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DEDICATION.

TO THE STUDENTS OF SETON HALL SEMINARY,
TO THE PRIESTS IN THE MINISTRY WHO
HAVE ISSUED FROM THAT SHRINE
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY,
1892.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

A BOOK of good, instructive sermons is useful to both layman and priest. To the former it will be an ever-ready guide and teacher in the spiritual life, upon which so much depends—the eternal happiness of his immortal soul. He can take it up at any time, in the leisure hours of the evening, when resting from the day's hard labor and fatigue, or of a Sunday afternoon, when perchance he will read it aloud before all the members of the family, or when convalescing from a long and severe sickness, and he will always derive from its perusal instruction and edification that will be of incalculable advantage to his soul.

To the priest a book of short, clear, logical and practical sermons, such as this written by the Rev. Father Sheppard, will always be useful and pleasant reading. On occasions it may even suggest to him for his own sermons, important points that might not have occurred to him, or that he would not have seen so clearly and distinctly, as they have been developed by Father Sheppard. There is, consequently, good reason for believing that the little work will do some good in the world, and that the time the reverend Author spent in preparing it for publication, has been very usefully employed.

✠ W. M. WIGGER,
Bishop of Newark.

SETON HALL COLLEGE,
Oct. 1st, 1892.

RT. REV. MGR. JOHN A. SHEPPARD, V. G.

MY DEAR MONSIGNOR,

Allow me to thank you for the advance sheets of the new edition of your book of sermons. Very cordially I recommend it to the Rev. Clergy. Practical sermons are of great value as aids in the careful preparation for preaching the word of God. I trust that this new edition of your excellent sermons may have a wide circulation.

Very sincerely yours in Christ,

✠ JOHN J. O'CONNOR,

Bishop of Newark.

BISHOPS' HOUSE,
SOUTH ORANGE, N.J.,
Jan. 1st, 1904.

PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

THE first edition of these Sermons has long since been exhausted and the book has been practically out of print for a number of years. The many demands from various sources for a second edition, have induced the Author to republish the work from a new set of plates. It is a matter of consolation to know that it has been an aid to the reverend Clergy in the preaching of God's word, and we hope that this new edition, in a somewhat improved dress, may still further assist them in the arduous work of the pulpit.

THE AUTHOR.

ST. MICHAEL'S RECTORY,
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY,
Oct. 1st, 1903.

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I. SERMON.
THE NECESSITY OF REVEALED RELIGION.

*“ He shall give testimony of me,
And you shall give testimony.”*
JOHN XV, 26.

WE would propose for your consideration three of the most important questions that can engage the attention of man. Important, for upon them depends his whole life upon earth; important, for if we but solve them we shall be able to decide for ourselves, whether the past years of our lives have been spent as they should be, and in what manner the future is to be cared for; important, for in their solution we shall have the key of the solution of life itself and all its hidden mysteries.

The first of these questions is: whether or not there be a Revealed Religion? This is the question which we shall here consider. The other two are: whether or not Christianity be that Revealed Religion; and where we shall find true Christianity? Who are its guardians? To whom has it been committed?

Is there then a Revealed Religion? In other words, has man ever had any communication with a world other than this upon which he lives, acts and dies. Has that world which is styled the supernatural any real existence, or have we on any occasion ever been brought into contact with it? Have we ever heard from competent and reliable authority of its existence and of its truths? Man is born into the

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world a poor helpless babe, ignorant of all that surrounds him; years of his life go by in infancy and in ignorance of his inevitable end; slowly and by degrees a light illumines him and he begins to discern objects distinct and different from himself; another step and he recognizes persons like himself; still another advance and he beholds a world of beings; nay more, he looks above him in the heavens, and his youthful imagination is lost in its wanderings through the universe. It cannot be circumscribed, and on its steady advance immensity stretches out before his gaze; he is lost in astonishment, and as his mind matures he begins to analyze and scan more closely the objects that surround him. He looks about the world and he beholds an indescribable beauty, an unbroken harmony, and an order that admits of no exception.

In vain have poets by the magic of their verse endeavored to give an idea of its beauty; they may sing of the mighty ocean, tell of heaven's arched vault, speak of its majestic mountain heights, and yet their theme is inexhaustible. The pen has used its power in vain; but the theme unchangeable will be taken up by nations yet unborn! The painter too, has endeavored to fix its beauty upon his canvas; his tints are borrowed from nature, his imagination is fed by that which surrounds him; but finding it incomparable, the brush falls from his hand after having caught but a poor shadow of its beauty. To confirm the order and harmony of the Universe, we have but to tell you to watch the rising and setting of the sun; the recurrence of the seasons, the little seed budding into life, the trees laden with their fruit, the leaves as they fall and die; the continual yet similar change that goes on in the succession of life unto death, and death to life again. We have but to mention these things and you recognize an order that is permanent and continuous. Seeing all this, are we not constrained to ask whence comes this beauty? Who is the author of this harmony and order?

In passing through a dark forest which appears to defy

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our entering, were we to espy a house nicely laid out, surrounded by all the necessaries of life and happiness, would we not immediately conclude that man must have made his home there; that though no one be visible about it yet some one must have built it, must even now dwell there, since it is in such good order. Would we ever think of ascribing the origin of that house to chance, or would we dare to assert that this lifeless mass of timber thrown into the shape and form of a house had always been there? Why, we would be laughed at; we would be called insane; and yet, my friends, will you credit it, there have been men who, looking at this vast Universe, with all its variety of beauty and order, have said that it was the work of chance; that it had no author—no intelligent author—though showing effects which could be produced by no other than an intelligent cause. This theory had its supporters, though shocking to common sense and the reason of mankind.

It was finally abandoned, and then this lifeless mass was considered to have been eternal; it never had a beginning and never would have an end. But then came the difficulty of accounting for the order that was visible throughout it. This was ascribed to nature, to the laws of nature. It was forgotten that there never were laws without a legislature. Yes, this world must have had some beginning, some one must have framed its laws; some one who still preserves it, and prevents it from falling into its original nothingness. That being we recognize as God, the Creator. Here, then, is the first revelation of a world beyond and above us. It is the Revelation of a Superior Being to the creature, by means of the world that surrounds him. "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made."

Again, consider the kinds of life that are seen on the earth, and we are struck with wonder at the order which reigns therein. A three-fold kingdom breaks upon our

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view. We see life in its lowest and highest forms. We look at the vegetable kingdom ; there we see it in its lowest grade ; we see the plant grow up, nourished by the soil, and then die. We advance a step and enter the animal kingdom. There we behold the animal possessing the life of the plant, nourished as it is, but having in addition the senses and the power of locomotion. Another step and we enter the rational kingdom, there we see man requiring nourishment as the plant does, endowed like the animal with the senses and locomotion, but above these gifted with the power of reason ; an intelligent being. Contemplating such a scene, are we not obliged and forced to confess the existence of some wise being who ordains all things well ? The world then, is not the work of chance. We did not come of ourselves into the world. We recognize the fact that God made and favored the earth with all that is upon it.

Why then did he make it ? Why did he make us ?

If we examine our own consciousness we find the existence of two great faculties: the intelligence and the will. The characteristic of man's intelligence is to seek for the truth. This has been and is the history of the human mind, which seeks and strives for knowledge ; day and night is spent in pursuit of it. The first days of youth and the last days of old age are laid on the altar of science. "Knowledge !" cries the child from the school bench ; "Knowledge !" cries the scientist in his discoveries ; "Knowledge !" cries the man of letters closeted in his study ; "Knowledge !" cries the philosopher in his speculations. In a word, it is the continual cry, and has been the continual cry of society for six thousand years. And yet how little has it prospered. What do we learn from this ? Does it not show that man's intelligence does not attain complete fruition in this life ? Was there ever a learned man who was not ignorant on some point or another, and who did not wish to know more. Here is the reason : the director of his intellect

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is the source and fountain of all knowledge, God himself ; and so long as man is estranged from that fountain he will always thirst.

Again, what a noble faculty is the will of man. The intelligence comprehends, the will forces it to seek for itself. Now one thing, now another is presented to the understanding ; the will knowing what is good, knowing what is proper for itself, either chooses or rejects the objects that are presented to it ; but as the intelligence has not found that which could fill or supply its capacity for knowledge, it consequently could not be moved by the will. We find this faculty of man also doomed to disappointment in this world. Examine this truth more closely. We have all of us more or less of those things which satisfy us, but are we happy? Is there nothing more which we desire? Some of you possess happy homes, live among friends who are always striving to please you, who are pained if you suffer and rejoice if you are glad ; but yet, are you happy? Enter the halls of the great ones of earth, pass through their homes and note their actions. Surely you will say : if happiness is at all to be found, these people must possess it. They seem to have all that the will of man could desire, their wants are supplied by a mere word, a mere command, and what ever they call for is near them ; but yet, are they happy ? Is there nothing more, and in fact do they desire nothing more ? Yes ; fill up and supply their wants, give them all that they ask for, and still a time will come when they shall confess with Solomon the wisest of men : "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity." We grasp the entire world, but we are not satisfied. The capacity of our desires seem to increase the more we possess ; hence our intelligence and our will force us to confess that there is something beyond and outside of this world which our understanding desires, and which our will would possess. Thus it is that we are led to recognize again the existence of a God, and at the same time forced to the conclusion

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that he is henceforth to be the aim of our intelligence and will; that we are created and made to know him with our intelligence, and to love him with our will.

There is then a God, and man is made for him. How then, shall this creature attain the end for which he is created? How come into the possession of God? He is his creature, his servant, made to live with him hereafter. Is there no means by which he will be enabled to get to him? Must not God of necessity, if He intended man for himself give him the means whereby he may come to him? But say you, there are other means besides Revelation. It is not at all necessary that he should make a revelation of his will for that purpose. Strange reasoning! The master on this earth may prescribe the work that is to be done by his servants, but God, the Master of us all, is denied that right because it has been foolishly asserted that it would be impossible for him to exercise it.

Now when we examine the other means of arriving at a knowledge of God's holy will in regard to us it seems to me that they might be reduced to two. Either the multitude must follow the instructions of the wise, or make use of their own reason, and thus draw their own conclusions. Have there then been in the past, and are there in the present, teachers capable of pointing out to us the mode of serving God without a Revelation from Him. He that would so assert has but poorly read the history of the human mind. Look into the past and examine the first teachers the world had. Examine the Priests of the Egyptians, the Magi of the Persians; they were great men, learned men; their lives were spent in study, and academy after academy and school after school were raised by those naturally gifted teachers. Yet, were they able to establish a perfect relation between God and his creatures? Were they able to establish a mode of worship from which justice and morality would flow; could they establish a Religion?

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They tried to teach, but they taught falsely, for their doctrines lacked unity and were taught without authority. The schools that were founded, the academies that were raised, took up sides against one another. The master could not oblige the pupil to receive his teaching, for all that was known was but a matter of opinion. To-day we find Socrates condemning the scepticism prevalent, while on the morrow we see it approved by the followers of Phyrro.

Epicurus tells the world to feast and make merry, for we are but mortals that die, never to be again thought of; Zeno follows with his ideas of fatalism, telling mankind that no matter what they do, they act by virtue of necessity; thus crushing and suppressing morality. No unity of thought or doctrine exists. Upon the vital question of the existence and nature of God, they are divided. Thus we see a multitude of Gods worshipped; nay, even the very beasts of the field and plants of the soil are looked upon as Deities. You remember the instance related in the Acts of the Apostles: where Paul was grieved by the number of idols he had seen in the city of Athens, an idol for every imaginary Deity; nay, he tells us that they even had one to the Unknown God. Could ignorance be more ridiculous! But they went further than this, for they even deified their passions, and raised altars to their lusts. They were not only wrong in their teaching but they had no authority to teach. They taught what they thought; which was but an individual opinion, and so long as they could not prove that their doctrines were truths, were certainties, they might be received or rejected at will. Reason pitted against reason was powerless to convince; and hence the people, seeing school arrayed against school, and man against man, were but little affected. This may seem strange, you may tell me that their doctrines were taken up and followed and defended by many; you may show me that the idolatry which they practised

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was but an outgrowth of their teachings; my reply will be, that this did not come from doctrines taught, or from the fact that people believed that they should receive these teachings; but it rather came from the fact that they were in keeping with the passions and feelings of men. Hence it was that in many cases they received them, not as acknowledging a right in the teacher to preach, but because he gave way to the bent of their inclinations. Had he done the contrary they might have listened to him, but only to forget what he had said to them. More than this, another essential element was wanting; their doctrine was without sanction, and in consequence people might adopt and follow them, or reject and not heed them.

You will better understand the necessity of sanction for a doctrine or law, by an example. You are aware for instance, that if you commit a breach of the laws of the state or of the general government, you are liable to be punished in some way or another. If there were no such punishment for the offence, the law would be useless. What would the robber fear, if he knew that he might plunder with safety? The murderer, if he knew his crime would go unpunished? They fear and dread the punishment that is to follow. Hence the respect for the law.

Now as to doctrine. You doubtless understand what the church means by a Doctrine or Dogma of Faith. It is a truth that admits of no denial; moreover, it is a truth that must be received and believed, either explicitly or implicitly, by the faithful. The right of the Church to exact that belief we shall see in a future instruction. What is it then that makes men receive this truth? Certainly they act from conviction, but beyond this, what makes them receive the truth. It is the sanction which the truth possesses. Men know that to deny that truth would be to separate themselves from the Church of God, and to separate from the Church of

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God would be to expose them to the loss of their souls for all eternity. The three essentials of doctrine then, were wanting: unity, authority and sanction. They were wanting, and hence it was impossible for priests, magi or philosophers to teach the truth. But is there not in man, placed there by the hand of God Himself, a power which can lead him to his Creator? Is there not a power in man that has accomplished great results? Yes! We recognize in man a wonderful, a magic power; we recognize in man a power that has enchained the lightnings of heaven; which has, as it were, destroyed and annihilated space; which has discovered the existence of a God, treated most learnedly of his nature and of his attributes, told us of the immortality of the human soul, taught us if you will that God should be adored and loved by all His creatures; in a word, we recognize in man a power which has done all but create. Yet, sad to say, we have to record together with this history of reason's successes, the story of its blunders. What absurdities and follies have not been foisted on the human race in the name of reason. Reason! Why, it is a power that has built up and thrown down. Reason! Why, there is no truth that it has not questioned, nay, even denied; it has even said: there is no God! It stood up and denied facts which were proven by the very senses, it maintained that they were not realities; it looked out into the material world which surrounds us, up into the heavens filled as it is with other worlds, and yet dared to assert that this world that we see and touch and that those planets we gaze upon; that all this vast system is endowed with but an ideal existence, that there is no reality in it. Reason! In our day it is a power which seems to have gone mad; it fears not to tell us, men as we are, possessing the power of understanding; it fears not to tell us of a disgraceful ancestry; that we are descended from the wild beasts of the field! With such errors, with such extravagances, with such powers, swayed as he is at

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times by pride, passion, prejudice and interest; will man attempt to establish a relation between creature and creature, and between creature and God? A rational religion, a religion of reason! Why, what does it mean? It means a divided religion; a religion which man may establish to-day and do away with to-morrow. It means a religion subservient to the passion, prejudice, or interest of the individual; it means a convenient religion suited to the taste of him who practices it; a religion that will demand no sacrifice, command no charity. But look back to the Revolution in France, not a century ago, and there you will behold a picture of the Age of Reason. You will see a people in a state of disorder and revolt, clamoring for they know not what. And they put up the pagan goddess, Venus, the goddess of lust and impurity, upon the very altars where once was offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

No! The history of the past compels this great power Reason to kneel and confess its inability to bring man to his destined end, if not aided by some supernatural means; by Revelation. Hence it is, that by the world's pages of error, we are led to conclude, nay, forced to concede, the necessity of a Revealed Religion. Of a Religion which will in no wise conflict with the faculties and powers of man's reason, though it may be above it; of a Religion which will come with doctrines possessing the three attributes necessary to make it universal, namely: Unity, Authority, Sanction.

II. SERMON.
CHRISTIANITY, THE REVEALED RELIGION.

“ I am the way, the truth and the life.”

S. JOHN XIV. 6.

WE now come to examine the second question we proposed to ourselves. We asked and answered the query, “Whether or not, man could attain his end without a revealed religion?” and we saw from the world’s history of the past that man drifted about in a sea of error, we saw that when religion was left to reason alone, left as an object which reason should construct and act upon, that peoples and nations ran into absurdities respecting the simplest of God’s truths. We examined the power of reason and paid to it its just tribute, when we admired its depth of conception and its power of execution; but whilst we were charmed by its magnificence, we could not refrain from inquiring into its errors, and a chill passed through our frames when we saw that petty power of man, rising in its pride and questioning the very existence of the Author of its being; and we naturally concluded that if man were made for God, his Maker should furnish him the means of coming to God, and since reason was insufficient as a means, we admitted the necessity of revelation; that is, we admitted that God, were he to save man, should manifest Himself to

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the creature; should impart to him truth, and thus preserve him from error.

We will examine here whether God did really manifest Himself to the creature, whether there be any religion upon earth revealed by God to Man? You may easily see the practical importance of such a question, for if it be true that God spoke to man, made His will known to man about the manner in which He should be served, we have but to inquire after the truth left by Him and follow it out to the letter if we would be His faithful servants.

As there is but one God, it is evident that there can be but one religion, for religion is the way to God. We can only come to Him by truth, and truth is unchangeable. It is but one; it never varies. What was true yesterday is true to-day, and what was true in a certain place and a certain hour thousands of years ago will be equally true after ages have gone by. The characteristic of truth in its oneness is its unchangeableness. Truth then cannot be found in the many religions that are on this earth, for they differ from one another; nay, they are even opposed to one another. Which then is the only True Religion which we should follow preferably to all others? Which is the Revealed Religion? Is Christianity a Divine Religion in its origin and in its teachings?

Our third question, where shall we find true Christianity? What Church of the present possesses it? will be left to another time, and now we would only show to you the divinity or truth of Christianity; not that we would put before you any thing new, or that we would seek to convince you of a truth with which you are already acquainted; but in order that you may be instructed and able to give to others a reason "for the faith that is in you," as the Apostle Paul says, and in order at the same time that your admiration may be called forth, and your love grow stronger for your Holy Reli-

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gion and your practice of it more exact when you see that it is a Religion from God Himself.

Christianity is as you know from its very name the religion of Christ; to establish its Divinity, to establish that it came from Heaven we have but to show that Christ its founder, had a divine mission, that He came into this world to effect a divine work, to set up the Kingdom of God in man's heart; it was not sufficient for Him to assert that He was God and that He came down from Heaven, people might not believe Him; in fact they would ask Him to make them certain of that; to show His credentials if He wished them to believe Him, to prove to them in some extraordinary way that He was as He called Himself, God. It was not sufficient for Him to teach a doctrine that the world had never before heard, it was not sufficient for Him to show that he was learned, it was not sufficient for Him to charm people by his discourses, to lead them after Him; for all this might be explained away by asserting that He was an extraordinary man; a man, the like of whom the world had never before seen or heard. To these, was something more wanting; they had been expecting a Messiah; His character had already been made known by their prophets; His birth, the place of His nativity, His public life and death had been made known to them by those holy and gifted men. Examine then if He were the Messiah, if He were the Saviour, the Son of God sent into the world for its salvation. His character and life must be as foretold by the prophets, they should correspond in every particular with the history that was given by these men, who were the guardians of God's chosen people. Open those inspired pages and you will regard them as a history of past events rather than a prediction of what was to be. Read those prophesies, and you will find them so clear in detail that when you come to compare them with the mysteries of Christianity, you will be induced to call them the history of Christianity.

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The place wherein the Messiah was to be born, His mission, the circumstances of His life and His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, the establishment of His Church upon the ruins of the Jewish Synagogue, the dispersion of the Jewish people—all are vividly portrayed and clearly foretold. All the events predicted have been accomplished, and after a manner so conformable to the predictions that Pagans even have been led to embrace the Religion of Christ.

Saint Augustine was led to confess that a Religion that had been predicted by so many oracles, whose words had been verified even to the minutest circumstance must be necessarily Divine.

It will be sufficient for us to recall but one of the many prophecies, the accomplishments of which fully demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Among the number we need but consider the famous prophecy of Daniel respecting the Messiah, and the dispersion of the Jewish race. This people now, the unwilling witnesses to the religion of Jesus Christ, once possessing the richest portion of the earth's surface, governed by kings, kneeling at the same altar, offering the same sacrifices, and listening to the words of their inspired leaders, was a powerful nation. To-day we find them scattered all over the world like a wreck upon the ocean, going about as wanderers, without a government, without priests, without sacrifices, without a temple. Their nationality is destroyed, and thus they wander without the faintest gleam of hope that they will ever again rise, and rank themselves among the nations of the earth. Do we not recognize in this the accomplishment of the words of Daniel, when he told the Jewish people five hundred years before the birth of Christ that when the Messiah would come they would put Him to death and after His death the people would be dispersed, their temple would be destroyed, their sacrifices abolished, and that thus they would remain a scattered people until the consummation

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of time. The Jewish people themselves have preserved their books, and they themselves are witnesses both to the prophecy and its fulfilment. We have seen nations disappear. We have read of Assyria; it is now no more; we have heard of Babylon, it is no longer known; we have been told of Greece and Rome's vast empire, but their boundaries are only to be found on the lettered pages of history; we have heard, too, of the Jewish people and unlike all the other nations that have perished, it alone remains, not attached to any particular place, not governed by any particular nation, but scattered in its members, testifying throughout the entire world to the Truth and Divinity of Christianity, testifying to the truth of Daniel that they should be scattered and left desolate after the coming of the Messiah until the consummation of the ages. Do we not recognize in this the finger of Almighty God? Do we not recognize the finger of a power who marks out and sways the destinies of nations and makes use of them for his own just end? And finally do we not recognize the Divine Mission of Christ when we see it thus foretold, when we hear the prophet tell to his people its just punishment for the decidal act of which it would be guilty?

To speak of the second proof of the Divinity of Christ's mission and consequently of Christianity I have but to ask you to consider the many wonderful works that He accomplished, the many miracles that He performed. A miracle as you all know is a work of God. He alone can perform a miracle, for He alone is the Lord and Master of Nature's laws; nor is this opposed to the belief that we entertain with regard to the miracles which the Saints effected, for in their case they themselves were not the *workers*, but *instruments* which God made use of to manifest His power. If then we find Christ endowed with the power of miracles, if we find Him confirming His assertions by His wonderful power, if we find Him calling upon the people to believe His

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works, if they do believe His words, we must of necessity conclude either that God allowed the world to be deceived or that the mission of Christ was Divine. To assert the first that God allowed mankind to be deceived would be blasphemy; for we know that God made us for Himself, and must consequently aid us in coming to the knowledge of Him. We must say then that the mission of Christ was Divine, that the Religion that He taught is also Divine, and to be convinced of that we have but to examine His works. Read the new testament, the Annals of the Church, the writings of the learned, of those who have made a study of the Scriptures, and you will find them testifying to miracles of all kinds effected either by Christ Himself or in virtue of His name. They will tell you of the blind who were suddenly made to see, of persons who were possessed by the devil and who were instantly freed, of Lazarus who had lain in the grave and of a widow's son who was being carried out for burial called back to life again. They will tell you of the Lord saying to the swelling sea, "Peace be still," and the waters obeyed Him. They will tell you of His saying to a multitude of five thousand people "Be fed," and five small loaves are sufficient, and they will go farther, and they will tell you of the efficacy of that Holy Name when made use of by the Apostles. And you will see them running to Him and telling Him of the wonders they worked, you will hear them say: "Master, even the devils are subject to us and obey us when we make use of your name," and you will hear Peter, His chosen Apostle, as he passes through the streets, telling the maimed and the infirm who are borne out by their friends sick, on their pallets, to arise and go into their homes. Do not all these works proclaim the glory and the truth of Christianity? Here were miracles, not in a certain town or in a certain place; not before a few witnesses, not before a people who were in any way prejudiced or in favor of Christ, but wherever Christ went,

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wherever the sick were brought to Him, even in the presence of His enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, who when they saw that they could not deny the great works He performed endeavored to excite the people against Him by, saying He did what He did in the name of the Devil.

And here we might dwell on this, and tell you that this is indeed a strong proof in favor of the miracles wrought by Christ; for you are not ignorant of the fact that in our day there are people who laugh and scoff at the idea of any such thing as a miracle; well, this is nothing new. There were always such people in the world, and even in the time of Christ, when He was walking in the midst of men and working His greatest wonders there was a class, then as now, who would deny, if they could, that He ever wrought a miracle.

You have but to remember the gospel that was read to you but a few Sundays ago, and there it was said that a person possessed by a dumb devil was brought to our Blessed Lord to be healed. He cast it out, says St. Luke, and the multitude admired. But some of them said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Here is the class of scoffers and unbelievers; they gathered around the possessed person and we may well imagine they gathered together there, hoping and wishing to see our Lord fail in what He proposed, and since they could not gainsay the evidence of their eyes and ears, they endeavored to make men believe that these wonders were performed in the name of the Devil.

Well, that class of people are to be found upon the earth, and of late years even a bolder class; for within the past years the world has witnessed men who have taken up the pen of infidelity and with an air of boldness and dogmatism inspired by a hatred of all religion, they dare to tell the people of the world that they have been misled; that they were deluded and misled by a man called Christ, and his Apostles. We need but re-

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flect a moment to see the absurdity into which they have fallen, and how far blinded they have been by their presumption. They would have the world believe that Christ and His Apostles were imposters, that they were hypocrites. They seem to forget that hypocrisy exists without sincerity. And if we examine the sincerity of Christ and His apostles, are we not charmed by it? Would hypocrisy lead Him to live in poverty and want? Would it lead His apostles to leave their homes, their friends, their families, all that they possessed upon the earth, to attach themselves to Him who had not, as he Himself complains, whereon to lay His head? Would hypocrisy lead men to be hated, to be despised, to be persecuted, to be regarded as the enemies of society? Finally, would hypocrisy have led the world astray for the last nineteen hundred years? And if it did might we not say, and could we not say, and yet we dare not say it. Might we not say that God had conspired against mankind for its destruction? Neither will it do for the infidel to assert that Christ did not live upon the world. That it is all a fable. For in doing that, to be consistent all history that treats of the past that treats of kingdoms now unknown, of empires which existed ages before Christ appeared on the world, and of great men who flourished centuries before Christ will have to be set aside as fables and we remain ignorant of the past, and sure only of the present.

And more than that; those unbelievers who do not admit the miracles of Christ will have to explain an astonishing miracle, viz: The fact of Christianity as they find it in the world. They will have to explain the astounding miracle of Christianity as it stands to-day. You know how it was propagated; it was not spread abroad by conquerors with the force of arms. Learned men were not chosen, who by their eloquence could win the assent of their hearers. No, not in this manner was Christianity introduced into the world. For if it were we might be

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logical in concluding that it was the work of man; but twelve ignorant men were chosen to conquer the world; twelve men who possessed neither talents, eloquence nor riches. And what were they supposed to do? To teach a religion whose truths were mysteries, far above the grasp and comprehension of men's minds; they had to propose maxims of morality contrary to all natural inclination; the hatred of oneself, the love of enemies, the mortification of the senses, and the crucifixion of the flesh. And whom were they supposed to teach? Was it a city, a town, a nation, the illiterate classes, or the men of learning and of erudition? No, not a city or town, but all nations; not this nor that class, not only the simple people, but the most enlightened of the world; they had to go and teach even the men of power, who defied their doctrine, and who hated them and threatened with persecution, the most relentless, and a death the most cruel. What was its success? Centuries bear testimony that it was scarcely made known when people embraced it, followed it, died for it.

Verily it is the grain of mustard, that has sprung up and become a mighty tree, in which the birds of the air may build their nests; for its branches extend from north to south, and from east to west; and in its shade the nations of the earth, and the restless mind of man, has at last found quiet. Is not this a stupendous miracle for the unbeliever to explain? Well indeed and sharply did the great St. Augustine reason, when he said that the world was converted to the Christian religion by the aid of miracles or without them. If the conversion was the effect of miracles then God is its author; but if on the other hand, it be not the effect of miracles, then the greatest, the most astonishing miracle is that the entire world was converted without miracles. Yes, it is the greatest of miracles. For is it not marvelous as St. Chrysostom says, how twelve poor sinners, such as the Apostles, could ever convert the world; that twelve men, the low-

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est among the people, without arms, without money, without learning, without a name, undertook and realized the conquest of the Roman Empire; twelve men in spite of all the opposition that was made against them, in spite of the difficulty of the doctrine that they preached, either to be understood or practiced, is it not wonderful, with what rapidity they spread their work? Why if they had been aided by Roman legions, and Roman wealth and power, we would have had to acknowledge that there was some other power more than human to account for its success, and the rapidity of its growth.

The fulfillment of prophecy in the person of Christ and the power of miracles with which He was endowed, prove sufficiently the Divinity of the Religion He preached upon earth; but besides these we might examine the sanctity and holiness of the doctrine He inculcated.

But you might say what is the practical utility of such a sermon? We are not addressing people without faith, people who are not fully and truly aware that Christianity is a Divine Religion, established by Christ, the second Divine Person of the Trinity, and your objection is correct. But might we not reply, are there not persons, who at times act as if Christianity were not true? May there not be some, who, though they do not say with the infidel that Christianity is but an imposition, still act like persons who believe it to be an imposture, nay, we will go farther and say that they act worse; for the unbeliever is consistent; he does not believe and consequently does not practice, what Christianity teaches, except by force of circumstances. But the man that protests that he is a Christian, and still does not practice his faith, is guilty of a glaring inconsistency. Take for instance the man against whom some outrage has been committed; he immediately makes up his mind to be avenged; go to such a man and say to him, "you cannot take revenge, it is against the Christian law," and that man will turn a deaf ear to you if he does not

laugh at you; he will not heed you. But come before that man not in the character of a Christian, but in the character of a worldling, and tell him have nothing to do with that man; flatter his pride, and tell him to take no notice of his enemy, that it would be beneath the dignity of his position to interfere with him, and that man will give way; he will no longer seek to gratify his revenge, but he will not have courage to give way, because he is a Christian man. He would be ashamed; he would be looked upon as pious and devout and that is sufficient to terrify him. Does such a man then regard Christianity as true? He cannot, for if he did, how is it possible for him not simply to omit doing what it requires, but to consider it to be something disgraceful for him to obey its precepts.

Again if you consider it true, why is it that you do not permit people to practice it freely, and independently? Would you think that those rulers of the world who have endeavored to do away with Christianity by persecution, by the sword, would you think that they believed that it was true? Would you think that the Roman Proconsul, who obliged the faithful to worship in the bowels of the earth, admitted the truth of Christianity? It seems to me that you would not. Well, strange to say there are people, professing themselves Christians in our midst, who compel others to worship God in some private manner at home, or in their private oratory; because if they came out and went to their church as good pious Christians should do, they would be exposed to the ridicule of their companions; they would be counted out as pious and devout, as people who wish to be considered holy; this is no picture of the imagination, the reality is met with daily; for instance there may be societies or sodalities in a parish, the members of those societies join them in order that they may lead better lives, in order that they may become better Christians. but how are they looked upon by those who are not of

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their number? Why they are sneered at, laughed at in places where they may be working, during the day, and told there by people who profess to be Christians, young men and women, that they would belong to no such society as would interfere with their pleasure. Is this not opposing the practice of our holy faith even as the persecutors of old once did? The only difference that can be discovered is that they opposed Christianity, with the sword, whereas you fling at it the shafts of ridicule; and that very ridicule is often more destructive, and often cuts deeper than the sword.

Here, then, is the importance of such a sermon. Though it may not be addressed to a host of unbelievers. It is to show such persons that those who scoff and ridicule others, who are endeavoring to do better than themselves; it is to show such persons that the Religion of Christ is a True Religion; and that the more exacting a person is in the observance of what it enjoins, the better he becomes. If therefore it be true, why will you take the pains to oppose those who wish to practice it? Do you call this Faith? Why we would say those persons who act thus are upon a mission, for which Hell itself is organized, namely, the destruction of Christ and His Religion.

Be more careful then, and ever keep before your eyes the truth of Christ; and if you do not practice it, do not throw obstacles in the way of others doing so, rather admire their perseverance, and endeavor to imitate them, for in imitating them, you will be imitating Christ Himself, you will take part in the work which He came to establish, namely, the setting up the Kingdom of His Heavenly Father, and you may expect to share in the reward hereafter, which He has promised to His faithful followers.

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“ I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.”

SUCH are the words which resound through our Churches when the choir Sunday after Sunday sings the Profession of Faith taught us from our childhood. We are fully convinced of the necessity of a Revealed Religion, and we are at the same time sure that the religion preached by Christ is that Revealed Religion. We have then but to examine in which one of the Churches calling themselves Christian we shall find the true word of God preached; which one is the true Spouse of Christ, the true Church of God. For it is evident to every thinking mind that though they all profess to be Christians they cannot all be so, because they contradict one another.

Our Blessed Lord in compassionating human nature came to save it. For that purpose He preached a doctrine calculated to lead man, if he would follow it, to his destined end. That doctrine was not to be the teaching of His time merely. Men were to bow down their heads in our day as well as in His to the truths He taught them, though it might be difficult to understand them. His mission upon this world was not to tell men to follow out the truths which appear to them consistent with

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their individual powers of understanding; but He came as a teacher, and not only as a teacher, but as one who was to sanctify and make men holy and virtuous; He came not to consult their tastes or private opinions, but as One who was to call upon them to throw aside the lessons they had received from the world and to adopt His; He came to enforce doctrines, to place before them truths that they were to believe, and to give commands which they were to follow if they wished to share in His happiness hereafter. His was not a religion of convenience, His was not a religion that might be adopted or rejected at will, but it was one they were obliged to receive under pain of eternal loss. Now if this were the manner of Christ's preaching in His time, if He exacted belief in His teachings from every individual hearer, look about the world in our day and tell me where is the Church which claims the right to teach, where is the Church which sanctifies her members throughout time and space. In other words, where is the Church which is one in its teachings, and consequently one in its belief; where is the Church which is holy, which sanctifies by its ministrations to her children; where is the Church which exists for all time and for all space; where is the Church which comes down to our day uninterruptedly from the Apostles who were first sent forth to preach the word of Christ.

The Catholic Church alone possesses these characteristics which Christ impressed upon His holy religion in the beginning. It alone is One, it alone is Holy, it alone is Catholic and Apostolic. You find unity in its Profession of Faith, unity in the number of its Sacraments, unity in the submission of its members to one heavenly appointed head. This triple band of unity is its strength, its glory, and it charms the reflecting mind with beauty and harmony. Go from pole to pole, visit the countries of both hemispheres and you will find, no matter where you enter a Catholic Church, the same Profession of

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Faith; language and manners may differ, the ceremonies may even vary, but the Faith, the expression of the belief of a Catholic people remains as immutable as God Himself. To-day, as in centuries gone by, the Church rejects and casts forth into the world of doubt and disbelief him who would dare change her creed or preach an article of faith not held by her. Neither are those who submit their intelligence to her teachings men of any peculiar class, of any particular nation or country; they are men of all classes; you will find them scattered abroad over the world, amid the barbarians of Africa, as well as in the circles of European civilization; neither are they illiterate men, or men of minds who might be changed by the external pomp of the Church, or men who would become the slaves of a beautiful idea which has been realized by chance. They are men of keen understanding, men who have tested and tried the firmness of their footing, men who have studied and have been fully convinced that if there be a God above them and a religion of His upon this earth, that religion must be that of the Catholic Church; and it is to this inspiring phenomenon, which no power save that of the Church has ever presented to the world, that we would particularly call your attention.

If there be a peculiarity in the minds of men which baffles solution, it is certainly their fickleness. Man's mind might be likened to a weather vane, changing with every prevailing opinion. Each succeeding age imagining that it is far in advance of its predecessor, begins to destroy and throw down that which has been built up with great care and labor; that which at one time was received as the everlasting truth, is now looked upon as some ridiculous fancy. The history of all the Natural Sciences is but a record of theories, once eagerly defended, but now contemptuously abandoned, and if we examine the different schools of moral and intellectual science, the same fact of continual change constantly appears. So, too, if you examine the various denominations calling themselves

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Christians, you will find them disagreeing on the most vital points of belief. In fact, no two individuals, though they frequent the same Church and seat themselves side by side Sunday after Sunday and listen to a self-styled teacher, are compelled to have the same profession of belief; for the very simple reason that there is no power in their midst which claims the right of teaching, and obedience cannot be exacted.

If then the spirit of change ever affects the workings of man's mind, and if it be true that all purely human science varies from day to day, can we on this earth find any power giving stability to the human mind, making men no longer the toy and plaything of opinion? We look about and upon this world, vast and beautiful as it is, we see but one only Church; for that all thanks. We hail Her with delight, with gladsome hearts, as mariners tossed about on the boisterous ocean welcome the first glimpse of land. What a wondrous power is Catholicity! It is the Church with which Christ has promised to remain for ages. "Go you and teach, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Within its fold we behold an astonishing constancy of doctrine to which an unchanging assent is always yielded, not merely by ordinary but by master minds. From the dawn of Christianity to our own day each century throws out its well filled roll of honored names which with the right to be called great, have the glory of being Catholic. You will find them identified with every department of knowledge, Theology, Philosophy, Poetry, History, Oratory, Jurisprudence; men who have exhausted the natural sciences, men honored in their own land and in all lands, known in their own age and to be known in after ages; not merely a few bright particular stars illumining our own learning but men who will ever be found in the intellectual firmament, steadily shining in the horizon of human knowledge. These form indeed a marvelous array of brilliant minds, of men who know full well their

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greatness, who are looked upon with reverence by those around them; who exercise great influence in their own sphere but who yet are most obedient to the voice of the Church; who firmly believe her doctrines, who with full undoubting, unchanging faith, accept all her teachings. They make no distinction between the various dogmas as more or less probable, but accept all with the same steadfast faith.

But do these great men who are united on matters of religious belief agree as harmoniously on other subjects? Far from it; once outside of the domain of Catholic faith the widest divergence of thought prevails; then sympathies and antipathies of age and country assert themselves and clash together, the horrid deeds of war may even further prove how broad a chasm lies between state and state. Catholic nations may have met and may meet in deadly strife, still, on points of faith they are one and all united, if necessary would suffer their blood to mingle in its defense. Here, then, is a wonderful fact presented to your consideration. We find men who have no common sympathies but opposite interests to sever them, differing in natural disposition and in acquired taste, thoughtful, intelligent men, scholars who have gained for themselves undying glory in every branch of learning; such men in every age and in every land we find firmly united in religious belief. To account for that astonishing unity must we not necessarily recur to that promise given by Christ: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Must we not of necessity recognize the efficacy of his prayer for his disciples when before his Passion He prayed: "Holy Father, keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are one. As thou has sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world, and for them I do sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth; and not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe

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in me, that they may be all one as thou Father in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Here Christ prays His Heavenly Father to grant unity in truth, and unity in charity to His Disciples and followers, and beseeches Him to make this unity of faith and love a very mark by which the world may be convinced of His divine mission. Whence it follows that those who are not one in faith and one in love are not followers of Christ, but opponents to that heavenly mission, namely, the Salvation for which He came upon this world.

Together with the unity of teaching and of faith we will cite the faithful of the Catholic Church, participating in the same Sacraments from the time Christ sent His disciples into the world down to the present day. The Church has ever and always maintained Seven Sacraments; seven chief aids for the Christian while journeying through the world. These means of sanctification she tells us were left by Christ, and she appeals to antiquity and shows from Scripture that they were instituted by Christ Himself.

For her Sacrament of Baptism she refers us to the command given by Christ to His Apostles to go and teach all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For her Sacrament of Confirmation she may point to the Acts of the Apostles, where we are told that those at Samaria were only baptized and had yet to receive the Holy Ghost, that therefore Peter and John were sent to them, and when they laid their hands upon them they received the Holy Ghost. For her Sacrament of the Eucharist she has Christ's own words: "This is my body, this is my blood. Do this in commemoration of me." For her Sacrament of Penance Christ has again said, when sending His Disciples into the world: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, whose sins you shall retain they are retained." For her Sacrament of Extreme Unction we find in the

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Epistle of St. James, these words: "Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the Priests of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with holy oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sin they shall be forgiven him." For her Sacrament of Orders she need but tell us of Christ, selecting a chosen twelve upon whom He breathed saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. As the Father sent me, so I send you. Receive you the Holy Ghost." For her Sacrament of Matrimony we have but to listen to the words of the Apostle Paul, who calls this a Great Sacrament in the Church.

These Sacraments we have to-day; these Sacraments which are mentioned in Scripture, are found only in the Catholic Church. In vain will you seek for them outside of her pale. Inquire after them among the many churches that surround us, and you will find some admitting three, others two, others maintaining that none are necessary. Seek for Baptism and you will find some who maintain that it is necessary for Salvation, while others regard it but as a ceremony of initiation into their society. Seek for Confirmation; to most of the sects it is unknown. Seek for the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and you will find the truth of Christ's real Presence corrupted, the words of institution mutilated, and their significance distorted. Seek for Penance and the very idea of such a Sacrament is laughed at, though Christ himself proved by curing the sick that the Son of Man had power to forgive sins. It is now denied by most of the sects, or if it be preserved it is regarded but as a mockery. Seek for Extreme Unction, that Sacrament of consolation to the dying; despite the plain words of St. James you will not find it. Seek for the Sacrament of Orders and you will find that some of the sects hold that man needs no commission to preach the Word, to exercise the ministry of the Apostles; that he has but to assert himself as a

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student of Scripture and then be appointed by the people. Seek for the Sacrament of Matrimony; you will find that with some of those sects professing to be Christians, that Sacrament which St. Paul speaks of and which the Church has guarded with jealous care, is looked upon as a mere civil contract, with no greater obligation imposed than would be upon the seller and buyer of a piece of furniture. In this manner are the very means appointed by Christ for our sanctification thrown aside and considered as so many useless ceremonies. In this manner are these Sacraments whose truth is contained in Scripture, Sacraments which the world has seen administered for centuries, which a constant and universal tradition testifies to, ignored by an age which flatters itself that it is enlightened and for that reason no longer cares to be subject to the truths which the world clung to in the past.

In contemplating this unity of the faithful throughout all times and all places, we must certainly be struck with these facts, and forced to confess that there must indeed be truth where there is such constancy; while on the other hand we must recognize error among the sects who are always changing. In fine, the faithful of Christ's Church are one in their submission to their divinely-appointed Head, the Pope, the legitimate appointed successor of St. Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth. In every society, as a matter of necessity, there exist laws, and some supreme authority which enforces and carries them out. Christianity is but a society established by Christ upon this earth, and like others we must find within it these guarantees of Order. There must be laws regulating its members and a power to see that the law is obeyed. To discover this power we must go back to the foundation of Christianity and there seek for its establishment. We read in the Gospel of St. Matthew that our Blessed Lord after His resurrection appeared to His Disciples on a certain mountain that he had made known to them as the place in which they would see Him. There it was that He said

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to them: "All power is given to me on heaven and on earth; go teach all nations, teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all days to the consummation of the world." "Go, and he that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me." What power, what authority was here given by Christ to His Apostles! Was power equal to it ever granted to man before or after? Was a commission ever more definitely established in this world than the commission which Christ gave to His Disciples to go and to teach, and to teach even to the consummation of time!

Of a certainty Christ established a body of Pastors who were to guide men and to teach them the things He had commanded; not only this, He clothed that body of men, those men who were to be the teachers of the world, with His own divine authority and guaranteed the continual assistance of His presence; moreover, He wished that they should be heard as He himself was heard, as the Father who sent Him from heaven was to be heard. From this naturally enough comes the conclusion that within the Church of Christ we must find a body of teachers, a body of men to whom the sacred trust of instructing the faithful is confided, and at the same time the faithful are obliged to adopt their teaching. Seek for the society established by Christ in this manner, seek for it throughout the world; and I tell you that you will seek for it in vain among the sects around you. Do their preachers come before us in the character of teachers? Do they come to preach in the manner in which Christ preached in His day; not consulting the tastes and wishes of the people, but speaking the truth to them, telling them of their vices and reproaching them with their sins, not caring whether it would please or offend? Do they come before the world as did Christ with any set form of truth; do they come and tell us that this or that doctrine which

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they teach was to be found among the things which God commanded should be made known to the world? Do you ever hear in their midst of any of the threats that Christ made use of when speaking to the rich, or of His blessings when speaking to the poor? In none will you find a unity of teaching on the part of those who call themselves Ministers of God, and in none will you find submission on the part of the people; you will find there no hierarchy, no supreme power, nothing but change and division. Together with personal independence in matters of faith and worship, they have installed an era of the most absolute individualism in religion, and to-day the world may indeed stand astonished at the infidelity which it witnesses.

In our Church alone, the Catholic Church, will you find preachers who come before the world with the zeal of Christ, and people who receive them as messengers sent by Heaven with the right to teach; hence you will find a unity that ever exists despite the pride of man's intelligence, the power of passion, or national prejudice. The Catholic Church alone shows to her children, in the person of the Pope, one whom they all recognize as the person appointed by Christ to feed both sheep and lambs, both the faithful and their bishops. In her bishops and priests we recognize the prelates of whom St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls." She recognizes in them so many sentinels of the house of Israel who continually watch and care for the souls of her children, knowing full well that they must one day render an account of the charge given them.

In contemplating this triple unity of the Church, are we not constrained to confess that this beauty which charms us is the beauty of God's own house, and that we are looking upon his sublimest work. Surely that marvelous unity is not accomplished by any earthly in-

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fluence, more than human agency must work so great a wonder; none other than a power such as that which defined limits for the tossing billows of the ocean, none other than the Power of God could accomplish so great a work.

IV. SERMON.
THE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH.

“ I am the way, the truth and the life.”
S. JOHN xiv. 6.

THERE is no man who admits that Christ came upon this earth to establish a Church whereby He might save souls, but will acknowledge at the same time that an essential mark or characteristic of that Church must be sanctity. The whole end, object and aim of Christ's mission upon this earth was to sanctify souls; for this was He born into the world, for this did He lead that life of self-denial and mortification for thirty-three years for this did He die the humiliating death on the cross. The Church then that makes this sanctification of souls her end, her object and mission is necessarily the Church of Christ, and must needs be Holy.

Which one of the many Churches whose names we hear in the world is able to appropriate the title of Holy? Which may claim indisputably this distinction? The Catholic Church alone claimed and proved that she possessed the note of Unity, and as she showed and still continues to show to the world that she is one in teaching and consequently one in faith, she alone can lay claim to the glory of being styled Holy. She is the Church which comes before us with a four-fold sanctity. We find her

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teachings holy, her Sacraments holy, her members holy, her founder our Lord Jesus Christ, holy and divine. The precepts given on Mt. Sinai to Moses, the warnings and counsels of the prophets, the lessons of morality uttered by Christ whilst He walked among men; these are the teachings that did away with the gross ideas of public honesty and morality that existed in the time of the Roman Emperors.

You know the state of the world previous to the coming of our Lord. The ideas that were abroad respecting the individual made these potentates the slaves of society. There was no such thing as personal honor or personal independence. The ideas that obtained respecting the family attacked and destroyed its very existence, for the condition of the mother was that of a criminal. With such ideas of the family and individual, the state and the state's authority loomed up as a gigantic power that crushed out the personal life of the individual, and destroyed the fixity and stability of the family. Such was the scene presented to the world as a consequence of man's teaching, for we must remember that the ancient world possessed illustrious men, men of profound genius and practical ability. Yet there was lacking one thing in their teachings, and that was: authority to teach. The right to teach, and in consequence the duty of following out their lessons was not recognized. The Church then had to combat these errors, she had to remould society; thus she laid hold of its chief element, the individual, and raised him up in the estimation of mankind. This she did by her Heaven-sent Doctrine. She told him of his dignity, told him of his relationship with another and more beautiful world, told him that while on this earth all things were to be made subservient to his destiny as a child of God, told him of his duties with regard to the state, and thus elevated the individual socially. But still her work was not accomplished. She must direct him to his true home—Heaven. She begins to instruct him, tells

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him of the birthright he has lost by the fall of his first parents, and implants a longing desire within his heart for gaining that country from which he is exiled by sin.

Then she places before him the means of obtaining it. She condemns not only the greater vices, and those which are more repugnant to human nature and a terror to human society, but she even brands our smaller imperfections as something we must rid ourselves of if we would be wholly pleasing in the sight of God. Nay more, her teachings go further, she even lays hold of and regulates the very thoughts that go passing through our minds. A desire welling up from our ill-regulated natures must not be consented to; a desire for revenge, even when injured, must be stifled in the very first moment that we are conscious of it. Our duties to God and our duties to our neighbor are clearly mapped out. With regard to God, we are told while seated as children on the school-bench, that we were made but to know, love, and serve Him, that we must offer Him our worship and our homage from the very beginning of our lives to the end. As we grow up and attain the use of reason the Church comes more vividly before us in her character of representative of Christ upon earth, she unfolds before us those precepts which are binding upon the conscience; so binding that to reject them is to reject the very authority of Christ Himself. By them we are told of a Sacrifice at which we must assist every Sunday of our lives in order that we may exhibit publicly the supreme worship that we owe God. With regard to our neighbor, we must above all love him after God. Also mankind of every description, no matter what country they may claim, no matter whether of noble or humble birth, all are children of Adam, are our neighbors, and as such we must love them. Anger is never to manifest itself upon our countenances or in our words, hatred is never to take up its abode within our hearts, revenge is a word that must be meaningless, while jealousy, the fire-brand, is henceforth to be extinguished. For

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the Gospel of the Catholic Christian is one of charity, is one of love. It is a Gospel that commands us to bless those who injure us, and pray for them that persecute us and calumniate us. Yet more is demanded of us; duties with regard to ourselves are imposed, we have to keep our hearts detached from the goods of this world and keep them fixed upon that other and happier sphere of Heaven. Our lives are to be lives of imitation, and the model after which we must fashion our lives is none the less than that of Christ our Lord. We must study His denial of self, the mortification He practiced, the patience He manifested in all His sufferings, the charity that led Him to die for a sinful world. Thus, by studying those virtues and pondering upon them, we may, aided by the grace of God, begin to reproduce them in ourselves, and become in very deed other Christs. Was there ever society upon earth endowed with such ideas of justice and morality? Why, to consider the Catholic Church, in her teachings alone, is sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind of her Divinity. But you may object, and tell me that the Catholic Church in putting those truths before the world is doing no more than any of the Churches that surround us, for these are Gospel truths common to all the sects who profess themselves Christians. We would willingly admit that they are Gospel truths and Gospel precepts; but when we see every individual mind allowed to pass judgment upon them, and to say whether or not they bind us, then we are forced to ask the question: did Christ when He taught those lessons leave them to the good pleasure of the people to adopt or reject at will, or did He teach them as binding, as truths that were to be practiced independently of what we might think of them? It seems to us that since He came upon earth to teach, He taught irrespective of our notions, and hence it was our duty to carry out whatever He enjoined. Therefore we recognize the Catholic Church as holy in her teachings, for that Church alone teaches as did Christ, heeding not

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the comments of mankind, but setting her truth in bold and unmistakable language before the world. Her Doctrines are doctrines which would sanctify us. But they are difficult, say men. Well, if they be difficult, the Church supplies us with means to overcome whatever may be in the way of carrying them out, and these means are likewise a means of sanctification. They are the Sacraments, seven in number, that were instituted by Christ. When infants, we are presented to the Church in order that she may bathe our souls in the precious blood of Christ, and thus cleanse us from the stain of original sin. At our Baptism we were incorporated with Christ, we became bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh, for: "as many of you," says the Apostle, "as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ." Nay more, from that moment we are temples of the Holy Ghost; hence it was that the Apostle said Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

But full well was it known that there would be times in our lives when we would give way to some of the many temptations that surround us, that then we would stain that white robe of innocence which was bestowed on us in our Baptism. Were we then to be deprived of all hope, were there to be no means of again placing ourselves in God's friendship and pleasure? With a load of sin pressing upon our souls, and our hearts breaking with despair, were we to be refused the joy of going to our Blessed Lord and telling Him that we had been wandering children, that we had been cheated by the pleasures and vanities of the world? No! In His mercy He erected the tribunal of Penance, that tribunal into which we may enter without fear of the minister of Christ. No matter what His imperfections are, He must be at least patient, gentle, and

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the only severity that He can manifest is that of a Father who would seek to win back an erring son. There the soul crushed to earth may enter, there tell out its crimes, its weakness, and imperfections, tell them out as though they were not told, tell them out and then hear those words of encouragement: "Go, thy sins are forgiven thee; go now and sin no more." Nay, go and eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, that you may have life everlasting. Such is the care of our Mother the Church for our sanctification. She meets us in our infancy, enrolls us among her members, looks after our youth, accompanies us during manhood, seeks for us when we become wayward, and stands at our bedside when the world of our future is breaking in upon us, that she may comfort us in our last moments upon earth. For us she was founded and for us does she labor unceasingly.

And here, we cannot allow the opportunity to go by without correcting a notion that seems prevalent, if we are to judge from actions, among many who style themselves Catholics. They stay away from Confession and Communion, stay away for months and years, and when they are asked why it is that they did not approach the Sacrament sooner, the only excuse they have to offer is, that they have been away so long that they did not like to come. Or again, they may say that they have been guilty of great sins and so could not bring themselves to go to confession. Do such people understand why these Sacraments were instituted? Where did we ever learn that they were instituted for Angels and Saints? The Angels are confirmed in grace and require them not, the Saints are at rest with Almighty God and require them not. We alone, struggling on this earth for the mastery over our passions, and we alone, are the ones that need them. Hence the very excuse which you offer as keeping you away from these Sacraments is the very reason why you should go there, and often. For how can you expect to overcome sin? You are not stronger when you are alone

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than if you were armed with weapons which Christ has prepared for the Christian's warfare upon this earth. Since the Church offers to her children the highest motives and the most powerful means to sanctify life, we must look for them first among her members.

When Christ commissioned His Apostles He sent them out to bring forth fruit. The sanctity of the Apostles and Disciples need not be dwelt upon; but beyond that, if we seek for personal holiness, where shall we find it save in the Catholic Church? In every age, throughout every clime and every land, you will find as the fruits of it, men and women who followed the precepts of the Gospel and became Saints of God and benefactors of the human race. Read the history of the Church and you will read of men who were so detached from the goods of earth that they literally fulfilled the counsel given to the young man in the Gospel of selling all that they possessed and giving it to the poor. You will read of men who quitted home, broke off all family ties, and buried themselves in the desert and there lived the life of Anchorites. Father, mother, brother, sister, land or estate, had no attractions for them. They threw them aside in order that they might follow more closely in the footsteps of Him who, though rich, had no place whereon He might lay His head. But why need we look to the history of the past for holiness of life in the members of the Catholic Church. We might indeed cast a glance over the catalogue of her Saints, and we might tell of her missionaries who sacrificed life itself in order that they might spread the light of the Gospel; but what need of it, since in our day, we may find an array of holy souls equal to times past. How many generous souls might we meet daily? How many souls that have renounced the pleasures held out to them by an alluring world. How many men and women have through it withdrawn from the world and now spend their lives in works of charity. Look at our Sisters of the Poor as they wander from street to street begging for

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the sick and the infirm, and ask yourselves what charm can there be in begging from door to door and in meeting with insults. Follow after her and enter the hospital ward and behold the sights that there surround her; sights that make the brain grow dizzy and the heart grow sick. Behold how tenderly she nurses that uncouth stranger whose face she has never before seen, whose name she has never before heard. Listen to the words of hope she whispers in his ear, and then ask yourselves what enchantment has come over her soul that she will thus care to wear out her days in this world in that sickly place. Take again our Sisters of Mercy and our Sisters of Charity, inquire into their lives, examine their duties, watch them as they are sent from place to place, from country to country; stand by one on the battle-field and in the pest house, and watch them as their ranks grow thinner. No face becomes pale, no arm becomes weak, no shrinking is visible; and then again ask yourselves, what is it leads those tender creatures into the very face of danger, creatures who before would have shrunk away, now growing strong and becoming ready to sacrifice themselves on the field of Charity. View the missionary as he goes to distant lands to fill the place of one who had been martyred, goes carrying but his Testament and his Imitation, goes demanding no security for his life; and then again ask what mysterious power is this that leads him to sacrifice himself for his fellow-men. Nor need we consider the religious alone in looking for saintly deeds. In the world we meet them daily; people who live up to all the duties of their state of life, poor though possessing abundance, humble in the honors that are heaped upon them by the world, leading pure, chaste sober lives. "By their fruits you shall know them."

Here then are the fruits of the Catholic Church, of pious and holy souls carrying out the evangelical counsels. In vain shall we seek for an array like it upon earth. In vain shall we seek for them among the sects that sur-

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round us, for, having separated from the Church they have separated from the Holy Ghost that dwells within the Church and brings forth fruit. They are branches cut from the vine, and being severed have become barren. True, there are many and bad Catholics in our midst, but whose is the fault? Surely it cannot be imputed to the Church. Her means are sufficient to sanctify all. The fault lies in the perverseness of the human will. The teachings of the Church are not practiced, the Sacraments are not frequented, and in consequence need we wonder if we find Almighty God permitting such individuals to fall into great crimes as a punishment for their rejection of His abundant graces. Besides, we must remember that the Church is that field in which the tares and wheat grow up together, the net cast into the sea enclosing within its meshes the good and the bad. She is a Church that never repudiates the sinner; she is like her divine founder, going out into this world seeking after sinners. Therefore the accusation is brought against her as it was against Christ, that she is the friend of the publican and the sinner.

The next crowning of the Church's Sanctity is, that she has Christ for her founder, and this it is that makes her holy in her doctrine and holy in her Sacraments; for having Christ as her founder, as her chief corner stone, the building rises before us as a temple of holiness. Run over the history of His life as given to us by the Evangelists and you will discover an innocence of life that will charm, love the most universal, humility the most profound; in a word you will find a life the most irreproachable. As a proof of this we need but revert to the questions put by Him to his enemies the Jews when He asked them: "Which of you shall convict me of sin?" They were silent. They could not answer, for they could bring no charge against Him. Even when Pilate examined Him privately and endeavored to find out whether he was not guilty of some of the charges that the false witnesses had brought, he was obliged to return and confess that he

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found no cause in the man. His enemies were not able to find the least guilt in Him, nay the fame of His sanctity so far impressed the Pagans that one of the Emperors proposed to the senate to place His statue among those of the gods of the Empire. Nor do His purity and holiness of life astonish us who regard Him with the eyes of faith, for in Him we recognize the Second person of the Trinity, true God and true Man. In Him we recognize the Son of God who came to save the human race, who came to establish a means of salvation, a way by which men should come to God. In Him we recognize the divine founder of the Catholic Church, and hence it is that the Catholic Church may claim His cross above all others and place it upon her spires and over her tabernacles; for she is the spouse of the Crucified God Christ Jesus our Lord. Now look to the sects who are separated from us; their very number terrifies us, and warns us that there cannot be truth where there is such discussion and division. We look at them and tell them you are but of yesterday and we demand your credentials. You come as teacher, show your authority! Could a Luther or a Calvin give them? No! Until these two degenerate sons of the Church arose you were not known, and now could they but rise from their tombs they would not recognize you as their posterity. Nay more, you are worse than the Jews of old, for they would not rend the garments of our Lord at the foot of the cross, but cast lots for it; whereas you daily rend Christ Himself in rending the truth that He left for the salvation of the world.

Should we not continually return thanks to Almighty God for having deigned to make us members of His Holy Church? We might, as so many others have done, fallen off from Him, we might, like so many others, have been born out of the true pale. It is by the goodness of God that we are within His Church, and for this blessing, the greatest that could be imparted to us in this world, we should ever be grateful; and while grateful for the happiness

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which we enjoy let us remember those who are not of us, remember them in our prayers and ask the Almighty to bring them in that they may be sanctified and made holy. Also, neglect not your own sanctification. You are within the bosom of a Church which holds sufficient means to sanctify the world, but only on the condition that you will be obedient to her voice, that you will frequent her Sacraments, those ever-flowing fountains of grace, purchased at no less a price than the precious blood of the Second Divine Person of the Trinity made man.

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“ And He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”—PSALMS LXXI. 8.

SUCH was the picture placed before the prophetic eye of the Psalmist when he saw the kingdom of Christ established upon earth. He saw rolling upon its surface rivers majestic and mighty, which would seem to sever all communication among men. He saw oceans tossing in their fury and roaring: “Destruction to him who would attempt to master them.” He saw rising from the breast of earth lofty mountains and solid walls seeming to forbid man to associate with his fellow man. He saw there Man, the object of God’s love and of God’s goodness; saw him differing from his fellow-creatures in race, color, heart and tongue. Still, despite all the obstacles which nature offered to man’s communication with man, despite the ribbed wall of mountain rising before him, or despite the deep trench dug out by ocean, despite the differences of race or color, despite the multitude of tongues, he beheld man united to man; he beheld a ruler whose sceptre swayed the peoples of the earth from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. He saw the Catholicity of Christ’s spouse The Church in its universality.

It is then to this note of the Church that we would con-

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fine your attention. You will easily understand why we do so; we asked ourselves certain questions which we were to answer. Our first was; whether or not we stood in need of religion at all? And our answer to that question was; that we needed a Revealed Religion, a religion divine in its origin. We then inquired where that divine religion was to be found on this earth, and we established in reply the Divinity of the religion taught by Jesus Christ Our Lord. But since there were a number of churches who proposed to teach the religion of Christ, differing from each other in fundamental doctrines, we then asked: Which of these churches is the one to teach the true doctrine of Christ? Has this church no marks by which we may know it? Will its truth with regard to God and my salvation be one thing in the East, and another in the West? Or rather, did not Christ teach a doctrine which was one for all countries and for all peoples? Seeing consistency in Christ's own teachings, we concluded, that since the Church was Christ's representative on the world, it must be endowed with that same consistency, consequently, The Church must have for its first distinguishing mark the character of unity in its doctrines, unity in its profession of faith; that unity we found only in our own church. We again studied the character of Christ, and we found Him as a mere man, the most holy of men; we found Him teaching lessons of morality of which the sages of earth had never dreamed, and we again said that the true Church of Christ wherever it be, must reflect the sanctity and holiness of its founder. It must be holy in its teachings, it must be holy in its members; and we found this character of sanctity in the doctrines and in the lives of God's Saints in our own church.

We come now to inquire for the third note or mark of the church. In order to do so we again study Christ as a teacher of the world, and we find that when He came to teach and to lead it back to Himself, He came to teach the

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people; not of His own time or of His own country, but those of the world at large. He was to teach for all times and for all places; for His doctrines were saving truths and were to be applauded and practised by men throughout all time and throughout all space; hence we conclude, that since Christ came to bring mankind back to Himself, that since the teachings were Catholic or Universal, so, too, to that Church which claims to represent Him upon this earth, must be affixed the seal of Catholicity.

Where then is the church that is Catholic? Catholic, as you all know, means Universal. The Church that subsists throughout all ages, teaches all nations and maintains all truth, that church is universal and it alone deserves to be called Catholic; for it alone is Catholic in time, because it exists throughout all time; in place, because it exists throughout all places; in doctrine, because its truth is the same for the nineteenth century as for the first. Its truth is the same for the cold phlegmatic Northman as for the warm lively-spirited son of the South. Catholic in time—that is, it must have existed for all time.

Now take up the history of the world, and we dare say, that if there be one fact which will astonish you more than another, it will be the fickleness of man. On the field of politics he will to-day cry out for the republic, and to-morrow he will quietly adopt the words and actions of a monarchist. In literature, the idol of his worship for a day will be the novelist, while on the morrow the much admired and the much respected man will be the historian. In philosophy he will follow for one moment the dream of the idealist, and in the next he will become infatuated with the school of the realists; thus in change after change, novelty after novelty, whim after whim, lies the drift of man's mind. Examine Science in its many phases and you will always find it fluctuating. Examine Art; it is never stable, and the reason is, that man is ever changing and in consequence his works change

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with him, while Religion, coming from God, puts on the Immutability of God Himself, and shows to the world amid its changes, that it alone is unchangeable, because under the guidance, not of man, but of a Divine Power.

Where then is the church that has subsisted throughout all time? Summon the Jew and ask him if his religion be that which subsists for all time; he must needs confess that with the destruction of his temple died the religion of his forefathers. Summon the Heretic; he will confess that his form of religion sprang into existence but a few centuries ago, and that it was not known to the people of past ages. But summon a man known as a Catholic and he will tell you, that his is that religion which has subsisted from all ages, which was preached and taught to the world by Christ Himself; nay more, he will go further, he will tell you how man in his fickle mood attempted to change and destroy in the course of ages his heavenly religion. Others whom you call to ask of their faith have to acknowledge defects. But if the Catholic, whom you now examine as to the stability of his religion throughout time, had to record but the continual triumph of his faith, he will tell you of men inspired with a hatred born of Hell itself; men whom, when they heard Christ our Lord speak of extending His dominion over the entire world, took council among themselves how they might represent Him, ruin Him before the world, and put Him to death.

Death came to the founder, but His Religion was founded on a rock, upon whose base was written: "The gates of hell can never prevail against it." This short promise was its only strength, its only fortification. Man might rise against it, the world might rise, hell itself might take part against it, but still it was destined to subsist in virtue of that other positive promise: "Behold I am with you all the days, even to the consummation of the world." But as the world treated the Founder, the Master of that Holy Religion, so would it treat and so

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did it treat His followers and disciples. The Catholic can tell you of an age of persecution during three hundred years that saw the sword unsheathed and wielded by the strong and powerful arm of the State. He can tell you how his forefathers sought refuge in the bowels of the earth, how they burrowed out temples there in order that they might worship and offer sacrifice to their own God without molestation. He can tell you of martyrs without number, and finally of a triumph; he can tell you of a Resurrection morning, which saw the Christians rise from the Catacombs, conquerors of the world.

But still the world was not quieted, its arms were not laid down; it had sought and obtained the power of the State, but it failed and acknowledged a defeat. Now it would make another form of attack; this time it would enlist upon its side children of the Church; it would enlist men of bright minds and of great name, taken from the very ranks of the Church itself, and make them do battle by corrupting the faith and teaching of the Church.

We could tell you of an age of heresy ushered in by Arius, who dared to deny the Divinity of Christ. But at the same time we would depict a gathering of Bishops from all parts of the world, meeting in the city of Nice, and branding the heresy of Arius with an anathema and warning the people against the teaching of that arch-heretic. The Council asserted the Divinity of Christ; Arius died, and Arianism disappeared from the world. Macedonius arose and called into question the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, but in the city of Constantinople the Bishops of the Church convened and asserted as teachers of the world the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. Macedonius died, and the Macedonians, his followers, were known no more. Nestorius arose and impeached the maternity of the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. But in the city of Ephesus, the Bishops of the World hold council with closed doors; the people of the city gathered without, the declaration went forth that Mary is the Mother of God,

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and the people cheered with joy. Nestorius died and with him Nestorianism disappears from the world. Luther arose, denied the doctrine of the Church, denied its Sacraments, denied its practices, and again the Bishops of the earth assembled and from the Fathers of Trent went forth a confirmation of all the doctrines of the Church, a confirmation of the Church's Sacraments and practices. Again the Church comes forth from the struggle, unslighted, unchangeable. Persecution did not destroy or even change a jot of her doctrine. In her conflict with Heresy she waxed strong, came forth from the conflict with her doctrines more explicit, and so set forth as to be unmistakable by her enemies.

But the world would not yet rest; it had opposed Christ and must oppose Him to the end, and what could not be accomplished through persecution, or through straightforward denial of doctrine, it would endeavor to do in a more insidious manner. It would declaim against those who maintained the Doctrines of the Church. The heretic world would not persecute them exactly, but it would cover itself with a mask of Christian Charity, and endeavor to throw society into a state of indifference with regard to religion. They would tell us that all religions are good, that we might save our souls in all of them, that our own consciences were the judges of whether we should practice any or all of the forms of religion that were seen upon the earth; that there was no teacher who could say with authority what we were or what we were not to believe; what we thought of God and our Salvation was a matter entirely in our own hands. The Church heard the flattering words that were spoken to her children, she knew that the mission of Christ upon this world was to teach men what they were to do, she knew that she was His representative, and in consequence that it was her duty to assert herself as the teacher of mankind. Again, and but a few years ago, the world witnessed the Bishops assembling in the hall of the Vatican around the

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saintly Pius, and declaring in words clear and explicit, that the world was not without an infallible Voice, an Infallible Instructor in matters appertaining to faith and morals. That Instructor was none other than the successor of Christ our Lord, the Bishop of Rome, the Pope of the Church.

The Catholic of to-day can tell you, that his church has passed through struggles which would have crushed out of existence any society of human origin, but which only served to strengthen The Church, because it was of God. Verily does it count its years by ages for "Thou art with it till the consummation of time." Thus then the Church subsisted through the ages of the past, despite the world's attack against it, and thus may we assert that she will subsist until the end of the world. The world may do its utmost, it can but repeat its manner of attack; the history of The Church's past, is the surest guarantee of the future.

But The Church must not only exist throughout all time, it must also be Catholic in place in order that it may teach all nations; for the Commission which Christ gave to his followers was to carry out his work, namely, to teach all nations. Now, where is the church which has shown itself to every part of the known world? Where is the church whose voice has been heard throughout every part of the habitable globe? Where is the church which proposes to have the power and authority to teach the world? And where is the church in fact uniting all nations in one, so that the Psalmist might sing of her: "He shall rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the end of the earth!" Summon the Jew again, ask him if his religion was known to the uttermost limits of the earth, and he will be obliged to tell you that it was national in its character, and that it never extended beyond the Jewish people. It had not the character of Catholicity. Summon the follower of Mahommet, and he too will tell you that his religion was confined to a portion

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of the earth. Summon the Heretic and he will tell you that the most his church could accomplish was to set itself up in a kingdom. Heresies in their innumerable forms could only lay claim to a single town or hamlet, and that but for a few short years. But again cite the man known to you as a Catholic to appear and ask him of his church; What glorious triumphs he has to record. He will tell you that wherever walked the foot of man upon the globe, there stood a Priest of my religion at his side. Whether in the barren icy regions of the Poles or the parched regions of the Equator, there stood the Catholic Missionary, bearing aloft the Cross of Christ, and pouring upon the children of God the cleansing waters of regeneration.

But a century after the Ascension of Christ St. Justin could write, that there was no race of men, whether Barbarian or Greek or any other people of what name soever among whom the name of Jesus Christ was not invoked. Later on Tertullian in his Apology could tell the persecutors of his faith in bold languages that they would be surprised at the immensity of their loss if the Christians were withdrawn from them. His words are so powerful in showing at this time the spread of the church that they must needs be quoted: "We are accused of not honoring the Emperor by sacrifice, it is true we do not offer victims, but we pray to the one true God for the salvation of our Princes. We respect them, but we cannot perjure our souls calling our ruler God we are frequently stoned by the enraged populace, our homes are burned, and in the wild frenzy of the bacchanals, even our sacred dead are not spared, but are dragged from the tomb and torn to pieces. How have we avenged ourselves for all these wrongs? If we desired to make war against you, have we not hosts of Christian soldiers? We are comparatively but of yesterday, yet already we fill your villages, castles, boroughs and fields; we are found in the senate and public places; nothing remains to you but

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your temples. Could we not even war with unequal forces, we who fear not the most excruciating torments; it being one of our precepts to suffer death rather than inflict it? We might be revenged by withdrawing entirely from the empire, and you would then be astonished at the immensity of your loss."

The Faith had gained over Europe, Asia and Africa, but still there were places beyond the pale of the empire. These too must be brought into the one fold, so that the prophecy of the inspired Psalmist might be fulfilled when he sang: "All the ends of the earth shall be converted to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall have dominion over the nations." To the north of the Roman Empire dwelt the Franks, a warlike people. Time and again they sought to conquer Gaul, and at last obtained the victory led on by Clovis their chief. Ten years after, St. Remigius was heard addressing the princely Frank in the following words: "Humble thyself, proud Sicambrian, burn now the idols thou didst formerly adore, and adore henceforth what thou didst formerly burn." On that day Clovis with three thousand mail-clad warriors received Baptism. From that Christmas dates the conversion of the French nation, who have ever since remained faithful to the Church.

But beyond the sea dwelt a people destined, it would appear from their later history, to be the chosen people of God in spreading His religion upon the world. To them Christ had not yet been preached. But Patrick arose and resolved to preach to them. He met the Druid priests, explained to them the faith, and saw the conversion of the people follow. Up and down for thirty-two years the saint wanders throughout that island; and when at last death called him to receive the reward of his labors, he left upon the field of his mission no less than three hundred and fifty-five churches. Still more he left The Faith imbedded in breasts that would never forswear it,

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he left it in the hands of those from whom it could never be wrenched, he left it in the hands of a people who could cry out with St. Paul; "For I am sure that neither life nor death, nor persecution, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of my God, which is in Jesus Christ Our Lord." He left it in the hands of a people whose Nationality formed an alliance with their Religion; so that a writer of to-day, speaking of Ireland's reception of Christianity says; "Centuries have perpetuated the alliance of Catholicity and Ireland. Revolutions have failed to shake it, persecution has not broken it; it has gained strength in blood and tears, and we may believe after thirteen centuries of trial, that the Roman faith will disappear only with the name of Patrick and the last Irishman."

Close by, shut in by the darkness of superstition, slept a sister island. Augustine with forty laborers gives England to the Church. The good work goes on, and for centuries does it remain faithful. It fell from the high position it had gained in the hierarchy, but its fall was not without its martyrs; their blood fructified, and England is again destined in the providence of God to share in the Communion of the faithful upon this world. So went on the conversion of the world. The Church followed man wherever he was to be found, followed him through her missionaries, followed him in the person of a Xavier in India and Japan, until she could count therein no less than three million of her children; followed them, when this world was discovered, in her religious orders, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Jesuits; followed them braving the deep snows of the North, the burning sands of the South; followed them until she saw the Cross erected wherever man was found to adore.

Thus do we find The Church subsisting throughout

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time and existing among all nations. But she has still another glory, that of maintaining all truth; She is Catholic in her teachings to-day, holding the same doctrines, the same truths, she taught from the beginning. It is needless for us to attempt to demonstrate this; to do so we would have to go over the same ground, to take you through her Councils, and give you her words as she dogmatically defined each truth against the heresies that arose. There is only one fact which we need mention to establish this truth, and that is: that The Church whenever she is brought in collision with the world, is brought into that collision because she will not deign to change. The world goes on, increases in scientific and other human knowledge, and expects The Church to move on with her, to change as she does, to grow liberal as she does, not to be haunting us with her doctrines of future punishment and of self-denial while on earth. The worldling would enjoy the ease and comfort the world can now afford; but The Church breaks in upon that comfort and ease which modern improvements furnish, and tells us the old, old truth of the Gospel: "He who would come after me, let him deny himself daily, take up his cross and follow Me." Such is the reason of the hatred of the world for the Church, because she will not cry out: "fall in with the world, fall in and enjoy its luxuries." The Church true to her mission has received truths from God, and as they were meant for men of the first century, so were they meant for men of the Nineteenth, and the Church must needs repeat them. The Church then, of which we are members, is the only Church that can lay claim to that Catholicity, which must be found in the True Church; for she alone is Catholic in time, Catholic in place, Catholic in Doctrine.

Are we her faithful children? Are we furthering or retarding her mission? Are we aiding in spreading the faith of Christ, or are we rather stumbling blocks to many who would be of us if we did not scandalize them

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by our lives? You are Catholics, and as Catholics you have a mission in the world, you must cherish the Catholic faith in your families, in your homes, and impart it to others. You may not be called upon to preach this faith publicly and in words, but remember that your lives must be the lives of Catholics, that you must show to the world by your example, that you are not only Catholics in faith but Catholics in practice. Ask yourselves this question, you young men who bear the seal of Baptism on your hearts, and the character of Confirmation upon your souls, ask yourselves if you are really soldiers of Jesus Christ, if you are really soldiers of His Church. Ask yourselves, you who loiter upon corners, who spend the Sunday in drinking houses, who shrink from the Church as though it were a pest-house, who keep from the Sacraments as though you had no faith, ask yourselves what must be the effect of your lives upon your associates, and those who surround you. Ask yourselves, you young ladies, you who are ever fond of the changing fashions, you who are ever wont to be seen in public places of amusement, who are wont to mix and form life contracts with those who differ from you in religion, ask yourselves if you are true daughters of Christ, if you are true children of His Holy Church, if you are to be true mothers who must bring up generations yet unborn in the Faith of the Catholic Church. And you, too, Catholic parents, you whose first duty it is to look after your children, to bring them up with a knowledge of their Holy Religion, to show them from the time of birth a good example, you who never ask your children where they spend their evenings, who leave for them a door unbarred and unlocked till the small hours of morning, who allow them to make choice of their own company, be it good or bad. Do you ask yourselves if you be fulfilling the mission of Catholic parents, ask yourselves if you act in dealing with your children as though you were authorized to represent God's own authority over them? Yes, let us all ask ourselves

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the question: Are we true Catholics? If not, Christ our Lord may say to us as He said to the cities of Corozain and Bethsaida who had seen His works: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago in sackcloth and in ashes; but it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you."

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*“ Built on the foundation of the
Apostles and the Prophets.
EPH. II. 20.*

Is there anyone of us who would not like to be a member of the temple of God, that temple framed by the Holy Spirit upon this earth, and whose inmates are here spoken of so beautifully by the Apostle St. Paul? In that temple none are strangers, none are foreigners; all are fellow citizens possessing the same rights, enjoying the same privileges, battling for the same cause, the salvation of our souls, and expecting the same reward; life everlasting with the Saints and domestics of God. Without doubt there is no man who would not wish to be found numbered in that society where all are brothers, where there are no rivalries or contentions, whereon the peace of God rests because it is the habitation of the Holy Spirit.

But where shall we find that society? Does the Apostle give us any sign by which we may know it? Does he tell us of any mark distinguishing it from the numberless societies we find upon the earth? For, if we look abroad, we shall find communities without number professing to be habitations of the Spirit, professing to be fellow citizens with the Saints and the domestics of God, profess-

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ing to be of His household. But in order that we might not be deceived, St. Paul was careful to enter into particulars with regard to that temple, planned for us, that building, so to speak; and tells us of a distinctive mark by which we may or should know it. It was built "upon the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." Such then is the mark, the note by which we are to recognize this temple. If our Church then can establish that she has existed from the time of the Apostles, that her teachers are the successors of the Apostles, our Church alone can lay claim to the title of Apostolic. Let us then, examine this claim of our Church, whether or not it be founded upon the Apostles, and at the same time let us investigate whether those who differ from us have any right whatever to that title.

What do we mean by the Church Apostolic? We must mean that Church which teaches the identical Doctrine once delivered by the Apostles, and whose Ministers derive their power from the Apostles by an uninterrupted succession; that Church alone can take the title of Apostolic; for it alone is Apostolic in its Faith, Apostolic in its Sacraments, Apostolic in its Priesthood. When our Blessed Lord wished to establish His Church, He selected from the world twelve poor fishermen whom He Himself taught for three years, teaching them the truths they were to transmit to the world. They were not men of learning, but they were men who when the time came for His departure from them, would be filled with the Holy Ghost, the spirit of wisdom; men who recognized their position, who understood that to them was left the legacy of truth which should be handed down to the remotest times. In accordance with the commission to go and teach all nations they separate, and begin to teach in the then known countries of the world. St. James remains in Jerusalem, St. John goes to Ephesus and founds churches throughout Asia Minor. St. Andrew betakes himself to Scythia, St.

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Thomas journeys to the Indies, while St. Philip preaches throughout upper Asia. St. Bartholomew teaches the Armenians, St. Matthew the inhabitants of Ethiopia, St. Simon the Persians, St. James the Arabians, while Matthias who had been chosen to fill the place of the traitor, Judas, passed to Africa. St. Paul who was not one of the original twelve, but who deserved to be styled an Apostle, brings over millions to the faith of Christ; St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, the vicegerent of Christ, after having preached to the Jews who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia and Cappadocia, after having taught the faith in Antioch for seven years, goes and claims admission to the City of Rome, the centre of Paganism, the home of vice and corruption, the abode of sin and iniquity. He goes there and claims for himself and obtains the throne of the Cæsars. In that place where Paganism had dwelt, Christianity finds its home; from that place whence brute force had issued and conquered the surrounding nations, from it the meekness and the justice of Christ were henceforth to go forth and subdue the entire world.

Behold the marvellous beginning of this Kingdom and mark how it was founded; founded upon the Apostles, with Christ as the corner-stone, for upon Him and upon His divinity did they build up their faith and practice. He was the subject of their preaching, the model of those who wished to become Christians. What was then to become of the saving doctrines entrusted to them by Christ? Were these truths to pass from earth with the men who taught them? No! Their successors were to take up the same truths and put them before the people with the same authority as the Apostles did. No one will deny that the Apostles had authority to teach, and that their teaching was binding on the faithful, that it was not to be discussed, but to be received as coming from God Himself. All will readily admit this, and here it is that we begin to touch upon the Doctrine of the Apostles, and to

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see the conformity of our Church's teachings with them. All will easily and readily admit that St. Paul was not with The Twelve when they were commissioned to teach the word. True, he was divinely chosen, but yet he was not of their number; still, hear with what authority he puts the truth before his people the Galatians. "Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be Anathema." And again, writing to Timothy he says: "The things which thou hast heard from me before many witnesses, the same commend to faithful men to teach others also." And writing to the faithful he says: "When you had received from us the word of God, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in deed the word of God."

Behold a teacher making known its truths with authority, and with an authority which should be respected and could not be questioned. And to-day, when we look at this Apostolic truth, when we look for a people to whom might be addressed the words of St. Paul, that they regard the words of their Bishops, not as the words of men, but as the words of God. When we look for a body of teachers who profess to teach as did Paul, telling their people that though they should see an angel descending from Heaven and hear him teaching a different doctrine, they were not to waver in their faith, they were not to believe him, but rather they were to regard him as accursed in the sight of God. When we look for this Apostolic truth which is no other than that of the Infallibility of the teaching body, we shall find it nowhere but in the One, Holy, and Apostolic Church. There alone shall we find a body teaching with Authority, and there alone find a people respectfully submitting.

Another great truth insisted upon by the Apostles, was; that the ministers and preachers of the gospel should be ordained and sent to preach. They had heard the words from Christ Himself: "As the Father hath sent me so

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I send you," and hence it was that St. Paul could boldly ask: "How can they preach unless they be sent," and that on another occasion he could say: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was." The office of preaching the gospel was not one that might be regarded as worldly, as a business that you might assume to-day and give up to-morrow to find something more lucrative; as a position that might be taken up at mere caprice and abandoned in the same fickle manner. It was a duty to which God called favored souls, as he did Aaron; a duty to which they should be appointed by proper authority, and ordained and commissioned to carry out by legitimate powers. Hence it is that we read that Paul and Barnabas had ordained for them Priests in every church. And in the epistle to Titus we read: "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee."

A most striking illustration of the necessity of being sent to preach the gospel is offered in the life of St. Paul himself. You know something of his life! He was a learned man, but a man opposed to the Christians; he was the man who stood by at the death of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen; he was the man who sought from the High Priest power to apprehend, and bring bound in chains to Jerusalem, those who professed themselves followers of Christ in Damascus. The permission is given, letters are drawn up and he sets out for the city; suddenly he is struck down on the road by a blinding flash of light, and hears a voice asking: "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me," and he answered, "Who art thou Lord?" The voice replied: "I am Jesus whom thou dost persecute," and he trembling and astonished said: "Lord what wilt thou have me do?" He was bidden to rise and go into the city, and it would be there told to him, what he should do. Those who accompanied him raised him from the earth, found him deprived of

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sight, and they led him into the city where he was baptized by Annanias. He regained his sight and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, to the consternation of the Jews, he began to preach the Crucified One. But strange to relate that great Apostle of the Gentiles who had been called to a knowledge of the faith, and who had been so miraculously converted, allowed the Apostles to impose hands upon him, and thus commissioned him to preach the great truths taught by Christ Himself.

If we again ask for the Apostolic truth and practise of Ordaining and Commissioning men to preach, where shall we find it more firmly established, more faithfully carried out, than in our own Holy Church. Here when a young man offers himself for the ministry, he is not immediately received. A time of probation is allotted him, he is told to quit his parents and friends, to go into the seminary to remain there for years. Each year as it goes by must testify to his superiors by his walk and conversation that he is really called by God as Aaron was; if it is found during his time of trial, that he is not fit to be called, then he must not venture to usurp the office. Years go by, the morning of his Ordination arrives, that morning when he is to receive The Command as direct as though it came from the lips of Christ Himself. He stands before the Bishop who asks from the Arch-Priest whether he knows this candidate to be a fit subject for the ministry. The answer is given, that so far as human knowledge goes, he may safely predict that he is worthy of being raised to the high dignity of the Priesthood. He is then told of his duty as a Disciple of Christ, a duty not of a month or a year, but a life duty. He is told that he is to offer sacrifice, to preach and to baptize; that his doctrine must be the nourishment of God's people, that the odor of his life must be the sweetness of Christ's church; that by his example and by his preaching he must aid in building up God's temple in such a manner, that those who have appointed him, and

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that he who has taken upon himself this office may not be condemned on the last day, for the abuse of the gifts entrusted to him, but may rather merit an eternal reward from Him whose work he is about to undertake. Such are the solemn words the church addresses to her Minister when presenting himself for Ordination. Words which should make the stoutest human heart reflect and involuntarily draw back, as it considers the weighty responsibility it is about to assume, were it not that the virtue of hope takes possession of the soul, and the whispering of God's Holy Spirit is heard promising the assistance which divine grace brings to the weakness of man. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."

It would be most interesting to take up and examine each of the doctrines of the Church as taught by the Church to-day, and show their identity with apostolic teachings; and not only the doctrines, but the practices of the church. But in establishing the fact that the Church of the Apostles was a teaching church, endowed with the divine attribute of Infallibility, we have established that The Church which to-day proclaims itself a teacher and moreover asserts its Infallibility, is that identical church; its Priesthood is the same, and has come down to us uninterruptedly from the time of the Apostles.

Are then the Bishop, and Priests of the Catholic Church the successors of the Apostles? In other words is the Church Apostolic in its priesthood? Are its ministers the legal successors of the original twelve chosen by Christ to carry the truth of His divinity to the world? Ask the Infidel if he is not satisfied that the Ministers of the Catholic Church to-day succeed directly to the teachers sent to the world by our Blessed Lord, and he will be obliged to confess that in his course of reading, he has been led to that conclusion; and that if he were to become a Christian, he must needs be Catholic. Ask the Heretic, and he must admit that we have the succession, though he

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dissents from our doctrine; for he will say: though you have the succession, you have erred in teaching. He forgets that St. Paul believed in the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who was to remain with the Church to teach all truth, and save it from lapsing into error "Though an Angel from Heaven preach a gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you let him be anathema."

And, they must of necessity admit that The Church is Apostolic in her Priesthood if history is not to be relegated to the regions of fiction; for, opening that chronicle of time, you will read of a man reigning in the city of Rome, styling himself the lawful successor of St. Peter, the vicegerent of Jesus Christ upon earth, and appealing to the testimony of nineteen centuries in proof of his claim and position. If you call on the centuries of the past to bear witness to the fact, you will find a chain of Pontiffs from the days of Peter to the days of Leo; a line of Popes numbering over two hundred; a chain whose links bind the centuries together. The succession of no line of Kings, of no line of worldly potentates is so well established as that of the succession to the See of Peter. And when we come to consider that the chair of Peter is a throne ever kept before the eyes of the world, because he who possesses it claims to govern the world spiritually, and that therefore the world is interested in him who occupies the position, then it is that our proof grows stronger, and we can easily understand, how few there are who have attempted to call in question, the legitimate succession of the Roman Pontiffs. If the Roman See has always claimed the right of governing the world, as it has, then the eyes of the world must have necessarily been turned to that See in a spirit of love, or in a spirit of hatred; at all events, turned they were, watchfully, critically, and by our enemies; and if the line had ever been broken, that truth would have been boldly thrust in our faces and written in characters unmistakable to the young-

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est aspirant of our creed. On the contrary, the succession was uninterrupted though the world sought to annihilate it.

You know of the death of the first Pope, St. Peter, who, like his master, was put to death, martyred for the faith. Would others ascend that throne, take up a crown sure to be drenched in the blood of the possessor? Yes, and for three hundred years men for whom the world had no terrors, which could make them forego their faith; or promises which could flatter and win them over to be the world's champions; men like these took up the sceptre entrusted to Peter, though they knew that death awaited them at the hands of their persecutors. After the storm came a calm, and the Popes governed for succeeding ages, and were allowed to rule their children. So just was their administration that after a few centuries had gone by, nations turned to them as children to a Father, when their rights were endangered, and placed in their hands the balance of power that in the present state of affairs in Europe, is placed in the hands of an army numbering millions.

Nor could this state of affairs be called a perfect calm, for the Church had its periods of trouble, its conflicts with the mighty ones of earth who hated it, who would destroy it were they able. In after years it struggled through the hatred borne it by worldly powers; again and again did it struggle through the invasion of its every right; but a new mode of attack, a new kind of warfare was now carried on. The world could not destroy that line of kings, founded on the Apostles and upon Christ, in any way that it had yet tried; it would now at the period of the Reformation, question the faith which was taught, and deny the many revealed doctrines. To forward its attack it would usurp the place of the Church, assert itself the teacher of Christ, place before the people some of the old truths, the Divinity of Christ, the Trinity and Unity of God and hold out to them a religion easy in

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practice, and convenient in principle. In this way it would gain over souls to the new kingdom, weaken the faith of men in the Vicar of Christ by perversion, and thus destroy that kingdom.

You know of its success; the world for the last three hundred years, outside of the Catholic Church, knows not what to believe; it has become skeptical and indifferent; its arms have been turned against itself; the reign of justice and of public honesty is supplanted by the reign of human opinion and private conveniency. But during that struggle what became of the succession of Apostle to Apostle? Unflinchingly as before the voice was heard, condemning the voice of error, and its tongue ever maintained the right of Christ's supremacy in the world. The succession still remained; it is true a cloud passed over it and the world was at one time divided in its allegiance, but still the principle existed, and is to-day vested in our glorious reigning Pontiff, who might be said to have lived the life of Martyr, Confessor, and Pope upon this world.

Verily the promise given by Christ has been kept. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Verily the finger of God is here. Is there to-day another religion which can trace a succession from the days of the Apostles like that seen in the Bishops of Rome? And if that succession be unbroken, as it is, then we say that the succession of the Priest remotest from that chair, no matter what may be the extent of his parish or the poverty of his people, that priest is rich in the knowledge that he is her follower, that he succeeds to teachers chosen by Christ as long as he remains loyal to the teachings of Rome; for within that city Peter rules, and holds the primacy of jurisdiction in the person of the Pope, who has sent that Priest through his Bishop to preach, and teach the word of Christ.

Is there then, we would ask again, another religion upon the face of God's earth, with credentials more se-

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cure than that of the Catholic? Ask them, for we have a right to question them; ask all others to show their succession from the Apostles. To the Lutheran you may say, for fifteen hundred years you were unknown to the world, then for the first time, your voice was heard speaking through an unfrocked monk, upon a square in Wittenberg. To the Anglican you may say, for fifteen hundred years you were unknown; then for the first time your voice was heard speaking through Henry VIII, King of England, who because he was not petted in his whims as a school boy, declared himself a Dissenter, and the Pope of the church of England. Thus might we address the hundred and one sects that surround us. Not one can claim to be from the Apostles and say that their church is the kingdom of Christ, founded upon the Apostles, with Christ as the corner stone. To us alone belongs the possession of Apostolic Faith, guarded for us by the Apostolic Priesthood, whose presence we enjoy. Should we not then thank God daily for being numbered among His faithful children; should we not thank Him for the great favor of having been born in that One True Church. While thanking Him for this precious gift, let us not be unmindful of those who are not of us; pray that to them may be given the Faith, pray that their understanding may be enlightened to see the way of the Lord upon this earth, and that their hearts may be led to embrace the truth which is found only in That Church governed and directed by the Holy Ghost.

We would say, in conclusion, that we must never forget that we are Catholics, that we are members of that Apostolic Church, and that in consequence our lives should be like those of the Early Christians in whose midst the Apostles moved. When reading some of the epistles one is struck with the words of commendation that are there written by St. Paul to the different churches, and the Minister of the Gospel is forced to ask himself, could I if writing to the people of to-day placed under

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my charge, congratulate them and say that they were leading the lives of Christians; could I address them in the words of St. Paul? A feeling of sadness is the only answer; a feeling of sadness that tells plainly that though he labors in season and out of season for the good of his people, and for their salvation; still there are some who never come within sound of his voice; some who are leading practically the lives of Infidels. He sees a marked difference between the majority of Catholics to-day and the majority of Catholics in primitive times, and he is forced to deduce from those writings another conclusion. Does it not surprise us, when we hear of the rapid spread of Christianity in the first age of the Church. Scarcely had the Apostles spoken when the world was converted from Paganism, that easy life, to the hard and sober life of a Christian. What was the cause of this? Many might be assigned, but to our mind there was a very powerful one: it was the life of example led by the first Christians; each one considered himself an apostle, knew that he possessed the truth, not for himself alone, but for the World, it was the legacy of Christ not given to him personally, but given for all mankind; this thought entered into their actions, and thus the Christian became another Christ in the eyes of the world, and thus by the preaching of the Apostles and by the example of the lives of the faithful the world became Christianized, became Catholic.

To-day we have the reverse of the picture. We live as did the first Christians in the midst of unbelievers. We possess the same advantages for living good lives that they did, and yet what are our lives, to those who are not of us? In many cases a stumbling block, a scandal. Far from being friends of the Church, we are its enemies. Though in it, we are not of it, for we are not working for its interests nor the interests of Christ! Nor does the scandal stop here. It goes farther. It does not alone keep others from belonging to us, but it is a means of

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perversion. The scandal given by parents is but too often the perversion of the children. Surely then recognizing our position as those to whom Christ has given all truth, we will resolve upon a change of life that will procure for ourselves Eternal Salvation and lead others into the one true fold of Jesus Christ.

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CHRISTMAS DAY.

“Behold I bring you tidings of great joy.”

LUKE II. 10.

THERE are many days in the world's history set aside for the commemoration of some great event. Every nation has its hero whom it loves to honor; there exists no country which cannot name at least one who has sacrificed all, even life itself, to its interests. Looking through the Church's Calendar we find Feast Days set apart to commemorate the lives of her children. To-day she names that of a Virgin, to-morrow of a Martyr, or again that of a Confessor, Pontiff or Doctor, as days of higher import and of greater significance, she tells you of the Feast of the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God, and finally of that of our Blessed Lord.

But among them all there is none upon which we commemorate a greater than that of the present, for to-day we celebrate a festival which is not local but universal, which is full of importance, not for the few but for all; one which told upon the world for the four thousand years preceding it, and has affected the entire universe since. An event which marks the central point of our world's history, in that it is the Incarnation of God, the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Well might the Angel say to the shepherds “Behold I bring

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you tidings of great joy." Tidings of great joy, because that is come to pass which will change the whole face of society; good tidings, because that is to happen which will shed peace upon the world and reconcile it with its God.

You have perhaps some idea of the world prior to Christ's advent. Nations existed then as they do today, but they differed in their structure and polity from those of our time. They might be likened to vast pyramids, gigantic but immovable. They were incapable of advancement. As an example of this we need but glance at the condition of the Roman Empire when Christ came into the world. She had nothing more to conquer, she stood at the height of her glory; yet behind all this magnificence lay an enemy whom her arms could not cope with, and which even she could not conquer. Throughout that vast domain immorality prevailed, modesty which lends such sweet charms to virtue had vanished. Man, God's greatest work, knew Him not, and became the slave of every passion. A sad and sickening sight it was to see a people rich in culture, possessing poets, philosophers, orators, historians, who have had no equals worshipping at the shrine of licentiousness. The true idea of the dignity of man was unknown. Men were belittled, the state idolized, society absorbed the individual; if he attempted to maintain his rights he was crushed by an iron heel. He regarded himself, not as a freeman whom his country was bound to protect, but rather as its servant, who should be ready at any moment for sacrifice upon its altar. So too with the family. Its principal element, the fond wife, the loving mother, was but the mere servant of the man, subject to his whims, and at the mercy of his will and passions. Today possessing all the happiness she could desire, sitting at the table as the partner of his joys, she might on the morrow be driven from his roof among the lowest of menials. In consequence, the education of her children

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was neglected, they never received the lessons which only a mother can instil into the minds of her offspring. As with the individual and with the family, so with society. Contemplate the scene for a moment. Society loomed up before us giant-like in its physical strength, and king-like in its external grandeur; but alas, thousands, nay millions of human beings were condemned to the unhappy state of slavery. This system was spread over the entire world. The smallest hamlet and the largest city had its quota, every family of social importance had its hundreds of those degraded beings, while over them the stern master exercised the right of life and death. Surely the world must have groaned under these grievances, and asked for some means to free it from this degrading custom; but what power could effect that result? Not its religion, which was paganism and deified vice; not law, for they were a Godless people, listening to the promptings of passion and stifling the conscience. Whence then could come a power to protect the weak from the strong, to soften the hardness of human nature, to succor the unfortunate; whence a power to fill the mind and heart with principles of morality and high sentiments of honor, to so affect the public mind and heart, that men would never dare to make open profession, or triumphantly boast of their shameful excesses. Whence the power to make the household the abode of devoted love, to restrain the ruler's encroachment on the subject's liberty. It must come from one source alone. Plato was right and reasoned well, when some four hundred centuries before the Christian era, disgusted with the state of Society and seeking for a remedy, he exclaimed that the power, the remedy, which should purge society of vices must come from above. And the power came, came from heaven. God, visibly weak but invisibly strong, came to the world's assistance.

From the crib which we gather about in spirit, shall

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go forth the power destined to change the aspect of the world; a new civilization, which was to supplant the old, and to endure forever. This is one of the events which we commemorate to-day: the birth of a new society, the birth of a new civilization and of a new generation. Call one of the Senators of the Roman Empire, bid him enter that stable and gaze upon the child in its poverty and coarse swaddling clothes; tell him that there lies in this neglected spot, the child-king who is to rule the world; he will laugh at you. Tell him that this is the child-king who is to change the face of society, its customs, its laws, and he will treat you as a mad man. Tell him this is the child-king whose palace is a stable, and a manger His throne, whose only retinue is Mary and Joseph, but that a day will come when His palace will be of the richest architecture, where the fine arts will assemble and exhaust their fancy to decorate His home. Tell the Roman prince that this infant will erect His throne in the hearts of the people, that there will this child-king be enshrined for all eternity, and that His retinue of Joseph and Mary and a few shepherds, will swell into millions, filling the world and coming down through centuries, he will treat you as a fool. Yet all this has been accomplished. His palaces have multiplied, His throne is in the hearts of the people, and His retinue has filled the world. The weakness of God is stronger than the power of man, the individual was reclaimed, man was to be no longer a mere part and parcel of the state. Man was told of his value in the sight of heaven, his own home; he was taught no longer to look for pleasure, that his pleasure was to be found hereafter. The truths of immortality entered his soul, and the world and its pleasures appeared as they are; transient, passing. Society was supernaturalized, God was born into it and coming in contact with it gave it a new life and a new impulse. It had been under condemnation, and man in his wanderings had lost the old traditions; one

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lingered: that some one was to save them. They felt their powerlessness; they might stretch out their hands to catch the heavens but in vain. God must stretch out His arm, take them up and thus reconcile them or else they would drift, as they had been drifting, away from God into darkness, and into death. But He came. The Light of the World. Man was told of his true home, heaven, as a place of reward, and that his life must be spent in winning it.

The family found its proper place. The woman was reclaimed, no more the plaything, she became the partner of her husband. His interests, his joys were all hers, she must share them all, and the pledge that he gave to take her only while on earth could not be violated. The law emanating from the crib enjoined one with one only and forever. Thus was the key stone of the family arch secured, and the Mother restored to the rights which nature and God intended she should possess. These changes in the life of the individual and the family would soon mould society anew, for it is made up of families and individuals. Neither was the down-trodden slave forgotten. The Gospel of the babe in the crib interfered and the Child was his champion. Suddenly his position was ameliorated. The patience, poverty, suffering, and obedience of his Lord and Master were held out to him for his imitation. His master is made acquainted with the truth that he himself must be kind and gentle for he has a Master in heaven. By the promulgation of such a doctrine the slave's position began to change, he becomes a man, becomes a creature of God, his master is no longer his owner. Their end would be the same, both must live to fulfill the same destiny in their respective spheres. These truths were kept continually before men and like the gradual disappearance of snow under the rays of the summer sun, so did slavery gradually disappear from the Christian world. Under the constant preaching of the Gospel coming from the

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Babe of Bethlehem, man was rescued from barbarism and paganism, civilization and Christianity now prevailed and to-day we have reason to rejoice, to thank the Lord for the mercies He has shown us, the peace He has given us.

To-day we commemorate the historical fact that Jesus Christ gave Himself to us to be ours, to be ever with us. What an act of condescension. What an act of love. What better return can we offer Him than to offer Him ourselves, to make a complete offering to Him and to resolve that with the assistance of His holy grace we will henceforth be His true followers, that we will love Him, and that we will show the world, that as Christians, we can bear the small burdens which He has imposed upon us by keeping His commandments. May the Blessed Babe of Bethlehem raise His hands over you, bless this good resolve and make it productive of good fruit in your lives.

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THE FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY NAME.

“His name was called Jesus.”

LUKE II. 21.

IF we examine history, we shall find inscribed within its pages names which deserve the reverence and admiration of posterity. We shall find those of statesmen whose every action, and whose every thought, after God, was for their country; men who sacrificed fortune, position, and even life itself for the advancement of their nation. We shall find the names of philosophers who sounded the very depths of human knowledge and of human wisdom; men who left upon their time an impression which centuries could not obliterate; we shall find the names of Theologians whose mighty intellect, illumined by Heaven, shed light upon the mysteries revealed by God, and won over hearts and minds to the love of the truth. Names such as these you will find written there; known, yet little thought of; admired, yet seldom and for a short time loved. In their midst however there is a name greater than all, because its possessor was more than man; a name more powerful, for it is the name of God; the name that alone is loved with an heroic love: the name of Jesus Christ. Other men lived, accomplished great things, died, and with their death were forgotten. Their deeds may have lived after them, and

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thus for a time their names were familiar; still, with time, they were doomed to pass away. One name alone was to be loved and universally revered; a name that alone gained followers in every land, was uttered in every tongue; and universally loved by the human heart in every age: that name is the name given to the Saviour of Mankind.

Reverse the picture drawn from history, and ask for the names of men who have been hated and despised in the world. You will find traitors who, for some petty gain or favor, or from some selfish motive, betrayed their country's valor and their country's honor. You will find for the philosopher the cavilling sophist, who destroys truth, and makes of man a miserable sceptic; you will find for the theologian the rationalist, who bids us hold our peace about revealed religion, and tells us that our God and His works should be comprehended by the unaided powers of nature alone: and these men though they have been admired by some, still, their names are despised by the majority, considered as dangerous, and their principles rejected by the common consent of mankind. But yet, worthy as these men may be of the hatred of the world, there is one hated more than they. There is a name that the world has persecuted for centuries. A name that she has sought to erase from the human heart and crush out of existence, so great is her hatred for it; and that name is again the name of Jesus Christ. So that we have the seemingly strange paradox of a name for which there is displayed a love that is heroic in its devotion, and a hatred that is most intense in its aversion. And it is a strange fact, which we will endeavor to develop for you. We would show you on the one hand the malice, with which that sacred name has been pursued, and we would show you on the other the fondness entertained for it by loving hearts; and then, in conclusion, ask upon which side do we range ourselves. Are we the friends, or are we the enemies,

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of the Holy Name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

I. When the birth of Christ was made known to the wise men, the spirit of Anti-christ manifested itself, and while the infant Jesus was lying in a manger rejected by His own people, King Herod resolved that His name should never be known to the world. While a child He must die, and assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ would be born; and they said to him in Bethlehem of Juda. He then tells the Magi to search diligently for the child, and when they had found him to return and bring him word, that he too might go and adore him. The Magi set out, find the child in a stable, and are told, by a messenger from Heaven, not to return to Herod. The King finding himself deluded and filled with jealousy, orders all the male children which were in Bethlehem, from two years old and under, to be put to death; in this way would the child be destroyed and his throne preserved. It was the sin of to-day; the world in the person of Herod considering Christ as an usurper, and consequently hating Him who claims the kingship of the earth. Then for the first time did hatred for Jesus spring up, and when He thirty years after began his public work, the world again recognized Him as its enemy and surrounding Him in the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, it dared to designate Him as a "seducer of the people." Some said: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" Others, beholding His miracles, asserted that it was "by the prince of devils that He cast out devils," and others again said: "We know that this man is a sinner. He hath a devil and is mad, why hear you Him?" They would act as Herod, they would put Him to death, and thus they would rid the world of Him. They plot His ruin and He enters upon His passion. The people cry aloud for His blood,

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He is given up to the populace and is crucified. They see Him die as other men, they see Him buried as others, their desires are at last gratified, for like others that rose in the world He would soon be forgotten, His name would not be remembered. They had forgotten that He left after Him faithful servants, that He had founded a society that was ever to remain, that He had established a Church. But alas! as with the Master so with the servants. For as soon as He had ascended into Heaven what became of His Apostles who were to bear His name to the world? They were laid hold of upon the streets and accused of being seditious as was their Master, and then stoned to death or slain by the sword. The Apostolic age passed away, the name of Jesus still lived. Judaism had not been successful, but what could not be accomplished in Jerusalem would be tried in Rome and Rome, mistress as she was of the world, Rome with all her power began to attack the Holy Name. Read her history and you will find it to be the history of a sinful world, you will read of ten persecutions that deluged her soil with the blood of martyrs, you will read that the Christians were a despised and hated class of people who were regarded as the cause of every misfortune that befell Rome. If for instance the Roman army were not successful in war, it was ascribed to the Christians. The Gods of the Empire were said to be angry because their temples were forsaken for the temple of Christ. If there were an insurrection in the provinces, again the fault was laid upon the Christians. They were regarded as the enemies of mankind, as the enemies of the Gods, and hence the cry: "The Christians to the lions." Heathenism fell with the fall of the Roman Empire, but still persecution continued. The world must rid itself of the name of Jesus, and Heresy took up what Paganism could not accomplish. Under one form or another it would attack the Holy Name. It would first say that Jesus Christ was not

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God, and that He had no right or claim on the world. Not having the Man-God present to lead to death as the Jews did, and seeing the numbers that believed in His Real Presence, in the Most Holy Sacrament where Christ is yet with us, they would deny that Real Presence, and they would throw insult upon that Sacrament. They would call Christ Himself a liar, and say that the truth was not in Him when He asserted that it contained His body and His blood. Then unbelief would create an atmosphere of doubt in which men should daily walk, and thus would their devotion, their true heartedness to the Holy Name be chilled; if they did not absolutely deny its sway over the heart, they would at least forget it or but think of it rarely. Under one form or another the attack was always the same. The cry of Voltaire was nothing new, it had been the cry of ages: "Crush out the infamous one." Thus did the world oppose Christ in person, and His Church, His representative on earth. The order of to-day is persecution but in a very insidious manner. It sees a man to-day maintaining that he is the representative of Christ upon earth, he claims that his power was received from Heaven not from earth; claims supremacy in all that pertains to Christ's kingdom upon the world, tells temporal rulers that they are not chosen to administer the affairs of that kingdom, that they are not to molest it. The world asserts that this is an assumption of power and calls upon the Church to nationalize itself, that the temporal ruler will administer the affairs of the Church within his own domain. It calls out and repeats the cry of the Jews: "We have no king, we know no king but Cæsar." It is again the old warfare, the setting aside of God's claims upon the world. Nor should we be surprised that this hatred of the world for Christ should be so intense now that we have seen it as it is, we should not be alarmed, for it is but the fulfillment of Christ's own prophecy when he said: "Ye shall be hated of all

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men for my name's sake." It is the fulfillment of Isaiah's words: "There is no beauty or comeliness, we have seen him and there is no sightliness that we should desire him. He is the most despised and most outcast among men. His look is as it were hidden, he is despised and we esteemed him not." It is but the fulfillment of Simeon's words when he said to the Blessed Virgin: "Behold this child is set for the ruin and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." No! we need not be surprised for it is the contest of sin against sanctity. The world beheld a man that had to condemn it, that preached hatred of the world; hence it is that the world hates and has ever hated the reign of Jesus Christ upon earth, and that it ever seeks to destroy the Sacred Name.

II. Though hated, yet that Name was loved, not by a class of people but by men at large; not for a time but for nineteen centuries. It was a Name that became known to every child through the world. There was no country upon the globe that did not become acquainted with it, there was no language in which it was not expressed, there was no people among whom it was not revered. Nay, more, the cross that holds before our gaze the figure of Jesus dying, the cross that had before been an instrument of torture is raised aloft as an object of veneration; it had been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and as it was the symbol, the sign of salvation to the world, so should it be raised in every habitable portion of the globe; so that it might silently yet forcibly point to the price that was paid for man's redemption. Despite persecution it was destined to supplant the Roman Eagles. A Boniface would grasp it, carry it to the wilds of Germany, and there subdue the savage tribes by the plain recital of the life of the man of sorrows. Remigius would take it up and show it to Clovis the king of the Franks, he would tell him of the bitter

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Passion of Jesus Christ; he would tell him of His love for mankind, and Clovis, filled with all the honest indignation of a soldier whose soul is wrapt up in arms would exclaim, "Oh that I had been there with my Franks, they would not have treated him thus." A Patrick would take it, cross the rough seas, hold it before the Celt and tell its history; and that generous-hearted nation to a man would gather under its foot never to be separated from it, no matter what the cost or what the penalty. They might be threatened, and persecuted, they might be exiled, cast out upon the broad world, but still, wherever they went they took the cross as a relic of their native land and presented it to the stranger. An Augustine would take it, he too would cross the seas, and England with the cross would become the most powerful nation of the world. The Turk would threaten Europe with destruction and Peter the Hermit and Urban II. would take up the cross, fire the nations with such a love for the preservation of the Holy Land, and with such devotion for the maintenance of Christianity in the world, that kings would come on bended knee and ask for the red cross of the crusader for themselves and for their subjects in order that they might do battle for the Name of Christ. And thus the Turk would be driven back, Europe would be saved, and Christianity preserved. Is not this love for the Name of Jesus? Where is the name as His Name? Nations have revered it, the world cannot get on without it; it is the Name whereof St. Paul wrote when he said; "God hath given him a Name which is above every Name. In the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those who are in Heaven, on earth, and in hell, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the glory of God the Father." It is the only name that is great upon the earth; other names are loved only in proportion as they are united to the name of Christ. You may speak of warriors and say that they are loved by their

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people, you may speak of the founders of States and Empires, and say that they too are loved, but while saying so you must remember that it is with a perishable love. It is less than the love that the Christian world offers to the least known of the Saints that dwelt upon this earth. Such was the love of nations for the Holy name. What shall we say of the heroic love of individuals for that same Name. See the charm, the attraction it has for them.

The virgin will quit the charms, the pleasures of the earth for it; the missionary will become a solitary exile for life on its account; the martyr will die for it; the priest will preach it in the deep forests of America. The world, though it hates it, will have to admit that name, and she will have to set apart a day in the week to commemorate it. Taught to us in childhood we keep it through life, it falls from our lips in the morning, we again speak it in the evening, and in temptation it is our shield: for in that Name we cast out devils. Wherever we turn, our eye falls on a crucifix, or lights upon a statue or picture that calls to mind the Name of Jesus. And in our last agony we wish it to be the last name mentioned by us on earth. Were we not correct in saying that it is a name loved beyond all names? But what is our love for that Holy Name; what ought it to be? Some three centuries ago a young brave was seeking glory upon a battle field in Spain, the city of Pampeluna was taken, and the gallant officer shut himself up within the citadel. The French bore down upon it with their artillery and soon a breach was made in the wall of the fortress. The young commander instantly appeared upon the breach at the head of the bravest part of the garrison, and with his sword in hand endeavored to drive back the enemy; he fought for fame and country, and what cared he if his life was lost, the cause was noble and would merit the applause and praise of his countrymen. He fell upon the breach wounded, and

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the moment he fell the garrison surrendered. He was borne to the Castle of Loyala, and there for weeks he suffered from the wound he had received. He called for books, tales, romances of knight errantry; there were none such in the Castle, and he was obliged to content himself reading the lives of the Saints. At first they were dry reading for the soldier, but soon he began to relish them; he looked upon the saints as greater warriors than those who figured on the field of battle, for they were the conquerors of self. He read there of men who were so devoted to Christ and to the Cross that they buried themselves alive in caves and desert places, pale with fasting and covered with hair cloth, and he recognized that true greatness and glory were to be found only in uniting oneself to the Cross. He saw that if he were to be happy in the next world and win the glory for which he had thirsted, he must unite himself to the cause of that great captain of the world Jesus Christ. And he was obliged to say to himself in studying their lives: "These men were of the same frame I am of; why then should not I do as they have done?" From that moment his resolve was taken, and that young man has since been known in history as Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, the great saint who gave so many children to Christianity under the name of Jesuits. He won the glory for which he sought, the glory of the saint of God. Now here is our model. As Ignatius loved the name of Jesus, so too must we love it, we must recognize Christ as our leader, as our king, for we are as St. Paul says, members of Christ's body. We are in one word to become Jesuits; that is, in our lives true followers and true disciples of Jesus Christ, and that we may become such, that we may be worthy members of the body of Christ, there are three duties that we must ever observe.

I. We must be as Christ was, pure in heart and body, mortified in our lives and patient with the little

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trials that we are wont to meet with in every day life; if we be impatient, if we be sinful, then our place is not under a king who is sanctity itself, under a chief whose pillow is made of thorns, and whose sceptre is a reed.

II. As we are members of the one body we must be in union with the head who is Jesus Christ, and with the other members who are our neighbors. We must conform our wills to the will of Christ, and what He loves we must love, what He hates we must hate. As He loves all mankind so too must we love them, and as He hates the world so too must we hate the world. True, we will often find imperfections in our neighbor, for as long as we are in this world we will not be perfect, but can we not make the same allowance for others that they have often to make for us? If by accident some member of our body were disabled, and if it did not threaten our lives would we part with it? Would we love it the less? Just so let it be with our neighbor, for he is a member of the same body that we are, and consequently is to be loved despite his slight defects and inconsistencies.

III. We have to love Jesus Christ with a tender and ever constant love as we have been made one with Him, our will must be His will, and our hearts must be conformed to His heart; His interests are our interests, when they are threatened we should be there to sustain them. Through His Church we are made acquainted with His will, what it condemns and tells us to avoid that we must condemn and avoid. Now if we are to examine ourselves in all sincerity upon this one head: ask ourselves if we are obedient to the voice of the Church, ask ourselves if we feel that the Church's interests in this world are the interests of Jesus Christ and consequently ours; how many of us will have to admit that we do not fully recognize our position as members of Christ's mystical body. We are told of the dangers that await us in the world; we are warned against forming life contracts with those who differ from us in

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religion; we are told of societies that are sapping, unconsciously perhaps, the foundations of faith and morality; we are told of the necessity of approaching the Sacraments frequently; yet how many, even of those who are now listening, turn a deaf ear to that voice; can they say that they have any regard for the interests of Christ in this world? Can they say that they are friends of the Holy Name? Or rather must they not admit that they are its enemies, not positively set against it if you will, but by their lives telling the world that whatever little good they may do springs, not from a love they entertain toward Jesus Christ, but from the mere motive of human respect.

Well, friends of the world, of the world they may expect their reward, for certainly they are not of the class who profess Christ lovingly, courageously to the world, and cannot therefore expect that he will confess them before His Father who is in Heaven.

IX. SERMON.
THE HOLY NAME.

“How admirable is thy name on the whole earth.”

PSALMS VIII. 10.

SUCH were the words of the inspired Psalmist as he reflected upon the greatness and goodness of God manifested in creation, and when we consider the conflicts sustained, and the victories achieved through the Holy name of Jesus, such are the words with which we Catholics may salute with peculiar appropriateness the Son of God. Eighteen hundred years ago it fell for the first time trembling from the lips of an Angel, it was caught up by the world and reechoed age after age, and is to-day the only name worthy of our love and adoration. Search the history of the world from the creation to the present day; run over the bright names that dot its pages, and then ask yourselves: who of all these is now most loved, who of all these is now most thought of? Scrutinize the world's roll of warriors, consult the pages that have chronicled the names of her sons of wisdom, invoke her men of genius and of talent, then ask yourselves: has anyone of these great warriors, sages, or intellectual giants, left his name enshrined in the loving hearts of the world.

This the great Napoleon did when in exile upon the ocean's barren rock, and what think you were his con-

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clusions? Conversing with his friend Montholon he said: "There have been but three great generals in this world, Cæsar, Alexander and myself. In spite of all their exploits, Alexander and Cæsar are now but mere themes for schoolboys:—who loves them now? So it is with myself; my memory will live perhaps fifty or sixty years in the hearts of some brave men and after that no one will love me more. One being alone is still loved on this earth after eighteen hundred years. He is Jesus Christ. Montholon! Montholon! I know something of men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man."

Yes, Napoleon was right. He has answered the question: Who is now loved most upon this earth. This brings me to speak of the excellency of that Most Holy name, which is heavenly in its origin, emblematic of the God-man in His two natures, human and divine, the epitome of the divine perfections; a reminder to loving hearts of the birth, life and death of our Crucified King.

His name is heavenly in its origin. In the fullness of time set by the Eternal Decree for the temporal generation of the ever begotten Son of God the Father, this name was whispered to the Virgin Mary by an Angel of the Most High: "You will call His name Jesus," Unlike the names of earth, it was to bear some relation to the person who possessed it. Take the names that are given us in Baptism, analyze their meaning and note how many of them express the character of those who possess them. Yet this is but natural, for not foreseeing the future, we do not know the mission of the babe, and hence we are led by some other motive in naming the child. Perhaps that of placing it under the special protection of a Saint, perhaps that of recalling some friend who sleeps in death; or, it may be of interest, or, as is often the case, of vanity; not so however with the adorable name of Jesus.

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Earth was not consulted. Mary, His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, His foster Father, the Angels in heaven, of all these none were consulted in the choice of that name. God alone in His wisdom, knowing the mission of His Divine Son, gave Him a name above every name. A name which with peculiar propriety should be His alone, expressing the unity of person and distinction of nature in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Yes, in the analysis of that name we shall find the existence of His divine and human nature, we shall recognize Christ, God and Man. Nor do we need for this the power and magic of learning; we may cast away for the present all worldly knowledge, we may discard the opinions of men, and opening the Holy Gospel we shall find the signification of that name fixed by God Himself.

After the Angel had announced to Mary the Miraculous Conception of the Divine Word, he continued saying; "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And therefore the Holy One which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Behold here the credentials of Christ to that title which He so often made use of when speaking of Himself: "He shall be called the son of the Most High!" Herein again lies His title to immortality which He claimed when reproached by the Jews: "Amen, Amen, I say to you before Abraham was, I am." Of His kingdom there shall be no end, He reigns throughout time and eternity. Throughout eternity in consideration of His eternal generation from the Father and throughout time in consideration of His temporal generation by the power of the Holy Ghost from the Immaculate Virgin; and from this shall He be called the Son of God. Behold here also his title to equality with His Father, for surely the first truth that presents itself to the mind when we con-

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template the relation of The Trinity is the identity of their natures, the Son must be a person distinct from but of the same nature as the Father. And therefore the Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep these were his words: "Joseph, Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save the people from their sins." Behold here again in this text the divinity and humanity of Christ. He shall be conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost and shall be born of a Virgin. Behold here the mission of Christ. "He shall save the people from their sins" and finally behold the reason why this name Jesus is given Him by His Heavenly Father. "He shall be called Jesus because He shall be the Saviour of the world." This is His part in the divine plan of the Redemption, and for this reason did He obtain that name which contains within it the sum of all the divine perfections. In that small word Jesus, we see reflected the power, the mercy, the justice, and the wisdom of God. Picture the condition of man after his fall; the beautiful creation which had sprung from the power of God was shattered by the disobedience of Man. Sin and death passed into the world, and we were as the Apostle says "Sold under sin." Lost to God, and fallen from our happy state, who shall restore us? Who of all the Angels in heaven is able to render us again pleasing in the sight of God? In vain do we call upon that heavenly court; who then of the Sons of Adam shall arise to save us? Ah! He and only He, the promised one of ages, the Emmanuel foretold by the Prophets, the Prince of Peace, anxiously expected by the nations. None but He the God-man. Jesus is sufficiently powerful to save the world. None but He, who reflected the attributes of

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the Divinity, for infinite majesty reflected in the Son must atone for that offence. Yes my Jesus! when we repeat Thy name, we recognize Thy Almighty Power, for who could save us but one of infinite power. When we repeat Thy name we recognize Thy justice, for who could satisfy the justice of an angry God but justice itself. When we repeat Thy name we recognize the Emmanuel, "God with us," for who could be our Saviour but a God and man at the same time, for what but infinite mercy could induce Thee to assume the sinful nature of man.

Jesus! At the sound of that name, mysteries of love are called to mind, imagination conjures a life of suffering and undying love, we see a God become man for us, we adore an infant in the manger, we see a Man-God dwelling in poverty, working like the most miserable of men, praying for the world, and obedient to his creatures. Before this spectacle our pride is confounded, our idleness rebuked, and our spirit of impenitence condemned. Jesus! The very name recalls the victim in his Agony in the Garden, before our eyes passes the ever-to-be-remembered drama of the Passion, Calvary's heights arise, and struggling up its side with the heavy weight of the Cross, surrounded by a jeering rabble, the Saviour of the world with looks indicative of the serenity of heaven ascends that hill amid the tumult and blasphemies of a maddened throng.

That name recalls the victim suspended between heaven and earth; there we behold our Priest, King and Pontiff, our Legislator and Mediator, and our souls wafted by faith beyond the boundaries of time and space, behold Him in the regions of that imperishable world Heaven, fulfilling the office of Advocate and Intercessor, beseeching His heavenly Father to spare us, for we know not what we do. What an astounding history in that adorable name! Did we not with reason assert that it was heavenly in its origin, profound in its meaning, and most affecting in its reminiscences?

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Let us now pass from the consideration of the name as relating to our Blessed Lord, let us endeavor further to penetrate its treasures and examine it with relation to ourselves. The Apostle Paul chiding the Corinthians for their excesses, tells them to remember: "That they are washed, that they are sanctified, that they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Herein lies for us the grandest of truths, the name of Jesus is for us the principle and source of our Sanctification; if we would be saved it must be through that Holy Name. You are all familiar with that recital in the Acts of the Apostles where this truth is expressly declared by St. Peter himself. It is related there that there was a certain cripple who was carried every day to the door of the temple by his friends, in order that he might sit there and beg alms from those going in and out. This was his position for years, and all those who visited the temple, even those who neglected the silent entreaty of the outstretched palm, recognized his familiar face. It chanced that as Peter and John were entering the temple the poor beggar asked for alms, and Peter and John stopping fixed their eyes upon him and said: "Look upon us," and the poor cripple looked up earnestly, thinking that he was going to receive something from them. But Peter said: "Silver and Gold I have none, but what I have I give thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." And forthwith his feet became firm, overcome with joy, never having known the use of his limbs before he began to walk and leap and run. He goes into the temple, and the people seeing him walking in their midst are astonished, whereas he, mindful of the favor he has received and wishing to sound the praises of the Apostles, goes and lays hold of them. The people seeing him lay hold of Peter and John are amazed, and gather about them, and Peter seeing this, makes answer to the people: "Ye men of Israel, why wonder ye at this, or why look

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you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk. The God of Abraham hath glorified his son Jesus and his name through faith hath made this man strong." What miraculous power in that Holy Name! Truly did Christ prophesy when He said: "In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall place their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." But Peter would make still another declaration from that miracle. He went on to teach the people who had gathered about him, but as the Priests and Sadducees of the temple were jealous they would not look on and view the conversions that followed, so they seized the Apostles and hurried them to prison.

On the morrow, summoning their council, they set Peter and John in their midst and asked them: "By what power or in what name have you done this?" Then Peter, says the inspired writer, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: "Ye rulers of the people and ancients hear: if we are this day examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole; be it known to you and to all the people of Israel that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which becomes the head of the corner, nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved." Here then is the testimony of Peter telling the council that this name is the source of our sanctification. In that name alone and in no other under heaven may we hope for salvation.

Erase that name and Christianity dies and the life of man becomes a dark enigma, void of all solution. Erase that name and charity flies to its heavenly home, society disappears, and a worse than barbarism prevails. Would

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that men in their strange reasonings, men who deny the divinity of Christ, but stop to reflect upon the consequences of their doctrines. It seems to me that they would start back terrified at the spectacle, and this very conclusion of what would inevitably follow upon the denial of the divinity of Christ is certainly a powerful proof of His divinity.

Ah! if we would but consider the mysteries of His Holy Name, where is the man who would dare to deny Him? We can now well understand why the Apostles, as the Acts relate, went forth from the council after they had been scourged, "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Christ Jesus."

We can now understand why the martyrs of the first ages endured such sufferings, we can now understand the sufferings of the ministers of the Gospel in our own day in endeavoring to carry the knowledge of that Holy Name to Nations yet uncivilized; they have conceived a love for it and its power upholds them. Like St. Francis of Sales, they have discovered in that name a power which made the angels rejoice, saved men, and made the demon tremble.

Would then, that we could impress on you the necessity of devotion to this Holy Name. Would that we could persuade those, if there be any so guilty, to refrain from blaspheming that Holy Name. Cultivate within your heart the greatest love and respect for it; and if others be so ungrateful as to use it unworthily in your presence, do you bow down your heads to honor it, that you may thus in some manner repair the offence of your neighbor. Let it be ever in your hearts, teach it to your lisping children; tell them to repeat it with love and confidence in the morning when they arise, in the evening when they retire to rest, and throughout the day in their many actions. Let them use it as a shield against the temptations of the devil, for remember Christ Himself says: "In my name you shall cast out devils."

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In your many sufferings through life, suffer in honor of that Name, and especially my friends in the hour of death, in that dread hour, when the light of eternity is fast breaking in upon the soul, when friends whom we loved, when the riches, honors, and pleasures of the world are fading from our sight; Oh! then let that Holy Name be on your lips and in your heart, repeat it with hope and confidence and so depart from this world with your last breath an act of devotion, that you may merit to chant it eternally with the blessed of Heaven.

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THE INCREDULITY OF ST. THOMAS.

*“ Unless I shall see in his hands the prints of the nails
and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”*

JOHN XX. 19-31.

WERE we to tell you from the pulpit that a deadly disease had broken out in our midst you would no doubt be somewhat startled and would listen with interest to all that we should have to say to you about it. We purpose to tell you of a contagion that is rapidly spreading; to tell you of a disease filling the entire moral world, and endangering not the safety or health of the body, but the salvation of immortal souls.

To-day's Gospel suggests this subject, for it is no other than the incredulity of St. Thomas. Our Blessed Lord had appeared to the Holy Women who were at the sepulchre, and had told them to acquaint His Disciples of the fact. He had appeared to the two who were on their way to Emmaus and rebuked them for their little faith; He had appeared to Peter and the other Disciples who were fishing on the borders of the lake. He had appeared publicly in the midst of eleven of them as we are told in to-day's Gospel, when they were in an upper chamber shut up there for fear of the Jews; He had wished them peace; he had quieted their troubles and doubts; but still, St. Thomas was not satisfied with this

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amount of testimony, and when the Apostles told him that they had seen the Lord he made answer: "Unless I shall see in His hands the prints of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." He did not say: unless I see Him and speak to Him as you have done I will not believe. No! he went farther; he seemed to think that they might have been deceived by their senses, and therefore he particularized and asserted that he would not believe unless he could feel His body and examine each one of the wounds He had received during His passions; for he knew that no man could bear such wounds and live. Hence it was that he demanded their inspection before his mind would give credence to the fact that a man had risen from the dead by his own power. Strange, was it not, that Thomas would not believe that our Lord had risen, from the testimony of the other apostles. He had seen that Master going about doing good, no doubt often accompanied Him, and had seen Him work wonderful miracles. He saw the lame rise and walk, he saw the blind receive their sight; saw the tongues of the dumb loosened and heard them speak; saw the dead quit their graves and leave their winding sheets when called upon by a single word. He was present when our Blessed Lord told His Disciples and the multitude at large, that He was going to give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink; and though many who stood by would not believe the hard saying and went back and would not walk any longer with Him because they could not understand; still we are not told that Thomas did not believe. He was present at the Last Supper, and when the moment came for the fulfilment of that promise, viz.: that He was to give men His body and blood, Thomas tasted and believed.

Yet now, strange to say, he will not believe in our Lord's Resurrection.

We feel as though he should be censured for his action

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and we find fault with him for not assenting to the truth of Christ's Resurrection—after he had seen the wonderful works accomplished by his Divine Master—without wishing to test the truth by the evidence of his own senses. Yet, how many are the Thomases in the world, how many incredulous and unbelieving even in our midst. We ask ourselves that question and we are somewhat surprised at the answer that forces itself upon us. We see unbelief growing up about us on every side, and we hear truths consecrated by the belief of centuries, and testified to by the most reliable witnesses called in question, cavilled about as though they had their origin from the mere opinion of men, not from God. Enter any class of society, and question its belief. You will be surprised at its want of faith. Men will tell you of opinions that they entertain, but they cannot state for you a single article of belief. What then, let us ask ourselves, is the cause of the unbelief that infects the world nowadays. Have not men the same reason for believing that they always had? Have they not the same motives, the same authority for the truths of religion that they always had? How is it then that we move in such an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty regarding religion's truths? It is true that the Enemy of our Salvation is ever busy warring against us; he is the lion seeking whom he may devour that St. Paul speaks of, and his agents are active in the cause of error.

In the first place they strive to pervert the young. It may not be done intentionally perhaps, but still the fact is that they wish to educate without Religion. Here is the first source of infidelity. It is to be found in the want of proper education and training. Let Religion be driven from the school room; let the truths of God not be heard within its walls; set to work all the powers of the intelligence and foster the ambition of youth, without warning it of its duties to God and to society,

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and the consequence will be that you stifle the conscience, and give to the world the scheming successful business man of the day; a man with brains, but without religion; a man with money, but without God; a man with respect for humanity, but without a conscience.

Another cause or source of the infidelity which exists about us is the Press, that power which should be used as the educator of men. It is a moving power in society, and were it true to its mission, what wonderful results it might accomplish! Employ it as all things human might be employed, as a means for obtaining our end, and who could estimate its good work. Make it the organ through which the public may suppress crime, condemn injustice and uphold the principles of morality; then this wonderful power which turns the world daily into a school-room and makes us its pupils, then this mighty power will be true to its trust. But instead of this, how do men pervert and abuse this advantage? Daily sheets which fly from the press and find their way into the hands of millions, are laden with hidden poison; scandals, the most filthy are laid before our eyes whose heroes are the representative men of the time. Religion even is not respected, and doctrines that have been received by the world for centuries are spoken of flippantly, as though they were conundrums proposed and offered for solution. So, too, modern literature in its turn has become infidel; characters are there depicted lacking honesty and morality, and yet these are the heroes of the latest novel. In fact the young gentleman and the young lady have grown so fond of this kind of reading that all else is heavy and dry for them; it must be, as they express it, stirring and spicy; that is to say, its characters must meet with hair-breadth escapes at every turn, and show in their dealings some sharp practice. Such are the books which are offered you upon the newsdealers' stands, and which are thrust at you if you ride but a few miles in our railroad cars.

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Their very titles are suggestive; they are bought up and devoured by the young, and slowly and in small doses the poison is thus taken; the young man, the young woman, gradually becomes irreligious, or even at least careless about the practice of their Religion.

The third great source of infidelity is the Pulpit; the Pulpit which should be the instrument above all others for destroying all forms of infidelity and unbelief. But a short time since, the question was publicly asked: "Is there a Hell?" Immediately every sectarian pulpit in the country was offering its answer to the question. Some denied its existence, others maintained it; whilst others again thought there was such a place as hell, but that it was not everlasting in its duration. The Catholic Pulpit alone took no notice of that question, for the Catholic Doctrine was and ever has been settled. But imagine the thoughts of thousands who listened to this question as it was proposed, who heard the opinions that were expressed upon it; conceive again the thousands who were not auditors but who read of it in the public prints! What must have been the effect upon them? They saw their professed leaders, their professed teachers, unable to answer that question for them; giving their opinions merely, thus throwing many into a state of doubt, others into a state of unbelief; while others concluded that Religion is but a farce if so fundamental a truth cannot be defined. Scarcely had that question died out when it was asked: "If there were a Heaven?" Again the answers were offered, and again doubts were expressed of a future life either of blessedness or of woe. Nay, men go farther; they foolishly question the existence of God, and thus are beginning to lose their faith, their belief. Here then are some of the sources of unbelief. It is drunk in at the school room; the young mind is taught nothing of God, the Catechism is not known sufficiently and taught among our young people; the current literature of the day, the sensational novel

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is full of unbelief; for to be sensational, it must deny some precept of law; it must show that its hero is courageous and shrinks not from shedding blood; shrinks not from breaking a life contract that he may have entered into by availing himself of a divorce. The Pulpit too, which should be the guardian of Faith and of the doctrines of Christianity, is doing its work in propagating infidelity; it is filled with contradictions, wandering about not knowing what to believe.

Now what is the effect of all this upon mankind? It is a sad one, its natural product is the unbeliever, the sceptic, the man who perhaps believes in some Great Being who rules all things, but who has doubts about every thing else in the religious world. Let the principles of a man who doubts the existence of the future world, who ignores a place of punishment in the next; let his principles be once received; remove from the minds of men the truth that no matter what their works may be in this world, they will never be punished for them; remove this truth from their minds, and you immediately destroy society itself. For if there be no punishment, for what do we labor? Why do we observe laws of right and wrong, why need we practise virtue and avoid evil; why practise honesty and avoid knavery? If we are free to observe no laws, if we are free to commit crime, what becomes of society? Men would follow the impulses of their passions and the world would be converted into a panorama of brutal scenes. If men who boast of their unbelief would only pause to reduce their premises to their last conclusions, they would never venture to broach their doctrines or laud themselves as the liberators of the human mind.

Another product of these different causes working upon society is to be found in our own midst, in the midst of the Catholic Church. We are moving about in this atmosphere of doubt and we are affected by it unconsciously; hence it is that we have the non-practical be-

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liaver in our own Church; that is to say, the non-practical Catholic, the man who says that he is a Catholic whilst he does not live up to that profession; the man who infringes every precept of the Church. Examine his life with relation to those precepts. In the first place he is told to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation under pain of mortal sin. How many, if we could question those who are of us to-day, in this city alone, how many would we find who have failed in that duty? Have they a reason for absenting themselves? For the most part they have none! It is their own carelessness; their time is not precious but still they cannot give it; they cannot make the return of one hour in the week to the Almighty as an act of thanksgiving for the years of life that He has given! And why is this? Because of the force of example! They live in houses adjoining, or they see Sunday after Sunday people whose religious convictions do not oblige them to do any act of worship on that day; people who may go to Church or stay away from it as they please, without holding themselves in the least responsible. The contagion spreads, many are infected, and fall into a careless state of life. Again, the Second Precept of the Church enjoins fasting and abstinence on certain days, for those who can fast; the reason for so doing is, as you know, that we may do penance for our sins; for we believe that to sin there is attached a temporal as well as eternal punishment. The eternal punishment may be remitted, but the temporal must be endured here or hereafter. These days are then appointed by the Church in order that we may do that penance even while in this world, willingly, and of our own accord. All this Catholics believe, all this you believe; yet, may there not be some who have acted during those seasons as though they did not believe one word of it; some who when hearing the Lenten regulations proclaimed, immediately decided for themselves and came to the conclusion that it did not apply to them; that

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they were not able, could not fast, could not abstain. They did not attempt it, and that time passed away with but little penance, if any, for the sins of life.

The third Precept admonishes us that we are obliged to confess our sins at least once a year. There are those in this world who can hear this repeated Sunday after Sunday and turn a deaf ear to it; yet they style themselves Catholics! They believe the Church's teachings, believe that when Christ breathed upon His Apostles, as we read in to-day's Gospel, and said to them: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained;" believe that he then gave to them and their successors the power of forgiving sins; still, though they believe all that, years go by without Confession; go by as though they were leading immaculate lives, and stood in no need of the Sacraments. Will men such as these style themselves believers?

They may be, but their belief is not unto salvation; for St. Paul says: "With the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation." They must make an external profession of their faith by practising the duties imposed by their religion.

The Fourth Precept of our Church says that we must receive the Holy Eucharist at Easter or thereabouts. If we were really men of faith we should blush to think that the Church was obliged to frame such a law. What is our belief with regard to the Sacrament of the Altar? We believe, as we were taught in our infancy, that it is a Sacrament which contains really and indeed the body and the blood, the soul and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine. And why has God thus deigned to remain with us in that adorable Sacrament? For our strength; to enable us to overcome our passions. That we are to do by feeding on that Body, and by drinking that Blood; and the reward

for so doing is life everlasting. "He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day;" again He says, after proclaiming that He is the bread of life that came down from Heaven; "If any man eat this bread he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in Me and I in him." This is what our Faith teaches, and what Catholics the world over believe; yet how many of them act as though they did not believe. Should we not blush for the incredulity thus visible among us?

Our Fifth Precept binds us to support our Pastors. It is nothing more than that which the Apostle St. Paul speaks of when he tells us that the Lord ordained that "they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel," and "they who serve the Altar partake of the Altar." And again he asks: "Who serveth as a soldier at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Who feedeth the flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock." Then to show them that he might appeal to a law, he recites for them the law of Moses. For it is written in that law, he says: "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," then growing still bolder he says to them; "If we have sworn unto your spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?" As though he would say; if we spend our lives laboring for your spiritual welfare, is it a matter for complaint that you should give us the means of obtaining what is necessary for us? Here is the foundation of this law. And now, my friends, how is it observed, this law which enjoins that we should recompense those who labor for us? Were each and every Catholic to do his duty in this regard we need never hear a single word spoken about money, from the pulpit; but there are people who never think of this obligation, or if they do, never think it

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worth their while to practise it; thus the burden falls always upon the same shoulders.

The Church, in her Sixth and last Precept, warns us against mixed and clandestine marriages. Our Belief is that marriage being a Sacrament, it should, like Baptism or any other Sacrament, be administered by the Church; yet how many clandestine marriages have we among our people who go before the squire and acknowledge him as the Minister of this Sacrament; who, contract this alliance before ministers of a different religious profession, although they know that by so doing they are excommunicated, and that their case is reserved for the judgment of the Bishop. We have such cases in our midst. What are we to conclude when we take up those six Precepts of the Church and see them thus broken? Must we not conclude that we are being affected by that atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty that surrounds us, that is gradually stealing in upon us, and that hence we should be more watchful and careful? For Parents particularly there is included within this consideration a lesson that they should from this day forth begin to practise. It is, that if they in their own lives have been remiss in these duties, they shall henceforth be more faithful; and that as Almighty God has entrusted to their charge bright souls, they shall guard them from the bad influences that surround them. They must place in their hands works not offensive to religion, they must keep them from the school room wherein the name of God is not mentioned; and they must banish from their homes the trashy novel and the journal; they must place in their hands works not offensive to religion, but instructive in their teachings. In doing this Parents will be doing their duty, a duty commanded by God and taught by our Holy Mother Church; a duty which will gain for them Heaven; a duty, by which they will be sure to hear after death the consoling words of the Great Judge: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

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CHRIST THE TRUE MODEL OF THE CHRISTIAN.

“See therefore, brethren, that you walk circumspectly; not as unwise; redeeming the time, for the days are evil.”

EPH. V. 15.

WITH these words of St. Paul, the Minister of God's Altar may well address his hearers to-day telling them, as does the Apostle, to be cautious in their lives, circumspect in their actions, and careful in their words and expressions; for the times in which we live are dangerous. They indeed try the virtues of all faithful souls. These are times when indifference and irreligion play a great part on the stage of this world and threaten, if it were possible, to extinguish the Christian faith. These are times when the words of the Psalmist seem to be fully verified when he says: “The Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things; that the kings of the earth stood up, and that the princes met in council against the Lord and against His Church.”

These are times when the sovereignty of Heaven has been called in question; when Christ is refused admission into the councils of the world, and when religion is regarded only as a salutary institution for the repression of public crime, and keeping the masses in restraint. If we would avoid the corruption which is abroad, the

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iniquity that is prevalent, we must in such times put in practice the advice given in the Epistle of to-day; to walk circumspectly, not as unwise but as wise, so that we may redeem our age and time. The Christian, no matter what may be the age in which he lives, or the time in which he moves, has always a mission before him; yet there are occasions in the world which make this mission of the Christian soul assume some particular form for particular times. Thus, in the early days of the Church when the Divinity of Christ and His religion were questioned or denied, the Christian went forth to seal with his blood the doctrine of a crucified God. Again, when the spirit of heresy manifested itself, and sought to destroy the doctrines of our faith, the Christian again appeared and told the age in unmistakable language that his faith, like the God in whom he believed, was unchangeable.

So now, in this age of indifference the Christian likewise has a glorious mission. He must go out into the world despite its innovations, its knowledge, and its enlightened culture, and preach by his example Christ crucified. He must daily hold up before the world, in his life and in his actions, the image of his Redeemer. There is a truth so evident to every intelligent mind that it admits of no contradiction, or being denied, we seek in vain for rest or happiness. It is this: that the happiness of a human being consists in his perfection; and that perfection is obtainable only by obtaining one's end. In other words, would man be happy, he must be perfect; and to be perfect he must attain the end for which he was made. Miss that end, and a life of misery, both here and hereafter, must follow. The perfection of his being is the end of man, and happiness is the consequence of that perfection. How then will he perfect himself, surrounded as he is by all that is imperfect? Who will be his teacher? Who shall go before and lead the way? Has any one man yet stood before the world and told us

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to follow him, if we would arrive at the proper end? Yes! In the midst of us stood One and only one who dared to say: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," if thou wouldst obtain thy end, come, follow me. There is then an obligation imposed by Nature, Reason and Revelation to follow Christ Jesus Our Lord. By reason, if it is true that by following Him we may be saved; by Revelation, if in the Scripture we find testimony to that effect. If it is the nature of man to seek for happiness, if he sighs from the cradle to the grave for that one joy, would we not indeed be unreasonable did we not take the means to obtain it. Seeking by the aid of reason alone for happiness, where shall we find it? Should we not examine the past, there search for those who discovered it, and inquire from them the way that leads to it? Well, ask of the mighty ones of earth and they will tell you, with Wolsey in the play, that they were dazzled with the world's greatness and lost it. Ask of the world's heroes, and you will find them, though conquerors of nations, the slaves of some petty passion; like Canute in his pride whipping the waves of the ocean.

Ask philosophers and men of learning; they will tell you that their speculations were Utopian, their ideas the dreams of heated fancy, impossible of realization. Is there then no voice from the past? Has the purpose of life never been attained? Yes, there is a voice; the voice of a Christian Army bearing in its midst the standard of the Cross, and testifying to future generations that there was One on this earth who asserted that He was God and proved it; and, teaching through Him, and Him alone, can we expect to arrive at that goal which brings with it happiness eternal. Choose then between the testimony of failure, given by the world, and that of success, given by the faithful followers of Christ?

This truth, that we are to model ourselves upon Christ, is contained in the Scriptures. But mark; on two occasions only throughout the New Testament, does

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the Eternal Father deign to speak. We read that Christ went to be baptized by St. John, and that after he had gone up out of the water the Heavens were opened and a voice was heard, saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here then is the testimony of the Father to the humility of His Son, who was baptized by a mere man. And why does the Father give such testimony if it is not to make known to us, that if we would be pleasing to Him, our Father, we must, like His Divine Son, humble ourselves. In the same Evangelist, St. Matthew, we read also that our Blessed Lord prior to His passion went up with Peter, and James, and John, into a high mountain, and was transfigured before them. We can well imagine how beautiful must have been the vision when we hear Peter in a moment of ecstasy cry out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." It was the effulgence of the Divine Nature manifesting itself through the humanity of Christ. How ravishing must have been the sight which could make Peter so far forget himself as to imagine that they could always remain there. While Peter was speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the clouds, saying: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Here is again the testimony of the Father to the Son. This teaches us that if we would share in His glory, we must partake of the bitter chalice of His suffering. Hear ye Him, follow Him, listen to Him, and He too will bear testimony that if you would share in the glory of Tabor, you must participate in the sufferings of Calvary.

Has Christ then told us that we must imitate him? Examine the life led by our Blessed Lord and ask yourselves why this plentiful redemption of man? Would not the justice of the Father be appeased by but a sigh of His Divine Son? One drop of His blood at the cir-

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cumcision would have been sufficient for a thousand worlds. Why then that life of thirty-three years in poverty and want? Was not it to teach us poverty of spirit? Why that submission to Joseph and Mary? Was it not to teach us obedience? Why that fast of forty days in the desert? Was it not to teach us to mortify our desires? Why that temptation by Satan? Why that crucifixion? Was it not to teach us resistance to the promptings of the evil one, and that we must crucify our passions and inclinations? Yes, my Jesus! We now understand the force of the expression: "Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart." "He who wishes to come after Me let him take up his cross and follow Me." "I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, so do you also."

The Heavenly Father therefore demands this imitation, his Divine Son likewise calls on us to follow Him, and the Church during its existence has everywhere taught the same in her Doctrines and Sacraments. St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, writes to the Romans inculcating this doctrine: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son." Hence then, conformity with the Son of God is not only a matter of precept, but it is given as a mark of predestination. And this divine saying of the Apostle Paul has been verified in all the Saints of the Church. Their sanctity, their holiness of life, their spirit of penance, their humility, all their virtues flow from that life-giving origin of virtue; our Head, Jesus Christ Our Lord. If then we wish to imitate their lives; if we would be holy, would be humble, we must be united to that head; we must be living members of the body of Jesus Christ. To make you such, is the whole object of the Church upon earth. Why is it that she gathers her children Sunday after Sunday around her Altar? Why is it that her Ministers preach to you time after time a Doctrine you have heard again and again? And when

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he does preach to you, what is he supposed to do? To expound the Gospel, to show you from it what the life of Christ has been upon this earth; to extract the practical part of that life; to show you the virtues practised by our Divine Lord; to hold them up to your admiration, oblige you to imitate them, oblige you to become a member of the suffering body of Christ upon this earth—for remember that His was a life of suffering—if you would be a member of His glorious body in the life to come.

Again, the Church in her Sacraments is ever teaching the same truths. Have you ever reflected upon your reception of Baptism? You were carried, as yet but an infant, and there at that font were made for you the most solemn promises that you would be a true imitator of Jesus Christ. There the Minister of the Holy Sacrament signed your forehead and your breast with the sign of the Cross, and told you to receive that sign both on your forehead and in your heart; to be in your life, as it becomes one to be who is a temple of the Holy Ghost. He then asked you if you renounced Satan; and the answer came firmly: "I do renounce him." And all his works? "I do renounce them." And all his pomps? A third time came the answer, still more firmly: "I do renounce them." Having renounced Satan and his works, he enrolls you on the side of Christ and His Holy Church. Do you believe in God? Do you believe in Jesus Christ His only Son? Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, and in the Holy Catholic Church? And a third time, like Peter's profession of love, went forth from your innocent heart, sealed with the cross of Christ, your profession of Faith: "I do believe." Then came the solemn words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost! I receive thee into the Church of God, into the temple of Christ! I admit thee as a citizen into the city of God upon earth, that thou mayst be afterwards enrolled as a citizen of His Heavenly Kingdom in the everlasting

heréafter." Then it was that you were made a member of Christ's mystical body. You grew up, the time of infancy passed by, you had arrived at the age of reason, and the Church again cited you to appear before her minister. This time it was to renew your former promises, and to be confirmed in your desire of being a true follower of Christ. You knelt on that day—which is a day of Heaven spent upon earth—before your Bishop; again the Sign of Salvation was impressed upon your forehead and you heard the words; "Signo te signo crucis," "I sign thee with the sign of the Cross, I confirm thee with the Chrism of Salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!" And you went away with the peace, the sacramental grace of God dwelling in your heart, with your name inscribed in the army of Christ. You had been made His soldier, and you were now to go to battle with the enemies of your salvation whom you renounced in your Baptism: and for this were you cited to be again reminded, that in the world, you had to follow and imitate your Leader. But full well He knew the difficulties before you; full well did He understand that the soul would grow weak, that there would be times when that poor Christian would return crushed, beaten down, and almost despairing of success. What then was to be the remedy? Was this imitation of His life and virtues to be given up? No, but a still stronger reminder that you were to imitate Him was given, and this time He would, so far as consistent with your own individual personality, deify you with Himself. His flesh was to become your flesh, His blood was to course in your veins. This is the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, where you are made one body with Christ Himself, and in consequence your actions should be like His.

And so, were we to examine all the different Sacraments and Ministrations of the Church, we would find her ever and always reminding us of the life of her

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Divine Founder and encouraging us in its imitation. Nor is there anything more reasonable. When God fashioned us out of the dust of earth, we read that He made us like to Himself. Man by his disobedience destroyed that image, that likeness which existed in the soul. Then came God to save us; the order of Grace was instituted, and as we were before like God in the order of nature, why in the order of grace should we not likewise reproduce within us that picture which was defaced by the sin of man. "For this," says St. Bonaventura, "was the Son of God sent from Heaven, in order that He might open for us the way of virtue; that He might teach us by Himself; so that as we were created in His image by nature, we may likewise become like to Him in His life, by the imitation of His virtues."

We need but appeal to the name you bear for a proof of this doctrine. You are called by a name which is known in every clime, expressed in every tongue, and admired in every land. You are called by a name, baptized in the blood of martyrs, dedicated by time and consecrated by centuries; first expressed by the Roman and applied by him as a term of reproach and of ignominy. It has broken down the boundaries of that Pagan Empire and is to-day a name of honor and of universal application; that name is the name Christian, a follower of Christ. "The definition of Christianity," says St. Basil, "is the imitation of Christ: *Definitio Christianismi est Imitatio Christi.*" If then you are a true Christian you must be about the business of your Master, His mission is also your mission, and you must endeavor to set up His empire within your own heart and the hearts of others. In order to do that, you must as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, express Christ in your life.

The obligation then is certain; what then must be the characteristics of this imitation?

It should be serious; like the labor of a painter who would give to the world a work of art. The painter first

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obtains a model; studies it thoroughly so well that it is always forcing itself upon his mind. He then begins with fixed eye and steady hand to draw the lines, touches it here, corrects there, and goes on with delicate carefulness until he develops the lines of similitude and expression in his picture. His work is then done. Tedious it was, and at times he faltered; it is now perfect and his delight is at its highest. So too with us. We must have our Model, we must study His character, we must study His actions and then begin to imitate Him in His sweetness, amiability, and disinterestedness. The work will be difficult, at times we too will falter, but courage! a strong arm sustains you, helps you in your endeavors, and you will see your efforts crowned with success.

It should be universal; that is, extended to all our actions. We must remember that Christ our model lived upon earth as we now do; He passed as we do from youth to manhood and He too like us mixed with the people of the world; but always remember that He was not of the world. Like us He performed every-day actions, like us He had His parents to obey. Like us He had His obligations to His neighbor, like us He too had to work and earn His living; like us He had His duties to God the Father. There is no one of us no matter what we may be in life, but can compare our daily actions with those of our Divine Lord. And my friends, if we would but do this; if we would but put that Model of virtue before our eyes in our very serious undertakings, and ask ourselves if our Blessed Lord were to perform this action how would He do it; how many mistakes in life would be daily avoided, how many trying temptations overcome, and how many more souls would be partakers of true happiness? It seems to me that if this one idea could be realized on this earth, misery would be banished from the world.

It should be constant: that is continual, not the work

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of a day, of a week or of a month, but the work of a life time. Our enemy is like a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour, always lying in wait for us. Hence we must be always on our guard, constant in our imitation. If not, we may expect to be surprised; for the agents of the Devil and the agents of the World are many, and their zeal in their struggle against Christ is only equalled by the hatred they bear Him.

Finally my friends it must be **THE WORK OF THE HEART**. It must be a whole-souled undertaking. If not, we shall tire, become discouraged, grow disheartened, and give up the good work. Throw yourselves then heartily into it, and by so doing you will make it a labor of love; and wherever love is the motor labor is not conceivable, because, as St. Augustine says: "There is no labor where there is love, or if there be, it is the labor of love." Enter into this work then with loving hearts, daily set up your model and daily compare your life with it. Within the recesses of the heart one will discover pride; in the model the deepest humility prevails. Another will find intemperance of some kind or another; in the model the greatest sobriety. In another again the passion of lust prevails; in the model purity and chastity. So each one comparing himself in this manner continually with his model, he will find that he, a member of Christ, is given to some vice, whilst in his Divine Master exists the corresponding virtue. His efforts then must be to rid himself of that vice, and to ask his Blessed Master to obtain for him the opposing virtue. This will appear difficult, but remember my friends, the life of a Christian is "a warfare upon earth;" and surely if we but glance at the life of our Divine Lord we must of necessity blush at our weakness and cry out with St. Bernard: "that it is a shame to be found as an easy loving member of a body whose head is pillowed on a thorny crown."

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THE MATERNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

“ Woman, behold thy son.”

JOHN XIX.

SOME eighteen hundred years ago had we been summoned to the Hill of Calvary, our eyes would have witnessed a most touching tragedy. We would have beheld the God-man Christ Jesus our Lord shedding His blood upon the Altar of the Cross for the Salvation of the world.

We would have gathered lovingly about that Cross, and knowing that it was our Saviour who was in His agony, we would have listened most anxiously and attentively to every word that should fall from His sacred lips. We would feel that they were meant for us, that they were addressed to us, and therefore we would treasure them up, even as we do the last words of a dying friend or relative.

Standing in the midst of the motley throng that surrounds Him, we would have noticed the presence of Mary His Mother. No doubt her presence there would be a source of astonishment, we would wonder how she could stand by and witness the cruel soldiers nailing her son and her God to the Cross. We would ask ourselves how a Mother could bring herself to that terrible place of execution, how she could have stood by and endured the

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sight of those cruel tortures that her son was made to endure; and finally, how she could receive Him in her arms when taken down from the Cross, and assist in placing Him in the cold, stony sepulchre. All this would astonish us and yet upon reflection we would say that as in all the circumstances that surrounded our dear Lord's life, Mary His Mother must be present at this terrible moment in order that the divine plan of man's redemption might be faithfully fulfilled. It must have been for a reason known to God alone; mayhap He will reveal it before His eyes close in death upon that Cross.

Again, in looking over that group which surrounds the fatal tree we shall recognize the figure of another much loved among men by our Blessed Lord. It is St. John, his dear, his well beloved disciple. Strange too, that he is found here at the moment of execution; strange that he should stand by and see his Master and his God thus cruelly treated. We should think that, like the other disciples, he would be absent and concealed, lest the soldiers should apprehend him and put him to death. We would think that his sadness and grief would bid him depart from the place where his Saviour and his friend was dying the cruel death of a public convict. Again upon reflection we would say that God must have some wise end in view. It is for some purpose of His own that Mary, His Mother, is obliged to witness that sight, and that St. John must look helplessly on, and offer no word of protest against the mob that is hooting and yelling at the foot of the Cross, as they cast lots for the garments worn by him.

But what is this purpose of God? Why should His tender Mother and His beloved disciple St. John, be obliged to stand by and witness the bloody spectacle of His death? Stand and listen! Perhaps our dying Lord will tell us.

He looks down from the Cross, He sees His Mother and the disciple whom He loved standing at His feet.

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His lips move and He is heard to say to His Mother, not Mother, but: "Woman, behold thy son." And to the disciple—the sacred scripture does not say to St. John—"Behold thy Mother." Oh! now we understand why those two should be found at the Cross, we now realize why they have to stand by till the bitter end and watch the sufferings of the God-man; Jesus had given Himself, He had died for the world, but He remembered that in the beginning of old, it had been said to the serpent in the garden: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between her seed and thy seed, she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Therefore he said not Mother, but: "Woman"—the very woman spoken of in the garden—"Woman, behold thy son." For, as Eve the first of women was the mother of the whole human fallen race, so art thou the Mother of the whole human race reclaimed and put in possession of their former dignity by my death. Therefore, in the person of John behold the whole human race: "Woman, behold thy son."

This truth, that Mary was given to us to be our Mother, is one which we have often heard, but upon which we have reflected but little; perhaps if we were asked to assign a reason for calling Mary our Mother we might not be able to give one. Let us endeavor then to get an idea of what is meant when we say that the Mother of God is our Mother.

No one who admits that Christ is God and that He came to found a religion upon this earth, but will likewise admit that we should imitate Christ in our lives. In other words, we have to love Him, and to love Him we must keep his commandments. "Learn of me," says Christ Himself: "That I am meek and humble of heart," and again: "He who keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me."

We have then to become like Christ, we have to live His very life if we are to be considered followers of His.

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To make this truth the more striking, He Himself has made use of that beautiful comparison of the Vine. He tells us that we must abide in Him, for as the branch cannot bear fruit unless it abide in the vine, so neither can we unless we abide in Him.

“I am the vine, you the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him the same beareth much fruit.”

We have then to become one with Christ and this union is effected by the Sacraments.

In the Sacrament of Baptism we are so to speak engrafted upon the vine, then it is that we become members of Christ's body. Then it is that we are born into the supernatural order, to be nourished and to be kept in that state by feeding upon the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist gives us the body and blood, the soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. In this Sacrament we are made brothers of Christ and co-heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Therein it is that we become the children of God the Father; for God the Father looking down upon us beholds in us the likeness of His Son; for, being engrafted upon Him we have grown like Him, having fed upon His Body and Blood in the Eucharist we are one with Him, and therefore children by adoption of our Heavenly Father.

But how are we children of Mary? In the same manner that we are children of the Eternal Father. We are her children by adoption, for Christ is the son of God the Father and at the same time He is the son of the Virgin Mary, and as we are sons adopted by the heavenly Father, so likewise are we sons of His Mother Mary through adoption.

Mary is the true real Mother of Christ. She looks upon us as her children, since we are brothers of Jesus Christ her Son, and co-heirs of His kingdom. But there is still another reason why we are Mary's children by adoption and why we should call her our Mother. It is

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to be found in the scene upon the Cross, to which we alluded in the beginning. We read in St. John these words: "There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother;" when Jesus therefore had seen His Mother, and the disciple whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: "Woman, behold thy Son," after that He saith to the disciple: "Behold thy Mother," and from that time the disciple took her to his own. Now we must remember that the scripture has a literal and a spiritual significance and so in these words we will find that the literal sense, that is to say, taking the words as they are, they bestow upon St. John a remarkable privilege; but taking them in a spiritual sense a remarkable privilege is conferred upon the whole world, for they establish the spiritual maternity of Mary over mankind.

But you ask how can we show this? How am I to understand that these words spoken to St. John were addressed to the whole human race. Well, study them closely and you will observe that they were adapted to the whole human race, and for a three-fold reason.

Jesus Christ is our Saviour, our Mediator, our High Priest; as such therefore, His every action, His every word, should be for the instruction and advantage of the whole human race. He must in a word be all ours, and so the Prophet in announcing His coming upon the world considered Him as peculiarly the possession of the world. Hence Isaias said: "A child is given," not to you or me or Mary His mother, but a "child is given to US." "A son is born" not to you or to me or to Mary His Mother, but "a son is born unto US." And again, the Angel announcing His birth to the shepherds who were minding their flocks tells them: "This day is born to you"—that is to mankind, to the world—"a Saviour." Therefore He has been given to us, He is our possession; hence all His thoughts, all His words, all His actions must be consecrated and given to us. We must have some share in all His designs and in all His plans.

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If He perform anything without taking us, the whole human family, into consideration, He is derogating from the entirety, the perfections of His offering—or rather of the offering which the Father has made when He sent Him upon this world—for the benefit of the whole human race throughout space and time. Now this is a rule that the Fathers of the Church have always employed when commenting upon the Gospel narratives; they have always explained Christ's words and Christ's actions as they are recorded in the Sacred Scriptures as affecting all men of whatever age or of whatever country; and they did this in consequence of the nature of Christ. Everything He said and everything He did was performed by Him as the Saviour of the world.

Again we must remember and bear in mind that Christ's whole life from the very first moment of His existence was one continuous sacrifice.

We, the human race, the object for which He offered up the sacrifice of His life, must have been therefore ever before His mind, ever uppermost in His thoughts. Can we then suppose for an instant that when Christ came to die, when He was stretched upon the altar of sacrifice, a victim for us, that we were absent from His mind? Can we suppose for an instant that when He came to perform that highest of actions after His sacrifice upon the Cross, that action of disposing of His Blessed Mother, that we were forgotten? That He no longer thought of us? Oh, no! It is then, and in that very place that we recognize His love for us; He is dying, He is leaving us, but before parting with us, He would say a consoling word and offer us the object most dear to His heart. "Behold thy Mother." 'Tis then in the presence of her dying Son, that we take her and recognize her as our Mother, and thank our dying Lord for the great gift He has given us.

To make this reason the more convincing, we have only to take the other texts of scripture wherever the

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Mother of our Lord is mentioned, and we shall find that whenever He spoke to her publicly or had to make allusion to her, He always did it in a manner instructive to all mankind. Thus you remember that He was once lost for three days; and we are told that Mary His Mother sought Him sorrowing, and finally finding Him seated in the midst of the doctors of the temple she reminded Him of her sorrow in seeking Him, and said to Him: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy Father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." He replied, "What is this that you sought Me, did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Now surely Christ could not have meant to reprimand His Mother, He could not have meant to reproach her, for she had done nothing deserving reproach, she had but performed her duty, she had but sought after Him, who was her child when lost. But he took occasion from this to give a lesson to all Christian parents; that they were not to interfere with their children when they sought to follow out and obey God's law; that they should not interfere with their children when they endeavored to perform the work which Almighty God had allotted to them, when He saw fit to call them to a religious state of life wherein they could serve Him more faithfully.

Again, as our Saviour was preaching one day, a woman in the crowd, enraptured by His eloquence, cries out: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck." Our Lord wishing His words to be instructive to mankind, replied and said to her: "Nay Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." On another occasion a man interrupted our Lord in His discourse and told Him that His Mother and brethren were seeking Him to speak to Him, and again He said: "Who is my Mother, and who are my brethren? They who hear the word of God and keep it, they are my Mother and Brother and Sister."

From all these texts of Scripture wherein His Blessed

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Mother is alluded to, it is evident that He had always at heart the common good, in other words that He ever remembered His mission, that He ever spoke for all. Then more than ever have we a right to suppose that He spoke for the human race and the world at large, for His words were pronounced from the very altar of sacrifice.

We have a threefold reason for believing these words, spoken from the Cross, to be addressed to the whole human race. The first is taken as you have seen, from the nature of Christ's Ministry as a High Priest. The second is taken from the words addressed to the Blessed Virgin: "Woman, behold thy Son." What does He mean by styling her Woman instead of Mother? We have to look for an explanation of that word, and we find it in the Chapter of Genesis, wherein it was said to the serpent: "I will place enmities between thee and the woman, she shall crush thy head." We look for the fulfillment of these wonders throughout the Old Testament. We only meet with figures of the woman, never with THE woman herself. It is only on the summit of that mountain to which the eyes of the world have ever been turned either through hatred or love. It is only upon the summit of that mountain which is the centre of the world's attraction and hate, that we hear the Incarnate Word itself uttering the fondest of eulogies, the finest of panegyrics, saying not Mother but "Woman, behold thy Son." It was as though He said: "O, wonderful Woman, behold the whole human race foretold from the beginning regenerated, thou standing at the foot of the tree, the tree of the Cross, hast brought forth salvation; even as that other woman, that representative woman, standing at the foot of the tree of good and evil, brought forth destruction upon mankind.

One other reason still remains, and then we have done. That is taken from the words of our Blessed Lord addressed to St. John. In speaking to St. John He does

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not make use of the Apostle's name, He called him the Disciple. The Sacred Scripture says that after that He saith to the Disciples: "Behold thy Mother." Therefore our Blessed Lord spoke to him as a Disciple, as an Apostle, and as such He represented the Christian people. For what is an Apostle? He is chosen by God to work for the salvation of the souls of men. He is a man who shares in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, a man that is clothed with the powers of Jesus Christ. Hence like Jesus Christ Himself, he is a representative man, a man holding the destiny of the people in his hands, and as such our Blessed Lord spoke to the Disciple—not to St. John—and said: "Behold thy Mother."

We recognize then our Dear Lady's place; that she is by divine appointment our Mother, and as such we hail Her upon this the feast of her Maternity. We recognize the Church's right to place Her before us as our Mother as well as the Mother of Christ, and as such we will ever pray to Her, not fearing that we will thus detract from God's glory.

We will be devoutly attached to Her for we begin to realize that it is God's own wish made known to us even upon Calvary's Altar, and even as that Mother was found upon that Altar, so shall we keep Her upon our altars and speak to Her as children would speak to a mother; asking Her to pray for us, to intercede for us, not to permit us her children, born to Her at the foot of the Cross, to fall under the power of Satan.

Hail her frequently with that address of the Angel: "HAIL MARY FULL OF GRACE, BLESSED ART THOU AMONGST WOMEN." We do not fear to use such language; it is the language of Scripture that she is Blessed of women; that she is in very deed our sullied nature's solitary boast; the one that stands alone unsullied and undefiled. And then too frequently make use of that other prayer of the Church wherein we style Her the Mother of God and admit Her great power;

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“HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US THY CHILDREN, NOW AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH.” Rest assured She who has all a mother’s tenderness, will pray for us without ceasing, will intercede for us until She shall have brought us from this land of exile to our true home with Him who died for us.

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FEAST OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

“ They are ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation.”

HEB. I. 14.

WE come to treat of the invisible works of God. We style Him in the Apostle's creed the Creator of heaven and earth, the creator of the visible and the invisible world. We will confine ourselves to the invisible world, the Angels. It is a world that does not fall under our senses, it is situated in a region above us; we cannot see it, we cannot hear the voices of those bright spirits, but still we believe in their existence, we believe that they are spiritual in their natures and we believe moreover that they are appointed by God Himself to be our guardians and keepers.

Hence, in order that we may be able to give a reason for the faith and the belief that is in us, we will ask ourselves these three questions: Are there any such beings, and if so what is their nature, and how are they occupied? These are certainly interesting questions, for as we have already said the Angels do not fall under our observation; they are beings whom we do not visibly see before us, they are beings whose words we never hear, they are not of this world but of a world outside of us; and hence it is that our questions are interesting for we are making

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inquiries about strange beings who inhabit a world that is not ours.

But you will say, if I cannot see them, if I cannot feel them, if I cannot hear them, how then am I to know that they exist, how am I to know that there are such things?

In the same manner, my dear friends, as we know the other mysteries of our religion, we know it upon the authority of an infallible teacher, the Church who declares that this truth is to be found in the Sacred Scriptures. Reading over the Old and the New Testament, we will get many glimpses and many revelations of that unseen world that cannot be gainsaid or denied. Opening its first book, that of Genesis, we will read of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two cities were to be destroyed on account of their sins. The curse of God hung over them and in the divine mind it had been decreed that Sodom was to be no more. Whilst the wrath of God was hanging over the city, the Angels came to the house of a just man named Lot and remained with him during the night. No sooner had the light of morning appeared in the heaven, than the Angels pressed Lot to depart from the city; "Arise," said they, "take thy wife and thy two daughters, which thou hast lest thou also perish in the wickedness of the city."

And as he lingered they took his hand and the hand of his wife and two daughters, and brought him forth and set him without the city and there they spoke to him saying,

"Save thy life; look not back neither stay thou in all the Country about, but save thyself in the mountain lest thou be also consumed."

Again in the same book we read that God wished to try the obedience of Abraham, and what do you suppose was his trial? He was told to take his only son Isaac and to go into the land of vision and there to sacrifice him as a holocaust upon a mountain which would be shown him.

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The father, obedient to God's call arises, takes with him his youthful son, and immediately sets out for the mountain whereon the sacrifice is to be offered. In three days' time the place is found, the wood for the sacrifice is brought, the young Isaac is bound hands and feet and laid upon the altar. His Father, Abraham, takes the sword and raises it above his head, and behold, suddenly his hand is stayed, he hears a voice calling to him and saying: "Abraham! Abraham! Lay not thy hand upon the boy, neither do thou anything to him!" That voice we are told was the voice of an angel.

Again, in the book of Exodus we read of a promise made by God to His chosen people; that He would give them His angel to guide them; and in the book of Tobias we read of a beautiful young man who was the companion of the young Tobias, and he was none other than an angel.

But not in the Old Testament alone do we find proofs of the existence of angels. Opening the first chapter of the Gospels we read of a holy old priest named Zachary, who, one day while offering incense in the Holy of Holies, beheld an angel standing on the right side of the altar; and seeing him, Zachary was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him: "Zachary, fear not, for thy prayer is heard and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John." And Zachary said to the angel: "Whereby shall I know this?" And the angel answering, said to him: "I am Gabriel who stand before God, and am sent to speak to thee, and to bring thee these good tidings." And again, in the same chapter we read of a young virgin who heard the words: "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." The one who spoke to her, says the Scripture, was the Angel Gabriel, who was sent from God unto the city of Galilee called Nazareth, to announce to Mary the Virgin, that she was to be the Mother of God.

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Turning to the first chapter of St. Matthew we find that Joseph was greatly troubled in mind and had secretly resolved to send Mary away. But while he thought on these things says the sacred writer, behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: "Joseph son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

And again, in the same Evangelist, we read of the Sadducees, who thought to lead our Blessed Lord into a contradiction. A woman had seven husbands, and they asked Him whose wife she shall be in the resurrection. Our Lord makes answer and says: "After the Resurrection they shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage, but shall be,"—how? what shall they be like—"as the Angels of God in heaven." On another occasion when our dear Saviour was instructing His Disciples He called a little child to Him; placing it in the midst of them, He tells them how careful they should be lest they might scandalize such a little one, and if they should happen to do so, that it would be better for them to have a millstone tied about their necks and be dropped into the depths of the sea. Then He goes on to say: "Take heed! Beware that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father, who is in heaven." What stronger proofs, my friends, could we desire, or what stronger could we obtain. We hear Christ, who was God Himself, speaking of the Resurrection and telling us that our manner of living in the next world will be like that of the angels, and telling us that the angels of those little ones were continually gazing into the face of His Father in heaven. Surely the most incredulous must then admit that there are angels, nay more, that there are multitudes of them; for the Prophet Daniel and St. John who caught a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem, tells us that there are millions of them. And the Holy Fathers commenting on that beautiful Parable, which tells us of the Shepherd who

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leaves his ninety-nine sheep and goes in search of the one that has gone astray, the Holy Fathers thus commenting, tell us that we upon this earth, all of us, from Adam, first of men, down to the day of doom, the whole human race, is that one sheep that has gone astray, for which Jesus Christ the good Shepherd, left the ninety-nine in heaven and came to seek us, the lost one.

What a magnificent idea does this give us of the number of those heavenly spirits. Might we not compare them to the sands upon the sea shore, to the drops of water falling in a rain storm, to the numberless leaves that are shaken by the winds of heaven?

But what is the nature of the Angels? Are they composed as we are, of body and soul? At times we see them represented in pictures as having bodies like to our own; at another time we see them in the form of infants, having wings and apparently flying hither and thither. Are we to think from all this that such is their nature and appearance? No. They are pure spirits, spiritual substances; and are only thus represented to remind us that some have actually appeared in that form to men. They could not be seen as spirits and therefore assumed the shape of bodies; or they are represented as children to remind us of their innocence; or with wings to give us an idea of their swiftness in passing from one place to another. We are told in the Scriptures that they are spirits, that they are not subject to any ills or infirmities, and are destined never to have an end; that they are immortal.

Thus we read in the Apocalypse of St. John that he was commanded to write to the seven bishops of the Churches of Asia: "Grace be unto you, and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits that are before Him." Christ Himself called the fallen Angels by the name of spirits.

We read in the Gospel of St. Luke that one day the twelve Disciples came to our Blessed Lord filled with joy

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and said to Him: "Lord, the devils are also subject to us in Thy name." He turned and said to them: "I saw Satan as lightning falling from Heaven. Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and upon all the powers of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Yet rejoice not in this that spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice in this that your names are written in heaven." They are then spirits, having no body; they are like to our souls, they are like to God Himself, endowed with an intelligence far superior to ours.

They know God and His perfections. They know His works of creation. At first sight they know more than we can ever know or discover by our reason or by study and application. They see effects and causes, and thus it is that they can conjecture to a probability what is going to happen; they can see our actions, but they cannot tell what is passing in our hearts; that is a knowledge and power which Almighty God reserves to Himself.

Thus it is that so many things can be done through the agency of the devil. Thus it is that at times, by means of fortune telling, things hidden or stolen may be found, and this is the very reason why we should have nothing to do with such practices. We know full well that God alone knows all things; we know moreover that the spirits both good and bad, on account of their superior intelligence and gift of knowledge, know things better than we, and consequently may impart that knowledge to others; but we know full well that when any one tells us truths regarding our future, and tells such truths to every one no matter what their condition may be, such a person does not derive that knowledge from God. Such persons are not saints; neither do they derive that knowledge from the good angels, who have no connection with the wicked ones of this world. Therefore, as our only conclusion, we may be sure that such knowledge, when true, comes through evil spirits who may at some time from their own intelligence and from what they know

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of persons past and present, conjecture to a nicety what will happen. Hence it is that we are not allowed to consult fortune tellers, for in so doing we converse with evil spirits, we turn aside from our Creator and pay reverence to His enemy, the devil. We are guilty of a species of idolatry.

But what are the duties of the angels? How are they occupied? They are chanting the canticles of glory before God in heaven, where they are destined to remain for all eternity. They are ever, as we are told in Holy Writ, praising God, singing: "Holy! Holy! Holy!" Such is the duty of the Seraphim and Cherubim, who are the highest in the heavenly court. Then there are the Archangels who are ever ready to perform God's will whatever it may be; such were they who appeared to Isaac, to Jacob, to Samuel and to Tobias in the Old Testament; such was the Archangel Gabriel who was sent to Zachary, the high priest, to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist, and to Mary to announce the mystery of the Incarnation.

Their duty in regard to us is to watch over us, and to guard us from all danger and temptations. They pray for us and they protect us. We read in the Psalmist that "He hath given His angels charge over us," and we read in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews "that they are ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of Salvation." Now we are all redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, all called to the inheritance of salvation, and therefore we have each and everyone of us a ministering spirit like to that Angel of Tobias. We have heard our Blessed Lord proclaim the same when speaking of the sin of scandalizing little children; He tells us to beware, and not despise one of His little ones, "for their angels see the face of His Father who is in heaven."

We have all an angel like that which accompanied Tobias. You remember that incident in the Old Testa-

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ment. We are told of the elder Tobias that he was a God-fearing and charitable man. He gave of his substance to feed the hungry, and often while at table he would rise from his meal and go out into the city to bury the dead.

When death was approaching he called his son to him—known as the young Tobias—and told him that the hour was drawing nigh for his departure from this world, and that when Almighty God should have called himself and his mother out of this world they wished to be laid side by side. He told him above all things else to be charitable; never to turn away from the poor without bestowing something upon them; to give abundantly if he had plenty, and to give at least a little if he had but little.

Among other things he tells him of a debt that is owed him by a man named Gabelus, who lived in a city of the Medes, and tells him to seek out some worthy person to accompany him, and to go to collect the debt. And Tobias going forth meets with a beautiful young man already prepared for the journey. They start off together, the young man as his guide. For some time they are absent, when again they appear before the elder Tobias with the money which Gabelus had given them. The father and son converse together and agree to give the stranger one-half of the sum for his services, when lo! the young man discovers himself to them and says to them: "When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury thy dead, and didst leave thy dinner and hide the dead in thy house by day and bury them by night, I offered thy prayers to the Lord. I am the Angel Raphael who stands before Our Lord." And immediately he disappeared from their sight.

Here then, you have one of the duties of the angels with regard to us. They offer our prayers and our good works to the Most High for us. How seldom we think of this when we kneel to pray, how seldom when we per-

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form a charitable action. If we did, would we not at least speak kindly to the poor when we would help them? Let us then, remember the office of the angels. They are spirits, praying for us, offering up to Almighty God the prayers we are uttering, and the works we are performing every day. Another duty they have, that is, like Raphael, they accompany us wherever we go; they are our guardians. As the Psalmist tells us: "The Lord hath given His angels charge over us lest we dash our foot against a stone." "We shall walk upon the asp and the basilisk, we shall trample under foot the lion and the dragon." Though we do not see that faithful friend, still he is ever at our side warding off danger and whispering words of comfort. Who can tell how many times he may have saved our lives; how many times he may have averted danger, and how many times he may have put the powers of darkness to flight? If such be their care over us,—and we cannot deny it, for we have the testimony of God Himself for it—what are our duties towards them?

In the first place we should honor them and love them. We should never forget that the world is filled with angels. We have them here in this Church, for each one of us is accompanied by his guardian friend; we have them surrounding our tabernacles and singing the praises of God. We have them in our streets and public ways. In the midst of our great thoroughfare crowded with human souls, Faith bids us see the Guardian Angel at each one's side; in the byways and lanes of poverty the same consoling Messenger walks by our side cheering us onward and upward, whispering into our ears that our souls are precious in the sight of God, that He died to save us, and that therefore we must do all we can to correspond with the graces which He gives us. Oh! what a beautiful idea does this give us of God's mercy and goodness! He was not content to quit heaven for us; He was not content to die for us; He was not content to leave Himself upon our altars; but so great was His love for

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us that He must give us a bright spirit from heaven to journey on with us through this vale of suffering. Well indeed, my Divine Saviour, might you say: "What is there that I can do for my people that I have not done; what is there left undone that could in any way aid in the salvation of their souls?"

In the second place, we should have the greatest possible respect for their presence. They are always with us, ever present at our side. These heavenly messengers are forever seeing God. They are His ambassadors, and therefore we should have the greatest respect for them. You know how careful you would be in your language before the great ones of this world; no blaspheming would escape you, no word that would bring the blush of shame to your cheek would be uttered. And yet, in the presence of these heavenly ambassadors, these Angels of God, what is your language and what are your actions? How often does the oath pass your lips in the day or in the hour, an insult hurled at their King in heaven. How often do you utter words that on reflection make you hang your head in shame; how often do you do actions that you would not perform before the lowest in the land; how often do you enter places that you would not want your friends to see you enter for the world? How often are you in company that you would be ashamed of? All the while this pure spirit basking in the sunshine of God's presence is with you, and you do not give it a thought!

Well now, the month of the angels, October, is about to dawn upon us. Let me ask you to think of them frequently, thank them for what they are doing for you, pray to them to guide you safely and to conduct you to heaven. Pray to your guardian angel in the morning when you arise, in the evening when you retire, and when you are tired and troubled from temptations. Above all things ask that Holy Angel to pardon your past forgetfulness. For years perhaps you have not thought of it; say: "O good Angel ever present with me, you

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who hear my every word and who see my every action, I honor, praise and bless your presence. I thank you for the innumerable blessings you have rendered me in the past, pardon me for my forgetfulness and ingratitude, and I promise to be more faithful and more devoted to you in the future. I look to you to be my guide through life; and I hope that when death has closed my eyes on this world I may behold you pointing out to me the heavenly Jerusalem, and hear your voice crying to heaven that another soul is saved, that another servant is entering into the joy of his Lord.”

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JOHN XIV. 23-31.

TO-DAY, we are celebrating one of the greatest festivals of the Christian year. Christmas comes to us bringing with it the remembrance of the Gloria chanted by heavenly voices over the lowly stable of Bethlehem, comes to us with the promise of peace upon earth to men of good will; for the long promised Saviour, the long promised Messiah and teacher of the world is born. Pentecost Sunday, the Sunday which we are now celebrating, comes to us likewise as a day of gladness, comes to us with the remembrance of those tongues of fire which appeared upon the heads of the Apostles; comes to us with the promise that the spirit of God is ever to remain upon mankind, to be poured out upon all flesh; comes to us as a day of joy, for then was born into this world, not the physical body of Jesus Christ, but His mystical body, the Church. And this mystical body of Jesus Christ was born into this world even as He Himself was; it was a birth that men knew but little of, it was hidden from the eyes of the great world at large. A few men gathered together in an upper chamber, men who had heard their Master telling but a short time before that He was about to disappear from their sight, but that He would not leave them orphans; that He would send to them the Paraclete, the

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spirit of truth, who would abide with them forever. And suddenly while these men were engaged in prayer they heard as it were the rushing of a mighty wind coming from heaven, and instantly upon their heads appeared tongues of fire, and we read that they were filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Previous to the advent of the Holy Ghost, these men were divided in opinion, they were slow to believe and very slow to act upon the truths that our Blessed Lord had imparted to them; nay, they even had their periods of doubt and misunderstanding, even after they had looked upon His miracles; so much so, that they were rebuked for their incredulity by their Divine Master. But no sooner had they received the spirit of God than they became even as the spirit which moved them, their understanding was illuminated, and they saw the truths of the supernatural order in a new light; their wills were strengthened, no longer vacillating, they were confirmed in their attachments to the truths they had received and which were brought back to their minds by the coming of this spirit of truth. They were knit together, those few men in that upper chamber; knit together with the one mind and one heart of that Spirit which was sent them from on high, and there was cradled the Infant Church, which was to grow and increase till it would fill the entire world. We may well inquire into the wonder and surprise of those men who stood about and heard the preaching of the Apostles after they had been filled with the Holy Ghost. They came out from that upper room and began to preach Christ crucified, the Messiah; and as they preached those who stood by, no matter from what part of the world they came, understood these poor ignorant fishermen as though they spoke in their native tongues. It is no wonder that they should stand amazed and ask one another: "How is it that we understand these men, are they not all Galileans, and yet they speak knowing every tongue." It was the Holy Ghost that was preaching

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through the Apostles in every tongue, thus teaching and showing them that the truths of Christianity were not to be confined to any particular place, but were destined for all men as all men were called to salvation.

It was the Holy Spirit making known His mission to the world, namely, that He was to be the teacher of mankind, that He was to bring to their minds truths that they were to receive and act upon, thus sanctifying their souls and gaining the inheritance of happiness in the next world. Our Blessed Lord had promised His Apostles that the Father would send the Paraclete in His name but for what purpose? To teach them all truth, to bring back to their minds all things whatsoever He had commanded them, and as He promised, so was that promise fulfilled upon the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost is then the teacher of the world, and He teaches through those to whom Christ said: "Go you into the world and teach all nations." Well indeed might He have said: "My peace I give you, My peace I leave unto you;" for from thenceforth men if they wished might know the truth that God had revealed, and that truth would make them free. To-day men boast of their freedom of thought and freedom of speech in matters of religion, they glory in the freedom of their writings, and they call themselves free and independent thinkers. Our literature is filled with infidelity and the minds of men are being gradually infected. Thus it is that to-day we meet so many liberal minded men, as they are called, so many with little or no religion. They are enjoying the liberty which they boast of, they are not calling things by their proper names. They are confounding liberty with license. Carry out the principle which they make use of in religious matters, which is: that a man is free to take up the Scripture and judge for himself and say what he is to believe and what he is not to believe. Take this principle into the social order and say that a man is free to do what he pleases, that he himself shall be the judge of his own actions.

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The moment you carry out the proposition that men are allowed to act without restraint, act independently of all law, that moment you destroy all society and man is thrown back into a state worse than barbarism. The most ignorant of men can understand this truth; that freedom cannot exist without law and that once you take away law, a state of anarchy is introduced into the world.

As in the social, so also in the religious order; the belief of men is to be regulated by some authority, and if we have not that authority, we must be prepared to see contradictory creeds, and also professions of belief starting up on all sides of us, nay, we must go farther and say that a human authority will not suffice, the authority in the religious order must be divine; for the simple reason that there are truths proposed for our belief which the mind cannot understand nor comprehend; they are mysteries of another and a higher world above us and beyond us, which we cannot grasp with our finite minds. If then this revelation of God's truth and of that higher world is to be subjected to the consideration of our finite minds alone, it is easy to see that we must end in infidelity, discarding all knowledge of a world higher than our own. Full well did our Blessed Lord provide for this; He foresaw the tendency of man to question, to investigate and to doubt, if he could not understand; therefore, He promised and did send into this world that divine authority, the Holy Spirit, which was to remain forever with the Apostles and their successors, teaching and illuminating the world through them.

Hence it is that the Supreme Pontiffs of the Church have the right to convene in Council to-day, even as they did in the time of the Pope St. Peter, and define for men what truths they are obliged to believe under pain of being separated from the mystical body of Christ. Hence it is that they have the right to convene and say, even as the Apostles did in their first council of Jerusalem: "It hath seemed good to us," but not to us alone; "it hath

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seemed good to us and the Holy Ghost to decree that you shall receive this or that truth and to reject this or that heresy." Therefore it was that the world followed the faith taught by the successors of the Apostles for centuries, never questioning and never doubting, knowing full well that the spirit of truth promised by Jesus Christ had been poured out upon them. Therefore it is that even to-day men receive these same truths as coming from God Himself, and are as certain of them as though they heard the voice of God Himself speaking to them. What a beautiful picture does this presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church give of our religion? It shows us men differing in opinion, differing in nationality, divided on political questions, warring with each other for the possession of states or countries; it shows us men in harmony and in peace, without division and without difference in their religious belief. It shows us the learned and the rich in knowledge, the wealthy and the possessor of this world's goods, men rich in worldly science and poor in fortune, all knowing and all believing the same heaven-sent truth. Surely that mark of divinity which Christ claimed for Himself when the disciples of John came to Him asking Him if He was the Messiah; may likewise be claimed by the Church. Go back and tell your Master that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them;" Go back and tell your Master that the poor are as wealthy in their knowledge of the truths of heaven as the rich are. But, the Holy Ghost is not only the Teacher of the world, He is likewise the Sanctifier. He it is that sanctifies the Church, He sanctifies souls through the ministry of the Church's members. When your child is brought for baptism the minister of that Sacrament breathes upon it and says: "Exi ab eo, immunde spiritus." "Depart from this child, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete." Again when presented for the sacrament of Confirmation the Bishop prays: "Spiritus sanctus superveniat in Vos." May the Holy Spirit come

down upon you, and may He bestow on you his seven-fold gifts. So, too, in the sacrament of Holy Orders, when the young man presents himself for Ordination, he is destined to be an instrument of salvation to be made use of by the Holy Spirit for that purpose. He is cautioned by his Bishop even while he stands in the sanctuary a few moments before he approaches to receive the insignia of his office, cautioned to think over the responsibility that he is about to take upon himself; he is told that up to the present time he is free to depart, to go into the world, to take part in its cares if he so wish. And immediately there rises before the mind of that young man the heavy responsibility that he is about to assume. Children yet unborn will be presented to him for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Persons that he had never met will kneel before him and ask him to pronounce over them the words of absolution from sin, and he knows that to perform and to administer these sacraments which are holy, his heart should always be free from sin; for being an instrument chosen for the sanctification of others, he himself should be holy. He knows that "holy things should be handled in a holy manner," he feels the weight of his mission. He hears the call of God, asking him to embrace that state of life, and enters it; then the Bishop extending his hands over him prays that the Holy Ghost may descend upon him, and the clergy likewise impose their hands in imitation of the Apostles, thus invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit upon that young priest, that he may be an instrument and means of sanctification to others. And so we might go through all the sacraments and show the invocation of the sanctifier, show how the Holy Spirit is called upon in all the sacraments to sanctify us even as the Father created us, and the Son redeemed us. Again this Holy Spirit seeks to sanctify the world through His teaching. We are told our duty in words that are simple and unmistakable, we are told our duty with regard to God and with regard to our neighbor, we have the com-

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mandments obliging us to perform certain actions and to avoid others; we have teachers and instructors always calling upon us and always reminding us to do our duty; we have all the means at our disposal for sanctifying and saving our souls, and if we be lost it is through our own fault and negligence.

How strangely are some souls led captive and made partakers of the sanctity of the Holy Spirit. Thus, for instance we may take St. Augustine, a young man who when but twenty-eight years old, saw himself the master of all the sciences, but still his knowledge did not preserve him from vice. He had run the giddy round of pleasure, and his poor mother could but weep and pray for his conversion. One day hearing of the great austerities and mortifications practised by the Anchorite, St. Anthony, St. Augustine said to his friend Alypius "What! the ignorant take Heaven by violence, and we shameful wretches with all our miserable science rise not above flesh and blood. How long, Oh Lord, shall I say to-morrow—to-morrow, why not to-day? why not at this very moment?" As he uttered these words he heard an interior voice, the voice of the Holy Spirit saying to him; "Tolle, lege;" take and read, and picking up a volume of St. Paul that lay at his feet he opened and read the passage: "Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention, and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provisions for the flesh in its concupiscence." His past life, its subserviency to his passions, immediately swept before him, in all its hideous deformity; his understanding was illuminated by the Holy Spirit, he saw the truth and into his heart flowed the charity of God. Augustine was converted; to-day he is known as a Doctor and Saint of God's Church.

None save God alone can tell the wonders that were worked in souls during the last fourteen hundred years. Saint Mary of Egypt, after leading the life of a public

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sinner, steeped in vice of all kinds, is held back from entering a church on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. She is told by a secret voice to go beyond the Jordan and do penance; there in the desert she lived for forty-seven years, leading the life of a penitent and a saint. Again St. Margaret of Cortona was led back from her life of sin and shame by the sight of the putrified body of a man who had been her lover. She was so struck with fear of the Divine judgment that she became in a moment a perfect penitent, and during the remaining twenty-three years of her life, her penance was so great that she merited a place in the calendar of the Saints. Wonderful indeed are the workings and calls of the Holy Spirit in the souls of men! To-day through the voice of some preacher, through the death of some friend, through the force of good example. To-morrow, through the reading of some pious book, the mere straying into a Church, coming upon a funeral and seeing the dead stretched out in the Church aisle. Through all these means are souls led to the knowledge of the truth and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. To-day it is like the history of that young organist who was called upon to play for his friend during singing of the Benediction Hymn. He sees the Blessed Sacrament exposed, the tones of the organ die out, a thousand worshippers are bowing their heads in breathless silence; they are receiving the benediction of their Father who is in heaven. Immediately, the infidel organist is forced to his knees, rises a child of the Church soliciting the Baptism of water and the Holy Spirit, without which a man may not hope for salvation. Again like the young man, the banker's clerk, who strayed by mere accident one evening into a Catholic Church, the priest is kneeling in the sanctuary saying the Rosary for his people, the young man listens to the responses, marks the devotion of the people, goes out and confesses that never before in his life had he heard what might be called a prayer. The Holy Spirit had touched his heart, flooded his mind with light, he sees

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the error of his life, becomes a convert, and but a few years ago was seated upon one of the Archiepiscopal Chairs of our Country. Wonderful indeed are the works of the Holy Spirit in teaching and sanctifying men! Let us then, be ever obedient to the voice of the Church in her teachings, for she is the organ of the Spirit of truth, and if we do not hear her, neither do we hear Him. When therefore she raises her voice and tells us of danger, tells us of ways by which the enemy seeks to subvert our faith, tells us of an education that is dangerous to the faith of our children, tells of the life alliances that should not be entered into, tells us of societies that are inimical to the faith, let us like obedient children listen to her voice and subject our judgment to the judgment of the Spirit of God who guides her. Being our Mother she is solicitous for our salvation; this is her only mission upon this earth; and if we wish to show ourselves true, obedient and loyal members of that society which is Christ's own mystical body, we shall always and ever respect her judgment. So too in the work of our sanctification we must make use of the means which Christ has died to obtain for us, which the Holy Spirit offers to us in the Church of Christ. Frequent the sacraments and be faithful in assisting at Mass, be present when you can at the public devotion in honor of Mary, or in honor of the Sacred Heart; place no obstacle to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, which is always working in this world. Be in earnest, realizing the truth that the night is coming when no man can work; that the night is coming which will veil your eyes in the sleep of death, the night which will usher us all into an everlasting future of misery or of happiness.

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PASSION SUNDAY.

HEB. IX. 11-15.

ON Passion Sunday, the subject that most naturally presents itself for our consideration is the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is a theme that is as ancient as Christianity itself, and men have spoken in glowing and burning words of those dreadful sufferings endured by the Lamb who had been appointed to be slain from the foundation of the world. It is a tragedy with which we are all familiar, and from our infancy we have heard the story of the Cross repeated by the Christian Preacher again and again. The orator, with all the graces of diction and in bursts of eloquence, has led us step by step, from the Garden of Olives to the hill of Calvary, and while we listened to his living words, we felt that he could give us but a faint idea of the bitterness of that long journey taken by our Blessed Lord. The painter, with all the magic of his art, in living colors, has set before us the picture of the God-man bathed in blood and bruised by the cruelties of his enemies. This scene has often passed before our gaze, and for the moment, while it passed, we felt a shudder, and as our consciences accused us of the bloody deed sorrow entered our hearts, and perhaps tears started from our eyes, but, alas! The lesson was forgotten and ere

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long that same conscience rose as an accuser, saying, you have again crucified your Saviour. And so the conclusion forces itself upon the mind, that the story of the Cross cannot be too often told.

The only difficulty is how best to tell it, how best to represent it. The preacher knows full well that his words are but feeble; he knows full well the language, when it would voice the sentiments of the heart on such a lofty subject, is beggared and silenced; hence he concludes that the most forcible and most touching sermon which could be preached upon the Passion of our Lord, would be to set before his people the Cross bearing the bruised form of his Saviour. The Cross alone, placed before our eyes, is the most eloquent of preachers; we look upon the dead cold face of Him who died for us, and our hearts grow warm with love; we see the prints of nails in His sacred hands, hands that have healed, and feet that have ever run after the sinner without tiring, and tears start from our eyes; we gaze upon the thorn-crowned head, the opened side; and our sorrow manifests itself in words as we protest that never again while we live will we be the cause of those bitter woes. Yes, we stand and hold aloft the figure of Christ upon the Cross holding it before you without a word, the most eloquent discourse upon the passion and death of our Lord would be afforded you. But yet, you might not be satisfied; for like the child that loves a kind Father you would wish to hear some one speak of His life of devotion, of His life of love; and this is what we would endeavor to put before you. We would place before you deeds of love performed by the best of friends. We would place before you the sufferings of Jesus Christ; that you may learn from them the heinousness of sins; the great love of Jesus for us; and that you may be so moved to contrition as to repent the past, resolving that never again will you commit a single wilful mortal sin.

It would be impossible to recount all the sorrows of

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Jesus Christ. We could not well relate in a few sentences all the circumstances of His Passion. We shall review with you its principal scenes, and we would ask you as we accompany our Lord in His sufferings, what place we hold in the motley throng around Him? Let us then join in the Supper scene where Christ, on the eve of His Passion, met His Apostles. All are assembled at table, their eyes fixed upon their Master, and they treasure up every word that falls from His sacred lips. He tells them what is to take place on the morrow, tells them that they will be scandalized in Him and fly from Him; tells them that one now in their midst is about to betray Him. Imagine the consternation of the Apostles at this startling revelation. One, in their midst, about to betray Him! They were His favored children, they knew how much He had done for them, they understood how much He had promised to do for them, they walked with Him daily, conversed with Him hourly; they saw the blind, the lame, the sick, all healed of their infirmities; they saw the grave give up the dead when called upon by Him; they had acknowledged Him in the sight of all these wonders as the Christ, as the Son of the living God, and hence it was, that when the revelation was made they were troubled and each one began to ask: "Is it I, O Lord?" They separated for the night, Peter and James and John are asked to accompany our Blessed Lord; they go from that upper chamber in the evening; the night is a pleasant one and they journey on together until they come to the garden of Olives. It was a well-known spot; often before He had led His Disciples there to kneel and pray to His Heavenly Father.

The other Disciples leaving the Cenaculum followed after their Master, but remained some distance from Him; and then, with the three who had seen His glory, He enters the garden telling them that His soul is sorrowful even unto death; He asks them to stay and watch with Him. He walks a few steps further, enters a grotto and

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there begins His bitter Agony. The first words that fall from His lips as He casts Himself upon His knees and face in the cave are: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." What! Is God Himself terrified? Yes, He shudders and trembles, for the dead weight of sin is about to be placed upon His shoulders. Hitherto He has been the object of most tender love in the sight of His Heavenly Father; now, He is called upon to become an object of hatred, that the vials of God's wrath may be poured upon Him. In an instant He sees the sins, iniquities and injustice of the world; the past comes up, and trooping with it come the sins of two thousand years, two thousand years of the world's unbelief and paganism; two thousand years of the world's foul corruption and impurity pour in upon that pure soul. Then comes the perfidy of His chosen Apostles; one a traitor, another afraid to acknowledge Him; the rest scattered and defamed through Him. He already hears the insults that are to be heaped upon Him, the scourging He is about to receive, the piercing of the nails and spear, the insults which will be flung at Him on the Cross; all these are present before His eyes. The future, too, starts up before Him, that long future, perhaps of another two thousand years; another two thousand years of sin and shame, another two thousand years of forgetfulness of Him even while dwelling with us He sees the people in the midst of whom He had passed His life teaching and preaching; He sees them still blind to the light of faith; He sees His Church, that Church which He came to establish upon this earth, persecuted and reviled; not acknowledged by the world, dealt with as the world dealt with Him; He looks within that Church, within which those rich treasures of grace were placed, and terrible to witness, even these, the sacred ornaments of the temple are abused. They were to cost Him His life blood; yet careless souls, instead of using them as a means of Salvation, for which they were given, would so abuse them as to bring about their condemnation and ruin; His suffer-

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ings, offered to His Heavenly Father as an atonement for the sins of the world, were to become the occasion of damnation to others, and the words of Simeon sounded in His ears: "Behold this child is set for the ruin and resurrection of many and for a sign which shall be contradicted." No sin escapes Him, every man born into the world stood there before Him as an accuser; we stood there with our terrible sins upon us, we stood there and shifted them upon that innocent victim, and then called upon His Heavenly Father to look down upon us. What then must have been His sorrows? All those waves of sin flowing in upon Him! We are unable to comprehend it; for, to comprehend it we must understand fully on the one hand the divine perfections, and the sanctity of God Himself; and on the other we know the enormity of mortal sin. So that now when we have seen the heavy sins of the world laid upon Him, we are forced to say that we cannot understand His sufferings. Neither do we fear to exaggerate them, nor are we at all surprised when we are told that a blinding sweat of blood issued from His prostrate form, and that He cried out: "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me." "Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

But what of the Disciples during this dreadful sorrow which filled His breast? Where are the faithful three whom He brought with Him that they might stand by Him in that bitter hour? Where are Peter and John and James? Unmindful of His request to watch and pray, they are sleeping. He comes to them, comes with garments stained with blood, faint, with livid lips and hair dishevelled; comes with the sweat of blood bursting from every pore; comes and asks the question: "Peter, are you sleeping? What! could you not watch one hour with me?" They awake, start to their feet terrified, they see their Master fainting with weakness, they see Him pale and trembling; they hear His changed and scarcely audible voice and they ask of Him: "Master what has befallen

you?" Again he repeats His injunction to them, tells them to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation. Again, a second time He goes aside and prays: "O my Father if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done." Then, before His vision passes the dreadful punishment which must be endured for sin; a suffering of body and soul which should comprehend all the pain due to the concupiscence and sins of the whole human race from Adam to the consummation of Ages. A debt which should be paid by that humanity which alone is exempt from sin, that of the Son of God. The fright and sorrow which overwhelmed the soul of Jesus at the sight of this terrible expiation to come, no tongue could express, no mind conceive. Back again, staggering with weakness, He comes to His Disciples; and again this loving Saviour finds them sleeping, for their eyes are heavy; He does not disturb them, leaves them resting; as a kind father who would not manifest to his children the sorrow that was breaking his heart. A third time He goes to the grotto and a third time He agonizes. Then He experiences that which every human soul must naturally experience when about to sacrifice itself for another. It must naturally ask why it should sacrifice itself; what good will come of it? This question with its answer must have occurred to Jesus, and immediately there swept before his vision all the heartlessness of man. Far in the future He saw that same Sacrifice offered daily by thousands of his Priests; He saw the few worshippers who surrounded His altar, whilst the majority of men stood aloof cold and indifferent to it. He saw the multitudes that would be baptized and cleansed from original sin by the efficacy of His blood, and He saw that blood wasted, for they bore with them the Rite of Baptism only to taunt Him by their unbelief. He saw the multitudes upon whose souls that blood would fall in the Sacrament of Penance unworthily. He saw the multitudes who, Judas like, gathered about His table, fed upon His precious body

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and blood, while preparing to offer Him new insults. Above all things else He saw the profanation of His love as manifested in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar by the irreverence, the negligence, the contempt, the sacrilege of men. He saw those who should receive Him, take Him into their breasts, defiled with sin. The conflict was a fearful one, it was a conflict between the Mercy and the Justice of God. His mercy would save, His Justice would condemn. Once more from His sacred face rolled down huge drops of blood covering His garments; but He triumphing over the repugnance of His humanity, arose determined to pay the debt owed by the human race to offended majesty; determined to die in order that man might if he wished, win back through His sufferings the crown he had forfeited. A third time He comes, staggering with weakness, to His disciples; trembling He approaches them and tells them: "Sleep on now and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go; behold he is at hand who is about to betray me." They arose, and turning suddenly saw a body of soldiers approaching them. The Gospel tells us that a great multitude came out with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and ancients of the people. Imagine then that motley throng, carrying lanterns and bearing swords and clubs. What cries and yells must have disturbed the silence of the night, what oaths and imprecations, what foul language must have fallen upon the ear of Jesus. In solemn silence He awaits their coming in the midst of His Disciples. As they approach He notices their leader; it is the man who but a few hours before had eaten at table with Him. It is Judas, whom He had just refreshed with His Body and Blood. The Scripture tells us that when he ate, the "devil entered into him," and here now, like a man possessed, he stood before his Master ready to give Him over to His enemies. He had separated from the other Disciples when they had left the Ce-

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naculum, hurried off like a man under the power of the demon; hurried to conclude arrangements with the High Priests for apprehending Jesus.

And now he comes at the head of the rabble to deliver the Son of Man to sinners. He tells them to watch His movements; the man whom he will kiss is the man; "look to Him, hold Him fast" lest He escape you; and then Jesus, calm and patient, who by a few words struck the soldiers to the earth, permits that traitor not only to approach Him, but to give Him the kiss of treason. He offers no rebuke, passes no censure on his action, but turns to the multitude and says: "You are come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me." His voice is drowned by the cries of the rabble, they gather around, bind Him with cords, and hurry Him off in their midst to the city. Night becomes hideous with their yells, and their infuriated faces, lit up by the red glare of the torches they carried, look like the countenances of demons. Forth from the houses which they passed stream the people, wishing to know the cause of the disturbance. They are told that Jesus is being led to death. Some fall in with the crowd, jeer and jest about the mock King, while others, faithful souls who had seen His cures and witnessed His miracles, compassionate Him in His sufferings and remonstrate with the brutal soldiers. But the Disciples, what of them? Scattered and dismembered, as our Lord had predicted; one alone follows that train, Peter. He alone is there; there in the distance, not daring to venture too closely; now catching a glimpse of the pale, haggard, worn face of his Master; there listening to the cries of the maddened mob, not able to speak a kind word to his Saviour.

Here, we will interrupt the history of the Passion. The Agony in the garden is now over, and we will ask ourselves where are we to be found? Are we with the Disciples in the garden, who were asked to watch and to pray?

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Are we with that mob which will not acknowledge the Son of God, although He is with us, which heaps indignities and outrages upon Him, or are we with the traitor Judas who sold his Master for the thirty pieces of silver? In the first place, are we with the Disciples? Has not our Blessed Lord told and forewarned us that while in the world we, too, should be tempted. There is no exception to this law. Once born into the world we are subject to the laws of humanity, and one of these is: that while we are made up of body and soul we will find with St. Paul that there is a law of the flesh and a law of the soul struggling one against the other; we will meet with temptation, and we are warned to watch and pray lest we fall. And yet, how few watch, how few avoid the occasion of sin? How many of you, looking back upon your past lives this evening, can recall grievous falls from the very fact that you exposed yourselves to danger. You went with a certain companion, you went to a certain place of amusement, you read a certain book, knowing full well that the consequence would be sin. You did not watch, you did not carry out the command of the Lord to "cut off the arm and to pluck out the eye that would offend;" to quit the dangerous friendship of those who would lead you to sin. Prayer became tiresome, became dull and heavy, you grew careless in the hour of temptation, and thus you fell. Thus it is that our Blessed Lord, bruised and mangled on account of your sin, can come before you and say: What! could you not watch one hour with me? What! could you not refrain from the commission of that sin which gave you but a moment's pleasure, could you not have refrained and saved me from this bath of blood into which I am plunged? Perhaps you are not with the Disciples. May you not be with the mob, may you not be with the number who have forgotten Christ; who act as though you had not Christ in your midst.

Endeavor to realize this truth; that there is a large mob in this world, a large mob in the Church, who are

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unmindful of Christ's presence in our midst. Ask any Catholic of our city, ask any Catholic throughout the cities of the world: Do you believe that there is a Sacrament in your Church which as your Catechism expresses it, really and truly contains the Body and Blood of Christ? Do you really believe that Christ is present in your Churches and in your Tabernacles; that Catholic will answer you with a straightforward Yes! I believe that truth, for Christ Himself has told me that it is His Body and His Blood and I cannot doubt His word.

Then we say that you should blush if such is your belief, since your practice runs counter to it. If you believe this how often do you visit Him; how often do you receive Him? How many years have passed since you were on terms of friendship with Him? You may say that you visit the church weekly, that you hear Mass every Sunday of your lives. What is the state of your soul? Do you not kneel and sit here in His presence in a state of sin, and worse than all in a state of habitual sin: sins of the worst and of the darkest nature, sins which call upon Him to avenge Himself upon you for your transgressions. Are you one of that mob which is worse than the rabble into whose hands you have seen Him delivered? Worse, for they did not know the man, whereas you know Him and know of His presence among you. Take heed lest you be of that number, for it is a large mob even in the Church. And if you would estimate the number of those who seem to be unmindful of Christ's presence with us, you have but to watch the Altar rail in any of our churches of a Sunday, month in and month out, and see the same pious souls kneeling there to communicate with their God. The great multitude, the majority we would say, do not present themselves as often as they ought, nay even when the Church commands them they do not hear her voice; not even at Easter. Where are the men who profess themselves Catholics? Sunday after Sunday they show as but a mere handful out of the

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hundreds that we know belong to us. And these men profess that Christ is corporally in our churches, that He is in the most Holy Sacrament. Is not this coldness, this indifference, worse than the pitiless fury manifested by the mob that persecuted Jesus Christ on His way to Calvary?

Again, there may be some among us who are with Judas, traitors to God and to themselves. Some who are selling their souls for the thirty pieces of silver, some who spend all their time and all their energy in amassing wealth, caring little for the Salvation of their souls. Visit any of our large cities, pass through the busy thoroughfares, scan the multitude as it passes by, all are there; the young in life, the aged, bowed down with years; matrons and maids all pass by hurriedly. Some go by wearing a look of anxious expectation, some lost in thought, some sad and melancholy, others with the dark foreboding of some great failure. Ask yourselves, why this noise, why this hurry, why this bustle? and the answer will come to you that they are all delving for money and the world's riches, they are all earnestness; heart and soul, hand and mind in the work. True, there are good souls. The Saint passes by with the Sinner, but how many of them, like Judas selling their souls, giving Heaven in exchange for the dollar! How many are there who think of our Blessed Lord, how many who resort in spirit to the presence of Christ in the churches. We should learn a lesson from these, we should be in earnest about our salvation; that is our business, our time, our energy, our money, all that we have, should be so used as to bring us to Heaven. If we are lost it is not Christ's fault, His love led Him to die for us, His love has made Salvation easy for us. We have but to be industrious, we have but to be in earnest, to throw ourselves into the work heart and soul; and with the determination that we are going to so live that we may be saved. Christ will help us, sin will have no longer a charm for us, and Heaven will be our reward exceeding great.

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“ Do penance ; for the kingdom of God is at hand.”

MATH. III. 1.

STRANGERS entering any of our churches during the solemn weeks of Lent would be struck with what, to them, would be a novelty in devotion. On the first day, Ash Wednesday, they would have noticed hundreds coming to kneel at this Altar to receive upon their foreheads a sprinkling of ashes, while the Priest uttered a few words which to them would be devoid of meaning ; they would then see those same people passing out into the streets bearing that cross of ashes on their brow as though it marked them out for the day as Catholics. Our good friends might even be tempted to smile at what seemed to them a ridiculous and meaningless ceremony ; strange to say, there are some in our midst who style themselves Catholics, who would not hesitate to do the same thing ; who, though not condemning this custom of the Church, still, on account of human pride, or of the world's smile, would not have the courage to bend the knee and carry away with them that sign of their mortality. On Wednesday evenings they would hear some preacher proclaiming a conflict, telling them that they were engaged in battle with invisible ene-

mies, telling them that though they lived in the world they were not of it, that though they shared in many of its interests, enjoyed many of its pleasures, all things should be made and must become subservient to one end: the salvation of their souls. If this were lost sight of, if this were not before them in their daily, nay hourly actions, they were but losing their time, and fast hurrying on the broad way which leads to destruction.

On Fridays they would find our devotions assuming a new form, they would hear our choirs attuning their voices to a plaintive harmony, and would behold a Priest passing from one picture to another which hang suspended from the walls and they would hear him reading some mystery from the Passion of our Blessed Lord; but they would fail to understand that we were passing in spirit over the rugged way that led to Calvary; that we were standing before Pilate and asking ourselves why is it that this innocent man is condemned to die, why is it that He is crowned with thorns, that a heavy cross is placed upon His shoulders, why do the people run after Him hooting and jeering, why does He fall a first, a second and a third time to the earth, why is it that He who has proved Himself the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, hangs bleeding upon that infamous gibbet? But to him who should gaze upon these scenes with the eye of faith, how different, how full of meaning would be these devotions! To him all these things would bring to mind the lesson inculcated by our Blessed Lord in to-day's Gospel, namely: the necessity of doing Penance for our sins. A necessity, for Christ Himself has said: "Unless you do Penance you shall all likewise perish." Penance is a word that sounds strangely to the ears of the worldly nowadays; it is a word which we recognize as having been once in use, but now, so far as practising the deeds which it would imply, almost obsolete. And why? Are we not children of Adam, have we not the same reason for practising penitential austerities which our fathers had? Let

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us confine ourselves to this question for a few moments.

Is such a thing as Penance necessary for our salvation? You will remember the state in which man was first created; in every way a perfect being, endowed with reason which governed all his passions, he might have remained faithful to his God and been gifted with immortality, he might have never known death; but in an unfortunate hour the tempter came, wily and cunning, man became a slave to Satan and thus we all passed under the slavery of sin. We are sold, as St. Paul says, under sin. True, our God was merciful, and we found a Saviour in the person of His Son; we found One who was able to redeem us from that miserable bondage, and who would again furnish us with means whereby we might arrive at the end for which we were destined from the beginning. For this did He die that cruel death, for this did He institute His Church, for this did He leave us those fountains of grace, the Seven Sacraments. But though His blood was shed for all, still all will not be saved; though His Church was instituted for all, all will not enter; the Sacraments were meant for the use of all, still all will not experience their efficacy. The redemption is a plentiful one, one sufficient to save the entire world, but it must be made use of; it must be applied to our souls, and we ourselves must apply its merits. Herein we first discover the necessity of Penance; to enjoy the fruits of that Divine Redemption, we must be continually performing acts of Penance and of mortification. To enjoy those fruits must we not take Christ as our leader, and as our leader, must He not likewise be our model? Consider then that divine character, and you will find in it a trait which you must imitate if you would be a true follower; to imitate it will be to live a continued life of Penance. Now one characteristic feature in the life of Christ was His state of incessant enmity against the sins of the world; this was the feature which separated Him from all the teachers

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that had gone before Him, and made Him distinctively the Christ; He taught men what they really were; He taught them the worth of worldly riches, the value of the world's honors, and finally he convinced the self-styled virtuous, those who made a show of their good deeds and good intents, as for instance the proud Pharisee, convinced them of their state of sin and dared to tell them that they were whitened sepulchres. Thus He spoke to them, and for this reason they hated Him. Not that they hated Him for condemning their passions, but because He dared to throw their very goodness in their faces, and convict them of blindness to the very things wherein they thought their vision so clear. They hated Him, and if there be one truth in the whole Bible which stands out more plainly than another, it is that for the very self same reason for which these men hated Christ, their fathers had hated Christ ever since His prophets first revealed Him, and their sons would go on hating Him to the end of time; would hate Him as they hate Him even now, because He interfered, not with the passions which they knew to be bad and evil, but with the standard it had pleased them to set up of the lawful and the good.

This was His peculiar trait; enmity toward the worldly, enmity toward the world's greatness, enmity toward the world's weak good-natured souls; enmity because they were becoming more conformable to the world than to the maxims He inculcated. To be hated and to be persecuted seems to have been His special mission. And as He was hated and persecuted, so also did He predict that His followers should likewise be hated and persecuted.

Here then is your Master, your leader, your model, Christ; a despised man, a persecuted man; in continual strife with the world. Is it not difficult to follow Him, to make war as He did upon the world, upon ourselves, upon the passions and inclinations of our corrupt nature, to run counter to the common practical life of the world? To follow Him means to be pointed out, as St. Paul has

it, "as a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men." To follow Him we must, as the same great Apostle says, "become fools for His sake." In a word, if we would be His true Disciples, we must take up our cross and follow Him, and to follow after Him is to lead a penitential life.

Again we might prove the necessity for penance by the fact that Christ in dying for us did not wish to save us without our co-operation; we were created without any help of ours, but we shall not be saved unless we correspond to the graces which God has given us. True, we are tempted, and grievously; true, there are many obstacles in the way of our salvation, but we must remember what the Apostle Paul tells us: "God is faithful, One who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also issue with temptation that you may be able to bear it." He tells us that though we be tempted, though there be times in our lives when it seems that we can no longer withstand the suggestions of the evil one, still God is faithful; He beholds the unequal conflict between ourselves and the invisible powers that surround us, and He runs to our assistance with His divine grace; we on our part being free agents need but to correspond and the victory is ours. Nor should it be otherwise; for as man turned away from God by a free act of his will, so also should he turn to God by a free act of that same faculty; sufficient opportunities are offered us, it remains with us to say whether or no we shall embrace them. He will not force us, for He would have us all confess with St. Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; for the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the Just Judge shall render to me on the last day, and not only to me, but to them also who love His coming." Now Christ saved us and purchased for us the means of salvation only by a life of Penance; by a life of suffering we, too, co-operate in that work; to be mem-

bers of His Church we must also suffer with Him and crucify ourselves.

To go farther, we may not only assert the reasonableness of doing Penance, but we may also say that out of charity to ourselves we are obliged to practise it. You remember the fall of our first parents; the guilt of their sin of disobedience was forgiven by God, but still, did He not tell them they must do Penance? To the woman He said: "I will multiply thy sorrows; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband, and he shall have dominion over thee." And to Adam He said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of the wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou has come; for dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." Again, we have heard of King David's crime of murder and of adultery, and we hear the prophet Nathan telling him of the punishment which God had decreed against him; but David confessed his sins to the prophet and said, with contrition in his heart: "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan answered and said to him: "The Lord hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die. Nevertheless, because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing, the child that is born to thee shall surely die."

Now what do we learn from these examples? What lessons are we to derive from them? They tell us of a Penance we must perform if we have any regard for our well being, if we have any charity for ourselves. We see sin committed in these two examples, and we see that though it was forgiven, punishment had to be undergone for it. And is this not our belief? Do we not believe that there is a temporal punishment due to our many sins?

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True, we may have made our confession, as did David, and we may have heard the consoling words that our sins were forgiven as David's were, that we would not therefore be condemned to die, condemned to eternal punishment; but, like David, there is a temporal punishment due for our sins which we must suffer. We know moreover that punishment in the next world is something to be feared, so terrible is it that it cannot be imagined; more intense than any suffering we could conceive of or which could be undergone in this life. If then we can avoid this terrible torture and do not, would we not be lacking in charity to ourselves? We can now forestall these punishments by voluntary mortifications, by voluntary acts of sacrifice; and surely the angels must look down with delight, God must look down with mercy and visit with a reward exceeding great the poor sinner whom He sees trying to atone by acts of Penance, by acts of self-denial and of self-annihilation, for the many sins and transgressions he may be guilty of.

Another proof of the necessity of this virtue may be deduced from the fact that throughout Holy Scripture it is laid down as a condition for obtaining the forgiveness of sin; likewise in the many examples of forgiveness in Holy Writ, such forgiveness was obtained only by means of the Penance performed. Ninevah was a proud and mighty city, to that city with its king and one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants the Prophet Jonas was sent to forewarn it of the divine vengeance, which was soon to fall upon it on account of its many sins and iniquities. "Go," said the voice of God to Jonas, "go to Ninevah, that proud capital, that great city and preach in it, for the wickedness thereof is come up before me;" but Jonas, aware of the mercy of God was loath to go; for he knew that if they did Penance they would be pardoned. He therefore fled, for as he said to himself: "If I go there and preach, Thou, who art so merciful to sinners. will spare them; their city will not be destroyed,

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and I shall be taken and put to death as a false prophet." He therefore would flee to Tarsis. But in vain did he seek distant lands, for are they not the possessions of the Lord; in vain did he take shipping on the sea, for is not the ocean His? He embarked, a storm arose, the very waves conspired against his departure, and he made known to the seamen on board that he had fled away from the face of his Lord, and would not perform the command given him. The ship master and sailors came to him and asked him what they should do that the sea might be calmed. And he said to them: "Take me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea shall be calm to you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon us." It was done, the sea grew calm, its waters closed over the body of Jonas and to all appearances he was lost. But not so; the designs of Providence were not to be frustrated by a single will, and three days afterwards Jonas was cast up alive upon the shore by a whale, when a second time the voice of the Lord came, saying: "Arise, go to Ninevah, the great city, and preach in it the preaching that I bid thee." And Jonas entered the city and began to preach: "Yet forty days and Ninevah shall be no more." His voice was listened to. Down from his throne came the haughty monarch of the Assyrians, cast off his royal robes, the insignia of his office, and clothed himself in sack cloth and sat in ashes; the example of the king was followed by the people, a fast was proclaimed and sack cloth garments were worn by the greatest and the least. The Lord looked down and had compassion on them, and their sins were forgiven. Behold the forgiveness of sin, the effect of Penance!

We read in the third Book of Kings of a king, Achab, whose covetous eye had fallen upon the vineyard of Naboth, and who would purchase it if possible. But Naboth was unwilling to give or sell it to him; but the impious Jezebel, the wife of Achab, by her ingenuity devised a means of obtaining it. Naboth is accused of having blas-

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phemed God and the king; witnesses are summoned, Naboth, the proprietor of the vineyard is condemned to be stoned to death, and his blood to be licked up by the dogs. The sentence is carried out, Naboth dies innocently and Achab takes possession of his vineyard to enjoy it. But Elias is told by the Lord to arise and go down to meet Achab, the King of Israel, and say to him: "Thus saith the Lord: 'Thou hast slain, moreover thou hast taken possession.' And after these words thou shalt add: 'Thus saith the Lord: In this place wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also.'" The prophet went down and performed his commission, told the king in bold language of the fate that awaited him as a punishment decreed against him for his sin. Achab listened, recognized the justice of the punishment, and with contrite heart resolved to do Penance for his crime. Forth before the gaze of his people comes that king, divested of his robes and wearing in their stead a hair cloth upon his flesh; feasting gave way to fasting, he lay down to rest only to find a new mortification of the flesh, for his bed was a bed of sack cloth. Again Divine Justice was appeased, the hand uplifted to strike stayed by the power of Penance.

So, too, throughout the New Testament we shall find Penance sufficiently powerful to stay God's justice and obtain pardon. Thus it was with Peter, who had thrice denied his Master; thus it was with the thief upon the cross, thus it was with Mary Magdalen, who is now known as the penitent. They confessed their sins, they threw themselves at the feet of their Divine Master, acknowledged that they had committed sins and deserved punishment, promised to repent, to be more faithful in the future; and thus it was that by their lives of Penance they merited to hear the consoling words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go now and sin no more."

Now, to bring this truth, the necessity of Penance, home to ourselves, is there one to-day in this community

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who has not at some time of his life been guilty of grievous mortal sin? How have any of us, even the youngest of us, spent the few years we have been upon this earth? Scarcely did we learn to know that there was a God when we trampled upon His commands. Yet to us has He not sent His prophets, have we not been told time and again of the punishment we may expect? Yet still we live carelessly, listening to that warning voice, but not at all disturbed by it; unlike the examples we have shown you in the Scripture, we will not confess ourselves sinners, we will not do Penance for our sins. How are we to explain this? There are those here now listening to every word we speak, admitting it all, admitting that they are sinners, admitting that they should do penance, aye, and perhaps now are half forming the resolution of doing better, of going to confession, of endeavoring to lead a more Catholic life for the future; and yet they will have scarcely left the church door when these words will be forgotten, when that voice of conscience which is now whispering to them to be sure not to let this Lent go by without making their peace with God, will be smothered and drowned by the louder voice of the world. How then are we to account for this? Does it not arise from your careless way of living; does it not arise from that habit you have formed of putting off your confession from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month; so years go by and the longer you remain away the more difficult it is to find your way back. Ah! we are told in the Epistle of to-day that now is the acceptable time, now during this season of Lent, as the Easter time draws nigh, who knows how many of us may be left to spend another Lent on earth, how many like you have met here last Lent and during the year have been called to render an account of their lives; how many of us who are now present may be called out of this world before another Lent comes round? One conclusion therefore, "this is the acceptable time," and like consistent people approaching the

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sacraments, Easter morning will find us at peace with Almighty God—satisfied with ourselves, living with the hope and expectation of a glorious resurrection on the last day.

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THE HOLY NAME.

“ All the nations thou hast made shall come and adore before Thee, O Lord, and they shall glorify thy name.”

Ps. LXXXV. 9.

So sung the Psalmist in a moment of inspiration when looking with prophetic eyes into the future. He beheld all the nations of the earth praising and glorifying the God-Man, Christ our Lord. To-day the Church witnesses the fulfillment of that prophesy, takes up the same strain, and in Her Office repeats and prophesies that the generations yet to come will likewise unite and praise the name of the Lord.

It is fitting that on this day, the Feast of the Holy Name, we should contemplate the character of Him who bore our sins. Not that we shall hear anything new of Him, not that we may expect to convince the unbeliever of His divinity; but that we may learn something of the greatness and the sanctity of His character, so that we may look up the more fully to Him as our model, our teacher, and therefore be led to love Him more dearly as our Redeemer and our God. An idea of the character of any one can be formed from considering his influence upon the time and society in which he lives. Thus, if to-day we wished to form an estimate of the men who

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surround us, we should ask in what manner they benefit their neighbors and society; so also in the past, if we would duly appreciate the character of great men we must inquire what effect their teaching, their manner of life, had upon society at large, and the more we find mankind benefited by such men the greater our respect, veneration and love for them; the greater and higher our opinion of them. Now in considering the character of our Blessed Lord we shall apply the same principles and first ask ourselves: What did the times call for? How far had men advanced in religion and morality; what was then the great want of the people of the earth? To estimate these we have but to glance at the condition of Imperial Rome. Throughout her vast domain we find immorality prevailing, blasting with its breath and touch, all that was pure and virtuous; modesty which lends such a sweet charm to beauty and virtue had vanished. Man, the noblest work which had passed from the hand of God, knew neither his worth nor his destiny, and became a slave to every passion of his baser nature. It was a sad and sorrowful spectacle. Behold a vast empire displaying all imaginable pomp, yet despising all morality; a people rich in mental culture, a people possessing Philosophers, Poets, Historians and Orators, who have known no equal, worshipping at the shrine of licentiousness. This was then the condition of civilized Rome. Those elements of society, the individual and the family, were not valued; hence came the decline of the empire. Individual rights were not defined, that of the family was not respected from the want of a knowledge which would lead to the proper appreciation of individual man. How then could they obtain this knowledge? Were they without teachers? Had not Greece heard the voice of her Plato, who was called the divine, and that of her Aristotle? True, they were lights in those dark days, they understood many natural truths; but when we hear them defend, nay, teach crime itself, then we see the imperfection of human knowl-

edge and are obliged to confess that human science alone could not preserve the society of those days from destruction. But was their legislation, too, at fault? Have we not heard of an Athens who had her wise Solon, and of a Sparta who had her Lycurgus? True indeed there were many wise legislators, true indeed that even to this day the legislation of the Roman is considered a model; but what was its effect, what could be the effect of laws if moral principles were not fixed in the conscience, and if the manners of the people were opposed to law. Beside these, where was the legislator who had not been circumscribed by place and time; the teacher who had not been confined to a country or a nation; their teaching and their laws lacked the quality of universality, and in consequence could not reach the barbarism which prevailed throughout the world. The great wants to be supplied were then a knowledge of the truth of the relation of man to his Creator, a knowledge of law and order, and a healthy conscience among the people. Who could supply these wants, who could teach with an authority to claim and demand universal consent for his doctrine? Who could legislate without force, and reign supreme in the conscience of the individual? Who could endow society at large with a public and just conscience? Could Science, who confessed her inability; could Paganism, the prevailing religion of the day? Philosophy had exposed its weakness, and was insufficient. Where then could be found a power capable of supplying these needs of society? The power of earth confessed its weakness when its learning and its laws could not effect the result. Turn we then to seek a superhuman, a divine power; and there, standing as the central figure of the world's history, the embodiment of Christianity, an object of admiration for the believer and of hatred for the infidel, we discover One whose every word is sacred, whose every act became the theme of devout meditation; whose teachings are reverently commented on, whose precepts are obeyed, and whose exam-

ple is followed. Him we recognize as the great Reformer of the world, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God.

One day a crowd of men gathered about the halls of Pilate. One thought alone filled their minds, they were intent upon the destruction of some one; with wild cries they called out for the condemnation of Him who had dared to name Himself King of the Jews. Within the palace stood Pilate and a man known to the populace as Jesus, the son of a poor carpenter. He had been brought there for trial and Pilate asked Him: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" The malefactor, as they styled Him, answered: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not from hence." Pilate, therefore, said to Him: "Art thou the King then?" Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." Voices clamored within the hall at this declaration, and the lashes of the brutal soldiery were heard falling upon His shoulders; they led Him forth before the mob with a crown upon His Head, but one of thorns; with the royal purple about Him, but in mockery; and there Pilate proclaimed from his balcony: "Behold the man." Little did that Roman governor think that he was then giving to the gaze of that rabble a man who should in after years be held up to the admiration and adoration of the world! Little did he think that in after years, the power which he then wielded would have crumbled away! Little did he think that the world would resound with the praises of the malefactor's Holy Name, and that the Christian Preacher would tell peoples and nations then unborn: "Behold the man."

Behold Him who supplied the wants of society, behold Him, the Teacher, the Legislator of the world! How

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then did He set about His work? Study Him as a teacher and you will find Him uttering a doctrine until then not thought of, because divine; not only does He teach, but He likewise practices the lessons He would inculcate. The teachings of others had not been received by the world for the reason that they could not teach with authority. Reason pitted against reason had equal power, and was equally received by the people. Authority to teach was wanting; there could be no certainty of the doctrine taught. Now Christ came before the world, and claimed divinity of person, claimed that He came down from heaven, that He was sent into the world by His Father, and as He said to Pilate, in order that He might teach the truth. Thus, His Doctrine was of the highest possible authority; the authority of the God-head. But was that sufficient? No! He had as yet but asserted that He was the Son of God and the world demanded proof; proof was given in His miracles when He changed water into wine, bade the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the blind to see, the dead to come forth from the bandages and linens in which they had been buried. Proof was offered when they saw Him dying for the truth He had preached; when they saw the earth shaken at His crucifixion; when they saw Him rise from the dead, walk again in the midst of His Disciples, and finally ascend into heaven. His authority then was not only asserted, but confirmed, and the world was obliged to bow down and receive the teachings of its God.

The time of His Mission has come, led by the spirit of God He enters the desert, and there buried in solitude far from the habitation of men, He fasts for forty days and forty nights, spending His time in preparation for the mission His Father had given Him. He comes out from the desert and no longer has a fixed habitation. He wanders, as did the prophets, from village to village and from town to town, preaching tidings of joy to the world, of peace to men of good will. A prophet foresaw

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this hour of redemption and chanted this canticle: "Arise, be enlightened, Oh! Jerusalem, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall walk in thy light and kings in the brightness of thy rising."

Good tidings! good tidings! Tell it to the individual; let him arise with a consciousness of his dignity and of his destiny; let him be told that instead of living for his state, for his nation, or for his country, that he lives for God; that he lives for a place beyond the skies; that he is the object of God's love; that he is equal before God with the prince, though he be but a beggar. Good tidings! good tidings! Tell it to the millions toiling in slavery; let them know that the time has come when their chains shall drop from their hands; let their necks be bent no more to the yoke of tyranny, and let them walk erect conscious of their true dignity as men. Good tidings! good tidings! Tell it to the family; let the poor sorrow-stricken wife hear that she is no longer the slave of her husband, the plaything of his fancy, that she is not to be separated from her children; that henceforth she is to be placed on the same footing with her husband; that she is to be entitled to respect; that she is to be the instructress of her children, and that the contract into which she has entered can be dissolved but by death. Good tidings! good tidings! Tell it to the world and let society rejoice, for into it in its dying hour is again breathed the breath of life; the individual is raised, the family secured against dismemberment, and the people are to live again saved and vivified by true ideas, sound morality and Divine Religion. The Saviour preached these good tidings in the Synagogue and in the Temple, upon the mountain heights, on the shores of the lake, and in the deserts where crowds followed Him. Men were so charmed with His person and His doctrine that we hear them crying out after Him

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in the streets to have pity on them. Zaccheus climbs into a tree to get but a glimpse of Him, and the Disciples, won by a word, throw aside their boats and fishing nets, and immediately follow after Him. Nay, more; even the multitude becomes so delighted with His presence and at His words, that they followed Him for three days and forgot their need of food, so that our Blessed Lord was obliged to perform a miracle in order that He might give them nourishment.

His doctrine was well calculated to call forth such enthusiasm; it was expressed in a most simple language, a language which could not but impress the people. Consider the simplicity and sweetness of the parable of the prodigal son, the tenderness and goodness of that of the shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine sheep and goes in quest of the one lost; that of the banquet or nuptial feast, that beautiful figure of the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, of which all are invited to partake; the poor, the unfortunate, the rich, and the happy of every age and of every place. What goodness, what sweetness, what a touch of simplicity, of affection, and tenderness! The morality of His doctrine was none the less charming; He left no vice uncondemned, no virtue which was not prescribed; until then men had believed that riches were the greatest blessing, but He on the contrary proclaimed: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Until then it was deemed cowardly not to resent an injury; men lived but for honors and distinction, and those who gained them by their pride and ambition were looked upon as successful; but counter to this ran the saying of our Divine Master: "Learn of me that I am meek and humble of heart. If any one will be my Disciple let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." What greater purity of heart, and fraternal charity could be enjoined than that preached by Him on the Mount: "If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out and cast it from thee; and if thy right hand cause thee to offend, cut it off and cast it

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from thee; for it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish than that thy whole body should go into hell." "Let your speech be yea, yea, no, no; for whatever is more than this cometh from evil." "You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy; but I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have, for do not the publicans the same; and if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens the same? Be you therefore perfect as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." Were ever such maxims of morality uttered, did ever philosopher or sage speak such language?

But not only did Christ preach, He likewise practised the perfections He enjoined. His was a life of heroism, of purity, and of incomparable charity. Consider that divine picture in the light of the Gospel; what love for God, what zeal for His glory! Entire nights were spent in prayer, and He tells us Himself that His meat was to do the will of the Father who sent Him into this world. What humility He practised, what disinterestedness He manifested in His every action; There was nothing of self in that sublime character; all was for God and His glory. He is poor, and yet flies from the honors and riches of the world. The people would make Him their King, but He escapes from them and hides in the wilderness. They wished to receive Him with honors in Jerusalem; but He flies from them and goes into the country. Think of His goodness and His gentleness towards the sinner and the unfortunate; what could be said of that? Admire His simplicity and love in the midst of little children: "Suffer them to come to me for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Behold His sorrow when Martha speaks to Him of the death of her brother; He goes to his tomb, calls him forth, and gives him back to his loving sister.

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Again, touched with compassion when he beheld the widow weeping for her son, He ordered the bier to be laid down, and then and there calls to life her only boy. In a word, it is impossible to describe His virtues, we can only use the simple though complete saying of the Gospel if we would describe His life : “ He went about doing good.” Well might He make the reply given to His accusers in the gospel of St. John: “ Which of you shall convince me of sin ? ”

And what may we expect of Him as a lawgiver. Law is a rule of conduct in accordance with the principles of right reason ; to be effectual it must have a sanction ; to be binding it must proceed from a power which has the right to command. None but God in His sovereignty, and those to whom He has delegated it possess that power. “ All power is given to me in heaven and on earth,” says our Blessed Lord ; hence, when He taught men their duties to God and to their neighbors, the world received the highest legislation. To do this He had but to sum up the law and the prophets, and that He did when He said : “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” Men were to live for God alone, for another world ; this was their first duty, and in this all were equal. Man was to love his neighbor, and in loving his neighbor he would respect his rights ; this was his second duty. Mutual respect for rights, and obedience to the call of duty was the whole tenor of the law. The marriage contract once entered into could no longer be broken by the whim of the husband. “ What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” This was the sacramental seal which gave stability to the family, and society being made up of the family its influence was universally felt. Parents understood that they were to protect and provide for their children, while the children recognized on the other hand that they were bound to respect, love and obey their parents as those whom God had appointed to watch over them.

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Masters were to be kind to their servants, remembering that they, too, had a Master in heaven, while the servant was to be respectful and obedient. The relation of the citizen to civil authority was likewise determined, and obedience to the constituted authorities became a religious duty. In a word, the law of Christ being the law of God, became the law of conscience, and thus the third great want of society was supplied. The reign of conscience began. Truth had been born into the world, had manifested itself in the person of Christ, and dispelled the darkness of error. Ah! should not our hearts expand with love on this day when we reflect upon the sublime character of Jesus. One man changes the entire world. Henceforth men will not date events from the beginning of the world, but will turn to the birth of that one Man. Even those who do not believe in His existence, who regard Him as a myth, who have tried to destroy Him, in spite of their hatred for that man, in spite of their incredulity will date births and deaths as so many years from the birth of Christ.

And does not our admiration increase when we consider the difficulties He had to encounter? He taught but for three years, and that teaching was antagonistic to the teachings of the world; adverse to the passions of men and opposed to their desires. His was a doctrine which demanded a life of self-denial, a life of mortification. And how did He propose to propagate that doctrine? Did He solicit the favor of the mighty ones of earth, did He make use of force? No; but one day walking on the seashore, and noticing a few fishermen mending their nets, He said to them: "Come, follow me." Next day, passing through the market place, He saw another gathering taxes, and to him, too, He said: "Come, follow me." And so He went on until He had chosen twelve men, not well-known, or famous for their learning, but on the contrary poor, hard-working, illiterate men; to them He said, after spending three years with them: "All power is

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given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Out into the world went these chosen Disciples; they had seen their Master put to death, but nothing daunted, they went out to preach what they had been told. They were sent as sheep in the midst of wolves. They were prepared for the scoffs and jeers of the world; nay, more, they, too, like their Master, would die in defence of the doctrine they preached; and not only they, but their successors for centuries, until the world at large would take up their doctrine, until their precepts of equality and charity would have been received into every code. Had the world ever before acknowledged a single man as its conqueror, and this man, without arms, without earthly help, and wearing the appearance of the lowest among men, triumphed over the selfishness and wickedness of the entire world.

In considering that figure we are forced to confess with the Apostle Peter the divinity of that man. One day Jesus came into the confines of Cæsarea and asked His Disciples, saying: "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?" And they answered: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, and others Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Holy Prophets." He saith to them: "But whom do you say that I am?" And Simon Peter answering, said—and we with him, after considering the sanctity of His doctrine and of His life, after considering the changes effected in the world by His teaching, after considering the greatness and the power of the man, we, too, must cry out with Peter: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

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FEAST OF SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL.

*“ He that cometh to God must believe that
He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him.”*

HEB. XI. 6.

WE do not think it out of place to speak of one characteristic in the lives of these two men who were chosen by Christ to carry on the work which He had begun in this world. His work was the Sanctification, the Salvation of the human race through Faith, and this is the work which they entered upon in all earnestness. With heart and soul they preached, and never tired of preaching Jesus Christ crucified; to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness. To do that, they necessarily had to be men of faith themselves, men of ardent and living faith. We propose to show you that these two Apostles were men of real sterling faith. It is good for us of to-day to recall the lives of such men; for, if we look abroad over the world, one thing must astonish us. There are men, Catholic men, leading lives that tell of faith lost and destroyed, while the actions of others warn us that their faith is shaken and threatened with shipwreck. This growing coldness to faith, to practical living faith, escapes the observation of none; it is commented upon daily. Those who labor to bring about this subversion of faith cheer themselves and tell us that the world nowadays must see, feel, and hear

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things for itself, or it will not believe; they tell us that this is a progressive age, far beyond the dark ages of Faith; that it is an enlightened age, and men must comprehend and fully understand that which they had hitherto taken for granted by faith; finally, and in a word, it is an age of knowledge and not one of belief. The minds of such men look upon the Ten Commandments as a beautiful code of morality, one perhaps that could not be improved on; but that those laws are so binding upon our conscience as to entail upon the head of him who violates them, an everlasting punishment in the next world, seems to them hard, so hard that they do not wish to hear it or believe it. By their lack of faith they thus break down the divine sanction of the law, and render it nugatory; binding, only in as much as it is protected by society for a human purpose. To the minds of such men the Church is a beautiful institution, a magnificent organization; one that calls forth their wonder and their admiration as a piece of human polity; an institution that in its day did great good, broke down the barriers that opposed the unification of society, and cemented individuals and families into one common social fabric. But to-day they regard that Church as out of place, as in its dotage; because it insists upon its place in the world as the representative of Jesus Christ. They regard it as a piece of machinery that worked well in its time, but which has now become heavy and cumbersome; they insist that the world must rid itself of an institution which shackles the mind, keeps men from advancing in the march of modern evolution, and forbids them from adopting the progressive ideas of the day. Because She opposes all this She is styled intolerant and superstitious, an effete thing of the past. And we must not deceive ourselves; moving as we do in this atmosphere, breathing it in our daily life. Some of us are affected by the poison, injured in our faith. We appeal to the memory of the oldest among us to testify

to the living faith of their day. They could tell us of a Faith and a Love that bound them to their Priests and to their Religion such as does not exist among the youth of to-day; they could tell us of respectful and devout posture in the hours of prayer, the absence of which is very often evident among our young men; they could tell us of the two seasons of the year, Christmas and Easter, when the thought was not allowed to enter into their minds of absenting themselves from the Sacraments, no matter what their lives had been. True, these faults seem but ripples upon the surface, they are not straightforward denials of Faith; perhaps the men who are guilty of them would to-morrow die for their Religion; but still their effect is bad, they tell us of an undercurrent which sways, of an undercurrent which may affect, perhaps destroy, the reality of Faith. Let us then to-day examine this question of Faith and its necessity. Take that of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul; review the obstacles they had to contend with, and finally examine our own, and see how we withstand the difficulties that are thrown in our way. In the first place, what is Faith? Our Catechism tells us that it is a divine virtue by which we firmly believe all that God has taught; in other words it is the assent of the intellect to all the truths that God has revealed to mankind. Whoever admits that Jesus Christ is God, admits the necessity of Faith; for we know that the world before the coming of Christ was to be saved only by belief in a Messiah, who was to come. After His coming all men who believe that Christ is God believe that their Salvation is through Faith in Him as Saviour.

The first thing necessary for Salvation is Faith. St. Paul tells us: "Without Faith it is impossible to please God." Again writing to the Hebrews, he says: "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him." Not only is the internal assent of the mind necessary, but there are times

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in life when we must profess our faith, for we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father, who is in heaven," and in St. Luke we read: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my word, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in His majesty and of His Father and His Holy Angels." Again St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, tells us: "For with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Here let me not be misunderstood; that faith simply in the person of Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation. No! But a faith which implies a belief not only in His person, but a belief in His whole doctrine and an obedience to His law, a faith which comprises each and every truth as soon as proposed; a faith living in the heart and manifesting itself in our lives. For we read Christ's own words in the Gospel of St. Matthew, where he says: "Not every one that saith to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Not every one that professeth me to be the Christ and loveth me by name shall enter into the kingdom. He alone who doeth the will of my Father, he alone shall enter into that kingdom.

Here then, we have an idea of what the Christian's faith must be. Faith is that fundamental virtue of the soul, infused into it by grace, by which it receives without doubt and without hesitation, unseen truths and mysteries which have been revealed to us by God; by which it not only assents to them as true, but goes farther, and realizes them, regards them a present actuality, much in the same way as sight or touch makes evident to us the reality of what we see or handle in the world around us. Hence it is defined by the Apostle as: "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Its chief and essential property is,

that it accepts supernatural truths simply on the authority of God; truths which are obscure and incomprehensible, which do not carry with them to our reason their own infallibility; truths which to the Christian mind do not necessarily convey constructive evidence of their certainty, but rest on the authority of God, who is not deceived and cannot deceive His creatures. Thus it is that there is no degree of certainty in matters of Faith. All matters of Faith are equally certain; we are as equally certain of the Trinity as of the existence of God. The Christian has but to ask himself: Has this truth been revealed by God? Has God taught men this truth? And, if the answer be that God has revealed that truth, that He has taught it to men, then, no matter what it may be, whether it be the Real Presence in the Eucharist, whether it be the forgiveness of sins in the tribunal of Penance, or the Infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals, His will at once demands unhesitating and unwavering faith therein; a faith born of the truth of God, and consequently to the mind certain as it is certain that God can neither be deceived Himself nor deceive His creatures.

The only difficulty is to know when man is sure that God has revealed the truth. No voice from heaven speaks in tones audible to us all, telling us what we are to believe. True, we have the Sacred Scriptures; but the dead letter of the Scriptures was never meant to be our teacher; they were originally addressed to men who were already in the possession of the truths of faith by means of moral teaching, and if they were meant to be the source from which we were to deduce our articles of faith, how would it have fared for centuries with those souls who were unable to possess a volume of the inspired Word. Again, even admitting that the Scriptures be the rule of faith, how could we gather from them with unfailling certainty that which God has re-

vealed; since our intellect is fallible, liable to error. How then are we to know with absolute certainty all that God has revealed? The youngest child brought up and educated in the Catholic Religion knows full well that when Christ came upon this world to fulfill His mission of teaching the truths of Salvation to mankind He did not leave them to haphazard, He must have left them to the world in such a manner that they could not be tampered with by men. He must have left them with His Church, who was to be their guardian and expositor. He must have left them with the Apostles and their successors, whom He commanded to go to the utmost limits of the earth teaching whatsoever He had commanded; left them to a Church which is infallible, since He Himself remains with Her, guiding Her, and preserving Her from error or decay. "Behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." Within the Church then we are certain of the truths that Christ has revealed to man; whatever they may be, we have only to inquire if they are taught by the Church Catholic. The Church having once set Her seal upon them we accept them as firmly and as unhesitatingly as though we heard Jesus Christ speaking to us individually. It matters not how incomprehensible they may be, how far above the capacity of our intellect; the Church having spoken the voice of Peter speaks through the Papacy. We know that voice to be the voice of infallible truth which cannot deceive, and our heads bow down as we make the profession: I believe in the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

And now, my friends, let us turn to the faith of Peter and Paul, let us see what manner of men they were in the belief of the truths, the truths taught by Christ. Peter lived and walked, as you know, with our Blessed Lord, as one of the chosen twelve. Paul was afterwards elected, and though he was not present to see the great works and wonders that were done by our Blessed

Lord, we find that when the time came for him to deny his faith or give testimony to its truth by the shedding of his blood, he walked forth as boldly and as fearlessly as the Prince Apostle, St. Peter. There are two ways by which we may examine the lives of men: We may recount their deeds and acts from the day of birth to that of death, and thus be able to form some idea of them; or, as in the present case, we may speak of some particular acts of their lives and, wishing to bring out their peculiar characteristics, we may show the difficulties with which they had to contend and thus obtain a better and fuller idea of them.

Now this is what we propose to do with regard to these two Saints, Peter and Paul. We would like to set them before you as two men of active real faith; and to do so we will not recount the great works or deeds they accomplished, but ask the question: What difficulties had they to contend with in the practice of their belief? Now the obstacles to faith in the days of St. Peter were just the same as those of to-day. Many might be mentioned, but we will select three which are most prominent. In the first place, the doctrines which are revealed to us are above us, and beyond our comprehension. They were above and beyond that of the Apostles, and yet they did not waver in their faith. As an example, take the Institution of the Holy Eucharist; our Blessed Lord, surrounded by a multitude on the side of a hill, tells them that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood if they would enjoy life everlasting. They are amazed and horrified at the declaration. What! Eat this Man's flesh and drink His blood? How can this be done? This is a hard saying; who can believe it? But our Blessed Lord does not alter what He has said, but goes on and insists, tells them again that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood if they would be raised up on the last day, and live forever. What then do they do? They hear Him repeating that strange

truth which they cannot understand, and sooner than believe, turn back, as the Scripture says, and walk no more with Him. Turning then to His Apostles, He says to them: "Will you also go away? For you must give assent to this truth; I claim from you what I asked from the multitude. Will you also go away?" And Peter, the man of strong faith, stepping forward, says: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, we believe and we know that thou art Christ the Son of God." St. Paul was not present at this scene, but who can doubt that he would have acted as St. Peter did when we read the words that are addressed by that Holy Apostle to the Corinthians. He tells them of the Institution of the Most Holy Sacrament, and he warns them to prove themselves before they attempt to eat of that bread or drink of that chalice; for whosoever shall eat His bread or drink of the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord. Such was the faith of these Apostles; the word of Christ was sufficient. They did not question the truth as men nowadays do. They did not ask Him to show them His body in the Host or His blood in the chalice, no more than they asked Him to show them the divinity that was hidden under His flesh and blood. It was enough for Him to assert, and Peter would answer: "Lord, though I do not comprehend how men are to live and be nourished by this food, still, I again say, whither shall I go for truth if thou, who art the Son of God and hast the words of eternal life dost not give it to me." How many men to-day, if they had been present among that multitude, would have shaken their heads and said with the Jews: "This is hard to believe, we cannot understand it, it is contradictory to our reason, and we will not believe. How many Catholics even are saying by their actions, if we are to judge them by their long absence from this Table of the Lord, that they do not believe this truth?"

Another great difficulty with which the Apostles had to contend and with which we, too, must struggle, was public opinion. In other words, human pride must be fought down and conquered if we would be true to the practice of our faith. The multitude in the days of Peter were opposed to Christ, dealt with Him as a criminal, and yet Peter, despite the incredulity and unbelief of the multitude, remained faithful. The moment came when all that was noble, all that was learned, all that was holy in the city of Jerusalem cried out against Jesus and condemned Him as a blasphemer and seducer of the people. Yet Peter, despite that solemn sentence pronounced upon our Lord by the ruler and people, would adore the condemned Son of God, and there under the very eyes of the people and judges shed bitter tears for his fault committed in a moment of forgetfulness. Nay, more; in a few days, the wealth, the wisdom, and the sanctity of that city heard Peter's voice preaching Christ crucified. The Holy Ghost had come down upon the Apostles, they began to speak in divers tongues, and when the people heard them there were some who wondered and asked: "What meaneth this?" But others mocked, and cried out: "These men are full of new wine." But Peter, caring little for their mockery, arises, and lifting up his voice, speaks to them, saying: "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you and with your ears receive my words. These men are not drunk as you suppose, but what the prophet Joel foretold is accomplished in them." He then upbraids them with the death of Christ and proves to them that they have crucified their Saviour.

St. Paul, too, remains true to Christ. You know of his wonderful conversion, you know how he had persecuted the first Christians, and yet, after his conversion, behold his victory over the opinions of men! They must have spoken of him, they must have considered

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him a traitor to their cause, since they sought to put him to death; and yet we find that he cared not for their opinions, that he was deaf to the voice of human pride when it came between himself and his Divine Master. He tells the Corinthians in writing to them that he cares not for their opinions and their judgment of him. "As to me," he says, "it is a thing of the least account to be judged by human judgment;" and again, in the same chapter, he says: "We are fools for Christ's sake, we are made as the refuse of the world, as the off-scouring;" yet, during all this, he preaches Christ crucified with a boldness that was never before witnessed, and with an eloquence that was resistless. Ah! how often are we timid and faint-hearted in styling ourselves Catholics and followers of Jesus Christ! It may be our lot to move among those who differ from us in religion, who now and then fling ridicule upon it in our presence; we stand by blushing, perhaps denying our faith. It may be that in our business relations we are thrown among those who profess some religion because it is fashionable, and then, because we have to strike some sharp bargain with them, we are heard confessing in their presence that all religions are good, and that we can be saved equally in any one of them. It may happen that we are thrown into mixed society at a time when the Church enjoins abstinence. Again our faith is placed on one side and the opinion of men upon the other. Those present do not know that we are Catholics and we are not going to make them wiser by obeying the law of abstinence; so our faith is sacrificed to human opinion.

Another difficulty in the way of the practice of our faith is persecution of one kind or another. In following the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, how courageous do they appear in professing their faith, no matter with what punishment they were threatened! Peter is brought before the council and told to preach no more in

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the name of this man who is called Christ; he makes answer and says to them: "If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye." On the morrow he is thrown into prison. Still he preaches and continues to preach; finally he is crucified as was his Divine Master upon the cross. The same perseverance in preaching the Gospel is shown by St. Paul. No persecution could shake his constancy. He tells us that five times he received forty stripes save one: "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I was in the depth of the sea." Besides these he tells us that he was often exposed to the dangers of traveling, often hungry, often thirsty, often cold and naked. Like St. Peter, the day came when he was thrown into prison and called upon to give up his faith; like St. Peter, he walked forth boldly to meet the headsman and seal his faith by shedding his blood. Here, are our models in faith; cling to that Faith purchased for us by the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and preserved for us through the persecution of centuries; cling to it with the tenacity and the constancy of Saints Peter and Paul! Believe and practise all that Holy Religion teaches and enjoins, despite the incomprehensibility of its dogmas. Cling to it through persecutions, so that you may say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith." For the rest, there is laid up for us a crown of justice which the Lord the just Judge will give to us on that last day, and not only to us, but to them also who love His name.

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COMMEMORATION OF ALL SOULS.

*“It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray
for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.”*

MATH. XII. 46.

THE Church has many Festivals, festivals of joy and festivals of sadness. She has her Christmas, when with joyful strains we assemble around the crib at Bethlehem, when she tells us that our Redemption is at hand; that the night of sin and shame has been dispelled, and that we may again lift up our heads and cry with joy: “Glory to God in the highest and peace upon earth to men of good will.” She has her Easter, another day of gladness, bidding us to have hope that the grave wherein we saw our Saviour’s body placed is empty, that He has arisen, that the grave is not to have the mastery over a single soul believing in Jesus Christ our Lord. She has her Ash Wednesday, when she puts on the garb of penance and brings us to the Altar side to receive the ashes upon our heads, and to remind us that no matter what our health, fortune, or age, we must leave this world, die, and mingle with the dust from which we were taken. She has her Good Friday, when we gather lovingly about the foot of the Cross, when She puts before us the dying Jesus and makes us follow Him in spirit to the

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grave, there to kneel and weep, to kiss the sacred wounds that we have made by our sins, while we resolve never again to be the cause of pain or suffering to that innocent victim.

Such are her Feasts of joy and of sadness. Once only in the year does She seem to bring both together on the same day. But a few moments ago we were praising the Saints in glory, and scarcely had we ceased when the Requiem of the dead began. This is a day upon which the entire Church in heaven, on earth and in purgatory come together. It is a day upon which the Church triumphant, the Church militant, and the Church suffering meet and look into one another's faces. We raise as it were the curtain that hides us from the other world, and looking in we discover the multitude of Saints whom St. John describes in the Apocalypse as a multitude made up of every tongue and tribe, and nation, every age and sex praising and glorifying God. We behold this beautiful sight and our hearts expand with delight, we half wish that life's trials were over, and that we had entered into that heavenly city, where there is no mourning or sadness. We look, and despair leaves us as we learn the lesson that we, too, may be called as Saints, that we, too, may, if we wish, share these everlasting joys hereafter. Again we raise the curtain, and this time our vision rests upon a scene of suffering; we behold God, not in His glory but in His justice; we see the punishment of sin, we see souls suffering and suffering voluntarily the blemishes of sin and the punishment due to it. We hear the voices of those who have passed from this world calling upon us to aid and assist them, and from them we learn the lesson that we must seek to avoid if possible this place of temporary punishment, and at the same time do something for those who are suffering there. Let us take these lessons to heart, let us learn that we are called to be Saints, and that we may become Saints, let us learn to avoid the pains of Purga-

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tory, and while in this world practise some devotion toward those holy souls confined there. Any one of these different subjects would be a sufficient text for your instruction, but I would say a few words on each of them.

We are called to be Saints; to the unbeliever this is a meaningless phrase, but to us who have faith it is full of meaning. It means that after life is over we are to be forever happy with God. It means that while we are on this earth we are but in a land of pilgrimage, a place of exile, sighing for our true home in heaven. It means therefore that we must not allow ourselves to be charmed by the beauties of this world, that we must not suffer ourselves to be allured from the path that leads direct to heaven by anything that the world can offer us. We are called to be Saints. This is the first truth we learned after we knew that of the existence of God. We were asked in our childhood why God made us, and we answered, taught by our Holy Religion, that it was to serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next; in other words, that while in this world we should follow the precept given by Him to His chosen people, wherein He said: "Be ye Holy as I also am Holy."

"Be ye sanctified;" this is His call, this His command. You may ask: Is this an easy matter? Is it not difficult, is it not impossible for the poor sinner struggling with the enemy, to become a Saint? In reply we would say, that what has been once accomplished may be accomplished again under the same circumstances; that if men before us, living in this world surrounded by temptation and sin as we are, became saints, so may we likewise. We have only to foresee the obstacles which are placed in our way and endeavor to overcome them. We would not deceive you by telling you that it is an easy matter and so lead you into the dreadful sin of presumption; neither would we say to you that it is a diffi-

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cult undertaking, and thereby cause you to be guilty of the sin of despair; we would say to you that it is both easy and difficult. If we consider the question of becoming saints as the most of men do, not taking God's help and assistance into consideration; then it is a most difficult work and we must needs despair of attaining it. If we consider our nature, study it, and behold its proneness to sin, its corruption, and its tendency to everything that is unlawful, we have but little to hope for; and this is what men do when they despair. They will tell you that they cannot give up such and such a vice, that there is no use in their assisting at Mass or frequenting the Sacraments, it is with them a foregone conclusion. They have considered but one side of the question, they have noticed the inclinations of their baser natures to sin, they will tell you it is no use to strive, they must necessarily yield again; and soon the poor soul finds itself in a state of despair.

In this sense, and as these people consider it, the work of salvation, the duty of saving our souls is arduous, and we may never hope to accomplish it. But in another sense it is easy for us to become saints. Let us but open our hearts to the teaching of our Holy Religion on this subject, let us permit the light of God's truth to illumine our minds, and how easy, how quickly we will resolve that henceforth we will labor to sanctify our souls and keep them pleasing in God's sight. Let us but endeavor to form an idea of God's great desire that we should become saints and of the assistance which He is willing to render, nay more, that He will do the work for us if we but ardently desire it, and Oh! how changed, how easy the task will become. What has not Jesus Christ done to save us; what has He left undone that He could have performed in the present established order? He became man for us, He taught us both by word and example for three and thirty years, He subjected Himself to all the miseries that human nature is heir to save

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sin, finally He paid the price of our redemption which cost Him His life. He did not then leave us orphans, He did not quit the world, but He remains with us still striving to sanctify us, for this did He establish His Church, for this did He send His Apostles to teach, for this did He institute the Sacraments, those channels of grace which render the soul saintly, for this did He through His ministers perpetuate the sacrifice made upon Calvary, for this finally does He remain with us upon our altars, inviting us to daily converse with Himself, for this does He feed and replenish our souls with His own body and blood that He might thus, as it were, identify Himself with us, as far as consistent with our own personal individuality, so that we might be clothed with His own beauty, with His own grace, and especially with His own power over the devil and our evil inclinations. Verily there was nothing that He could do for His vineyard that He has not done. Verily the work of salvation is easy if we wish to correspond with God's grace, and make use of the means which He has placed at our disposal; verily He has made His yoke sweet and His burden light for those who wish to assume it.

Again the salvation of our souls is not impossible if we consider the lives of those who have gone before us. To-day, the Church giving us a glimpse of heaven, tells us in Her Divine Office that after the Choirs of Angels its inhabitants are Patriarchs, Prophets, Holy Doctors of the Law, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, Hermits and numberless Saints. All these were similar to ourselves, they lived upon this world, they possessed the same nature, had the same difficulties to contend with; they had no greater help than we have, they were members of the same Church and partook of the same Sacraments, and to-day they are confirmed in glory. There are there souls who performed deeds of heroism, there are martyrs, young and old, who gave their life's blood for their faith, there are hermits who lived for

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years shut out from the rest of mankind doing penance for their sins. When we reflect upon their lives we shudder with fear and say that we will not be able to do as they have done. Well, we are not called upon today to do as they have done, we are not asked to shed our blood for our religion, we are but asked to practise it; we are but asked to do as other souls have done that go to make up that vast throng, we are but called upon to perform faithfully the duties that our state of life imposes upon us; we are but called upon to abstain from mortal sin. This is our one great duty and into this all others may be resolved. Avoid mortal sin and you will become a saint, for mortal sin alone can kill the soul, and if it be our good fortune to live without mortal sin, to die without mortal sin upon our souls, then when we have expiated our smaller sins, we will be permitted to enjoy the glories of the Saints, to be saints forever with God.

But now let us give thought to the souls in Purgatory. The lessons we learn from their sufferings are: To avoid that place of expiation, and to resolve to do something for those confined there. Our Holy Faith teaches us that if we depart from this life with a single blemish upon our souls, or with any temporal satisfaction due to God for our past offences, after their guilt has been removed in the Sacrament of Penance, we may not expect to see the face of God until that stain is removed or that debt paid to offended justice; for nothing defiled can enter heaven. How then are you to avoid this place of suffering? Simply by leading sinless lives. If we would avoid these punishments we must not only seek to put aside mortal sin, but we must advance a step further and endeavor to live without committing voluntary venial sin; and if, unfortunately, as all of us have, we should have committed mortal sin whose guilt has been remitted in the Sacrament, but for which we have not done sufficient penance, or if we have fallen into venial

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sin, then we must have recourse to the indulgences which are held out by the Church. How many indulgences might we gain every day of our lives; what a great indulgence may we not now avail ourselves of by making a Jubilee.

You all know what an Indulgence is; it is not the remission of sin, but it is the remission of the punishment due to sin. Here then is our opportunity for cleansing our souls from sin in the Sacrament of Penance, and of gaining this indulgence which is plenary in its effect, if we only fulfill all the conditions which are necessary. By gaining this indulgence not only will our souls be cleansed from sin, but likewise from all the punishment due to sin. This then is our first lesson: To acquire all the indulgences we can. If in societies, let us find out what indulgences we may gain, and on what days we may gain them. If we become accustomed to say fixed formulas of prayer, to wear scapulars or medals, or to perform other devotional works to which the Church has attached indulgences, let us learn what they are, so that in the performance of these different works we may gain the indulgence that is offered. Have the intention in your morning prayers of seeking to gain all the indulgences that the Church may have affixed to any of the actions that you are about to perform; then you may hope, if in the state of grace, to obtain the remission of much of the punishment which would be otherwise due to your sins.

Our second lesson is: To learn to do something for those poor souls in Purgatory. What a beautiful, what a consoling doctrine, to know that after we have passed from this world we will not be forgotten by our friends and by our Holy Mother the Church. We plead with you for these poor souls. We plead in the name of your friends whose bodies you followed tearfully to the grave, but whose souls are now suffering and forgotten by you. We plead in the name of a good father and a kind mother,

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we plead in the name of a brother, or a sister, or your loved wife, to whom on the death bed you promised to be ever mindful of in your prayers. We plead in behalf of the souls now suffering in purgatory, and we ask you plainly what will you do for them during this month of November, which is peculiarly devoted to those holy souls? Were we to tell you how best to aid them, we would say that the most powerful means is the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. On all Souls Day the whole Catholic world over, that Holy Sacrifice is offered from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. That sacrifice is offered for the souls of the faithful departed. The feast of All Souls is not a Holy Day of Obligation, it is not a day upon which we are obliged to be present at Mass under pain of committing mortal sin; but it is a day of devotion. Surely it will not be asking too much of you to be present to put up your prayers and to unite with the Priest in asking Almighty God to receive this action of yours in their behalf. Were we asked what else you might do, we would request you to offer them your indulgences, we would request you give alms, for charity covers a multitude of sins. We would ask you to pray for them, and if it might be permitted to mention a time at which you should pray for them particularly, we would say, let it be when you receive your Lord in Communion. Then when Jesus Christ is within you, when you are making known to Him your many wants and necessities, when you are thanking Him for the many favors He has conferred upon you, then let not the faithful dead be forgotten, but ask Him to have mercy upon them and to take them to Himself in heaven.

Permit not this month to go by without performing some works for these holy souls, or rather, permit not this present hour to go by without resolving that during this month you will practise some daily devotion in behalf of them. You who can, resolve if possible to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily during

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this month, so that your prayers may be offered to our dear Lord while He is mystically immolated upon our Altar. Enter into this season of the Church's devotion and rest assured that when our time comes to bid adieu to this earth, these prayers, these indulgences, these many acts of devotion which we now perform in behalf of those poor souls will not be lost to us, but will be given back to us a hundred fold.

XX. SERMON.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

*“ Many daughters have gathered together
riches, thou hast surpassed them all.”*

PROV. XIII. 29.

IF it were my object to call to mind the many pious souls who have passed from earth, and who are now enjoying in Heaven the reward of their labors, what a bright roll of names we might unfold before the world's gaze. We would find an army of heroines in the Christian fold, we would find there young maidens with the promise of a long and happy life before them sacrificing their all out of love for Christ and His holy religion; we would find the elderly maiden turning aside from the world after years of folly and spending the time allotted to her in penance for the past; we would find there names whose history could not be written, and whose works of piety and devotion would scarcely be credited, so far would they seem to be above human power. There are those who have been born to rank and station in life, leaving it all to seek quiet and peace inside the walls of a convent; and of all those holy souls we might say that they were many daughters who had gathered together riches. And so if we examine the Old Testament, we shall find there likewise an array of heroines unsurpassed, nay, unequalled in history. Those inspired books are full of illustrious names, but it will not be

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difficult for us to recognize at the same time that their deeds, like those of their counterparts in the New Testament, were small in comparison with those of MARY.

We shall find inscribed there the name of a Deborah who had conquered the enemies of God's chosen people, and sang her song of victory; but Mary triumphed over the enemy, not of a people or of a country, but of the whole human race and so sang her canticle of joy and praise: THE MAGNIFICAT.

We find there the name of Judith who saved the city of Bethulia in striking off the head of Holofernes; but Mary in giving a Saviour to the world crushed the head of the serpent and delivered the whole human race from its state of slavery and bondage. We find there the name of an Esther who found grace and favor before the great king Assuerus, and who liberated from death a proscribed people, but Mary finds grace and favor before the King of kings, and so turns aside the anger of Divine justice that was about to descend upon a guilty race. Of these holy souls we might too exclaim with the inspired writer that there were many daughters who had gathered riches: yet we must confess with him that there was one who surpassed them all, Mary the Mother of God. In their midst she rises like the Sun in the Heavens, she rises more beautiful and more charming than all the daughters of God, for she bears upon her brow a triple coronet that gives her a right to superiority and places her inferior in the Heavenly court to only Christ himself.

Her first diadem is that of her Immaculate Conception. As soon as the breath of life is breathed into us, our souls are tainted with the stain of original sin. But Mary was preserved from that stain, and her pure soul from the very first moment of existence was pleasing in the sight of God. Born into this world children of wrath we are deprived of the ornament of grace, our souls are soiled with the sin of our first parents, and we appear in

the sight of God as objects of hatred, nay, more, while in that state we are under the dominion of Satan, "for by one man sin entered into the world," says St. Paul, "and by sin, death, and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned." Death, according to St. Paul, is the effect of sin, and as all men die, the young and old, those who have attained the age of wisdom and those who are but infants, so all must have sinned in that one man, Adam. Nor was this truth of the transmission of sin a new truth taught by St. Paul, for the Jews were fully aware of it and hence it was that Job could ask: "Who can make him clean that is conceived unclean. Is it not only thou who art," and that the Psalmist could cry out in his groanings: "Behold I was conceived in iniquity and in sin did my Mother conceive me." Sin abounded throughout, the whole world was sold under sin; of one creature alone could it be said that the Lord possessed her in the beginning of His ways; Mary alone escaped the universal shipwreck by the preventing grace of God. On for centuries had flowed that deluge of sin, on for centuries will it continue to flow, upon each soul as it is created; about one alone, save Christ, rising like a light house in the ocean, will those waters dash without being able to affect her in the least. Her soul comes unsullied, ravishing by its beauty the eye of the beholder, so that he is obliged to exclaim: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning, rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?" Who is she that rises upon that dark night of sin which enveloped the world, who is she that pales with her brilliancy the countless saints in the firmament of God's glory? Who is she who comes like an army drawn up in battle array against the reign of Satan? It is she who was promised as the one who would conquer the arch fiend of man, when God uttered these words in the garden of Eden to the serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for

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her heel." Ah, who can describe the beauties of that pure soul! No stain upon it; nay, more, says St. Gregory: "It was not only conceived without original sin, but in the very first moment of its existence, its grace and sanctity equalled and surpassed the beauty of all the angels and Saints." "It was the house of the Lord prepared on the top of the mountains." It was elevated and raised above all in its greatness and sanctity. Estimate if you can the graces and spiritual treasures of our souls; estimate if you can the merits of St. John the Baptist living a life of penance for thirty years in the desert; tell if you can the graces of the Martyrs in the first ages of the Church, of those holy fathers who withdrew from the world and their friends, and hid themselves from the eyes of men in order that they might lead holy lives; of that line of virgins who gave up all for Christ's sake; estimate their penance, their prayers and their works of charity. Estimate the beauty of the saints who praise God continually, glance at the Angelic choirs who surround the throne of the most High, ever singing: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." Put all these glories, all these beauties, all these graces together, make of them all one magnificent treasure and say that God bestowed a beauty like to that upon the immaculate soul of Mary His Mother, and you will have some idea of the riches with which that bright soul was adorned in the first moment of her conception, for it was founded upon the very summit of the mountain. But even when tired, weary, breathless as we may be in ascending those mountains of sanctity, we have but a faint picture of the beauty of Mary's soul, for we must remember that every moment of her life was an advance in sanctity.

There is an opinion among Theologians founded on Scripture that the actual grace which God gives us to perform any action corresponds to the sanctifying grace that is within us; if we perform the action for which

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this grace is given in accordance and with the wish of the Holy Spirit, the habitual grace that is within us becomes twice as great; in other words it is doubled, and so the increase goes on whenever we act in conformity with the Holy Spirit guiding and directing us. You will better understand this by the parable given us in the Gospel. We read there of a Master who distributed pieces of money among his servants, to one He gives five talents, to another two; going away they made use of them, and the one gained another five and the other another two; so also with us if we correspond to the graces we receive we will some of us receive another five and some another two. Like to a person who would use his money in such a way that it would always increase to twice its original value. To Mary then, God granted actual grace as He did to the Saints, and never before was there a correspondence to grace like Mary's. Every moment of her life of sixty-three years in this world was spent in acts of love and adoration. Even in her sleep every moment was meritorious, for in her sleep she had the exercise of her reason. Judge then of the graces that must have adorned that soul. She began more pure more holy than all the saints and angels in heaven. With her increase of grace, how beautiful, how brilliant must have been her pure soul. She might be likened to a man who began life with the riches of all the kings of earth, and who went on increasing them every moment of his life; every moment saw them double, every moment of time that ticked upon his clock told him that his riches had increased two fold. "Verily thou hast set upon her head a crown of precious stones."

The second diadem that Mary might claim is that of Queen in heaven, for she is no less than the Spouse of God the Father. Take up the Scriptures again and you will read of the angel's visit. There in the poor city of Nazareth dwelt a virgin child, one who had consecrated herself to God from her infancy, unknown and un-

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thought of by the world, she led an humble and obscure life; no, not obscure, for the angels in heaven looked down upon that poor dwelling and within its walls beheld a treasure dear to the Most High. They looked, and heard one of their chosen number, the great Gabriel, asking Mary's consent to become the Spouse of the Most High. He salutes her as a messenger might well salute the queen of his king: "Hail full of grace, Hail thou who hast surpassed all others in amassing spiritual treasures, all hail! The Lord is with thee, thou art pleasing in His sight, and thou art blessed among women, for thou alone art the child of benediction for all mankind." And the tender maiden hearing this salutation was troubled, for she knew not as yet its nature; but the angel seeing her embarrassment bids her to fear not for she has found grace with God. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and thou shalt bring forth a son and thou shalt call His name Jesus." Mary remembering the pledge of her virginity, remembering the solemn promise she had made to God, could not give her consent until she knew whether or not it could be accomplished without in any way affecting her consecration to God's service; hence she asked: "How can this be?" And the angel answering, said to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, therefore the Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And Mary replied: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word." My consent is given. This body, which is thine by creation and by consecration as all other creatures are thine I also give up to thee in accordance with thy request, entirely, absolutely; I give it to thee in order that thy will may be accomplished within me. "Be it done unto me according to thy word." These are the espousals between Mary and the Eternal Father, this the contract agreed upon by Mary with Heaven's ambassa-

dor; a contract which makes Mary the Spouse of the Most High, since she is the Mother of His Divine Son. Truly this is a sublime dignity, a dignity sufficient in itself to win the love and the devotion of the entire world.

The principal work of God in creation is not this beautiful world that we witness, neither is it the world of spirits. The principal work of God is not man with all his greatness, though made in the image and likeness of God Himself; neither is it the Immaculate Virgin Mary, spotless as she is, though she be fairer than Eve who was clothed with innocence and endowed with immortality. The principal work of God and the greatest effected by His almighty power was the Man-God, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And now behold the dignity of Mary as the Spouse of the Father; she is to participate in the production of God's greatest work. From her pure flesh will be formed the human body of that divine person, and her pure blood is hereafter to beat and pulsate in the heart of God. Great indeed is this dignity of Mary, the Mother of God. Oh, wonderful dignity for a creature to be the Mother of her Creator. Consider that Mother and Son; an infant, He reclines in her arms; a helpless babe, He subjects Himself to be placed here or to be placed there as Mary sees fit. To her He looks for the necessaries of life, to her He looks for all His little wants. Truly, to look about the universe and contemplate its size we are struck with astonishment at its order, its harmony, its vastness, and we are more than astonished when we think of the mysterious power that works all these wonders, but is it not more wonderful to behold God himself in the arms of a creature? Wonderful is God's power in supplying the wants of all living things upon this earth. "He but opens His hand," says the Psalmist, "and all wants are supplied." But is it not more wonderful to behold God Himself within Mary's arms trusting to her to nourish

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Him? Who could penetrate that mysterious infancy of Christ our Lord and tell its wonders, He grows up and Mary teaches the God of creation to lisp in human language, she teaches Him to make use of His little limbs, to follow her about the house as she performs her daily duties. The age of manhood is attained and He lives on in obedience to Mary. What forbids us to suppose that Jesus did towards His Mother what dutiful children are wont to do when they manifest their feelings of respect and love for their parents; what forbids us to suppose that He who enjoined the command: "Children, honor thy father and thy mother," obeyed His own injunction. Yes, He was obedient to them; we are told this in the Gospel. After He had been found in the temple we see Him retiring with them to dwell in poverty working as an artisan for His livelihood. And during all these years, those thirty years, who can tell the mutual love of Jesus and Mary. Sum up all you have heard or all you have read of the love of a mother for her child or the love of a child for its mother. Imagine all that thought can conceive or words utter with regard to maternal love and filial obedience; picture the kindly spoken words, the loving smiles that are exchanged, the tender looks that are given, the embraces that pass between a loving mother and a loving child, and even then you have not a correct idea of the affection existing between Mary and her darling Child. To understand their love you must become acquainted with their feelings, and to do that you must fathom the secret of their hearts. The heart of Mary most pure, the heart of Jesus most loving, throb for throb, sigh for sigh, joy for joy; the heart of Jesus rests upon the heart of Mary and there finds a love that is not human, a love that is far more than angelic; it is the love of a mother for her God, the love of God for His Mother.

Such was the life of these souls upon earth; it was a life of mutual love. Death came and severed Mary

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from the corporal presence of her Son, but later on again death came and united Mary with Him. Is it difficult for us to understand how that same love which bound those holy souls together in this life still exists in Heaven? Is it hard for us to understand to what an eminence Mary must have been raised in heaven if this life be a life of merit? Here she took care of her God and ministered to His wants, watched over Him in His infancy, directed Him in His youth and suffered intensely with Him during His passion; she shared in the joys and sufferings of our Blessed Lord upon this earth more than any other creature, a partaker in all His works; in His glory will she not be permitted to participate? And as His glory is in the highest in heaven, will we not be doing right when we place at His right hand above the Seraphim and Cherubim, above all the saints and Doctors of the Church, His Immaculate Mother Mary, hailing her as did the Angel as full of grace, as the Queen of Angels, the Queen of Patriarchs and Prophets, the Queen of Apostles, the Queen of Martyrs? Yes, my friends, we are right in honoring her, for God Himself honored her, the Trinity honored her in granting her the greatest blessing that could be given to a creature, namely, the honor of being the Mother of God. As good Christians let us honor then the Mother of God, and let us remember that her power with her divine Son is beyond calculation; let us gather then about her Altars on the feast of the Immaculate Conception and offer to her our litanies and songs of praise. Gather you who are pure in the sight of God and free from sin, for here is your queen, the Queen of Purity. Gather you who are bent under the weight of mortal sin, whose souls are darkened; gather around, for remember that Mary is your mother, the refuge of sinners; gather about you who are exposed to temptation and dangers every day of your life, for remember that she is the Virgin most powerful; gather about you who are afflicted through life, you who

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suffer from poverty and want, you who are made wretched in your family, for remember she is the consoler of the afflicted. All will find hope and consolation in Mary the Mother of Mercy.

But besides invoking the Blessed Virgin there is another duty that we should practise, and that is, that we should endeavor to imitate her virtues. Christ is our model in perfection, but Christ is God, and the task of imitating Him appears difficult. Well, here is Mary, a creature like to ourselves, may we not attempt to imitate her? True, her soul is the reflex of Christ's own pure soul, but still we must pray to her, to obtain for us by her powerful intercession the grace to begin, and the grace to persevere in imitating her. There may be some among you who boast of being members of her Holy Rosary. Some again, nay all, may say that they daily bear her livery, for they wear her scapular; others there are again who come still nearer to that fountain of holiness and style themselves her children, band themselves together in sodalities and call her by the name of Mother. To such we would say they are performing a good work; they are indeed followers of Mary, they indeed honor her, for they testify publicly to the world the honor, the love and the respect they show to the Mother of God. But even in their midst we fear that there may be some who, if they ask themselves whether or not they are really trying to imitate the Blessed Virgin, must hear the answer that they have been negligent; that they have been faithless, that they have wandered away far from their Mother; they will find that they have been forgetting their contract and their act of consecration to the Mother of God. There will be found in their midst some who, during the day lose hours, who during the week lose days, and who during the month lose weeks, yet they cannot devote one-half of the evening at Mary's shrine; they are off chasing after the pleasures of the world or perhaps sinning. To that class

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we would say: Courage, make another effort; the month of Mary is a month of grace, and if you ask her to obtain for you the grace of conversion, the grace of again turning to her service, you will find that on the last night of this beautiful month of May when you will again call upon her to renew your consecration, that you will rise from her altar a true child prepared to follow her, prepared to imitate her in a manner that will secure your happiness in this world and a place of glory with Mary in the next.

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*“ And He went down with them, and came
to Nazareth, and was subject to them.”*
LUKE II. 51.

You have heard the Gospel from which these few words are taken. When our Blessed Lord was twelve years old His parents took Him with them to Jerusalem. They were wont to go there for the celebration of the Paschal feast. When returning home they missed Him and went back to Jerusalem to seek Him, and there, seated in the midst of the doctors of the law, the wise men of the day, they found Him hearing them and asking them questions. Mary, with all the love of a mother who finds a child that is lost, rejoiced, and the boy Jesus came away with her and went down to Nazareth and there remained subject to Mary, His mother, and Joseph, His foster-father. In a word He was obedient to them. By that single act Christ gave us an example that all are obliged to imitate; by that single act He proclaimed a principle to the world which if acted upon would be its salvation; for He established the principle of authority and the correlative duty of submission; the principle that men should respect all legitimately es-

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established authority, the very principle which in our day is being lost sight of and practically denied.

We would speak to you of obedience, and in the first place we would ask what we mean by obedience. Obedience is the subjection of our will to some lawfully constituted authority, it is the acknowledgment of authority on the one hand and submission on the other. It is an action testifying to the existence of law and producing as its effects order and harmony. It is the power which in time of war achieves wonders and wins victories on the field of battle; it is the power which in time of peace, sustains nations and makes them prosperous. To-day the cry of the world is for liberty. Men clamor for their rights; the word duty is forgotten. They imagine that liberty and law cannot co-exist, and therefore law is trodden under foot; instead of liberty they would have license, instead of order, anarchy. Upon nothing is this sad effect more apparent than on religion; for there are men to-day who are drawing their own conclusions respecting the manner in which they are to serve God. Men are wandering about in error, questioning truths that have been revealed since the foundation of the world; casting doubts upon the origin and destiny of man, reducing him to a mere animal and all this because they will not admit the right of God's authority. Hence they wander erring, not knowing what to believe; hence it is that religion to-day outside of the one true Church cannot present you with any fixed creed if you demand it, it can only offer you the opinions of men, ever fluctuating and changing. The principle of authority which should link and weld them together is denied, obedience has become impracticable, and unity impossible. But is obedience necessary in the world? Would we not be better without it, better without laws and rules that we must follow in our daily life? Did our Creator ever intend that we should be bound down by laws? Go and question the material creation around

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you; go to the heavens and ask those planets which have revolved for centuries why they are so orderly in their course. Ask of the sun why it shows itself each succeeding day to our gaze and lights up our world; ask of the moon whence and why it borrows the light, that makes of our night day, and dispels the darkness of the tomb from a living world; go and ask of Ocean as it tosses madly at your feet, why it chafes and does not overstep its shores; ask the earth, hard and frozen, why it relaxes and gives forth life again; ask the waters thundering from mountain precipices whose is the hand which drives them so hurriedly to the embrace of Ocean. Go ask of fire, air, earth, water, why they are subject to law, and they will tell you that they but serve the will of Him who made them; they are but subject to their Creator. The bulky universe and the minute star move both subject to the laws of their being, to the laws ordained for them by their Creator. But man, is he to be subject to law? Enter the family; why is it that the individuals who compose it remain together? The child born into this world is dependent, it cannot provide for itself for years, it is powerless; it must be obedient to the laws of its being, it must cling to its parents for support and subsistence; thus the family is held together. Again, look at the numberless families growing up together and known as one great family under the name of Society, how could it last were it not for this principle of obedience, this subjection to law? How could the state be held together, and how further the interests of all?

If you would behold the necessity of obedience and at the same time its power, consider that great society which is called the Church, whose children are scattered over the whole surface of the earth! behold its immensity, it is not confined to any one particular country, it spreads the world over embracing men of different nationalities, men whose judgment differs in all things save the Doctrine of the Church, the theologian lost in the considera-

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tion of the revealed world, the philosopher questioning God's own being and attributes, the scientist seeking for knowledge from the world around, examining God's wonders in creation, weighing the heavens and measuring the distances of the planets, carrying out the command of God to subject the earth; men of culture rich in the knowledge of the world's past and casting the horoscope of its future; men of power remarkable for their keen-sightedness and quickness of comprehension; all these are held together, knit together closely in the bonds of one faith and of one religion by Her power. She has stood eighteen hundred years on the battle field, for never like her Divine Founder did she have respite. To-day persecution from without would take up arms against her, and her children would be compelled to lay down their lives for their faith or fly to distant lands; but like the wind of heaven which sows the seeds of earth, persecution but spreads abroad the Christian name over the whole world. To-morrow heresy in all its forms would endeavor to sweep some doctrine from Her Creed; but like the opposition of the heated iron to the hammer which beats it into form, heresy but serves to bring out more clearly the dogmas of Catholic Faith. The world in its power and wealth would oppose that society and ask it to relax its code of morality. The sceptred monarch would demand privileges, the crowned head favors that could not be granted without an infringement of divine law; but knowing Her mission to obey God rather than man, their demand was left unheeded. The bigot blinded by his hate would fling ridicule upon Her, and the fanatic in his misguided zeal misrepresent Her to the world. Still majestically, queen-like, She proceeds upon her way, leaving in her wake empires in ruin, kingdoms in the dust, crowns trembling and thrones tottering. Unshaken and unyielding She moves on in the promise of Her Divine Founder: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

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How do we account for this unity, this stability in the midst of a world which witnesses the weakness, the discord of all things temporal? How account for this remarkable phenomenon? By the power of Him who has engrafted this society upon Himself so that we are all real members of His body; flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone; after that power it is owing the acknowledgment the principle of obedience recognized and acted upon by Her children. This it is which draws and binds the Catholic masses to their clergy. This it is which binds the clergy to the Priesthood, to the Episcopacy, and the Episcopacy to that great centre, that great heart which gives life-blood and strength to the millions of its children, the Papacy. Men of the world if asked the cause of this phenomenon would say that the devotion of the laity to the priest is a bigoted superstition. No, it is the outcome of faith in the great heart of the people who, after looking upon the face of their Christ are quick enough to recognize in the Priesthood the traits they have adored in Him. Men would say it is the growth of ignorance; but no! that it is the enlightened homage which millions of intellects pay willingly to the virtues of humility, chastity, love of learning, zeal for man's salvation, the spirit of labor and union with God. Men say it is the result of fear. No! it is but the outpouring of a love which has been growing in the hearts of the faithful laity for eighteen centuries, fed year after year, as the sea by flowing rivers, by the service of a Priesthood whom gold could not corrupt, nor labor tire, nor persecution crush, nor the fear of death itself sever from the flocks which God had committed to their charge. No! It is owing after God to the living and practical obedience of the children of the Church to their Supreme Head. Behold the power and necessity of obedience; nature in her works gives that lesson, and man when he would live the life of a moral being must

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respect law and order, must become subject, must necessarily be obedient to authority.

You may ask why we choose to speak to you on such a subject. Would it not be more fitting that we should speak to you of the Blessed Virgin, you who are the children of Mary, you who profess to honor her even more than others, would it not be more fitting that we should speak to you of some of her virtues and show you the manner of practising them? Well, if we are not speaking to you of the Blessed Virgin, we are speaking to you in a manner that we hope will bear fruit and make you more ardent admirers of Mary, and closer imitators of her virtues, for we speak to you as to a society gathered together to honor publicly the Mother of God; to a society whose devotion is not to last for a day, for a week or for a month. We speak to you as to those who should continue their devotion to Mary for their lifetime, and hence we speak to you of obedience. For being a sodality in honor of Mary you are to appear before the world as such, and to appear as a society, as a body having interest in our common cause, your first duty is to know what constitutes and makes up the life and strength of every society. This is what we have endeavored so far to show you: that the life and strength of every society is obedience on the part of those who are its members. Having once become the member of any of these societies, you have a mission, the mission of keeping the Blessed Virgin in all her beauty and loveliness before the world. This is the mission which the Church entrusts to you when she permits you to unite in honor of that glorious Mother. She well understands that if Mary and the knowledge of Mary is to be kept before the world, the only possible way would be to centralize that devotion in some institution, and hence it is that she allows and calls upon young men and young women the world over to form themselves into these societies. But fruitless will be the effort if you do not

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perform your task; you are not called upon to preach this knowledge and love of the Blessed Virgin to the world publicly; you are not called upon to perform any great work in her honor; you are not asked to make her the subject of your conversation continually; you are not required to perform any great work in her honor; you are required to do but one thing, which is to practise the virtue of obedience; do but this and you will be faithful to your mission, you will accomplish great things. This silent work of yours will enlighten the hearts of many whom you little think. At first a desire will seize upon the beholder to be among your number, and on that desire will follow its accomplishment. Remember that when you entered this society it was from an act of choice, you were notified that it was a free act, and you should live up to all the laws, the rules and regulations that you have imposed upon yourselves. If you do this you will be practising the obedience we have been endeavoring to inculcate, and the effect will be a mighty one; it will be the result of some hundreds of souls striving after their own salvation, and giving edification to a whole parish. You cannot say that too much is demanded of you, for after all, what is asked of you? You are not called to any great degree of perfection, you are but called upon to live the life of an ordinary Christian; to receive Holy Communion monthly and present yourselves at the tribunal of Penance. These are but duties which the majority of Catholic souls should perform, and this is but the extra weight, the great burden that you imagine you have to carry. The only difference is, that you are called upon to perform these actions publicly, in a body, and this is the great law of your society which you should fully resolve to fulfill every month as the time comes round. If on the other hand you are not faithful, if you have become members and after a few months grow tired of this restraint, you are in the way, impeding the progress of your society, chill-

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ing its life, freezing its activity; you are like recreant soldiers on the battle field, halting when called upon to march.

But are we demeaning ourselves by this life of obedience? To answer this question we have but to ask ourselves what was the life of our Blessed Lord upon this earth. It was a life of untiring obedience; He tells us that He came into this world to do the will of His Father who sent Him. What was His life of thirty years while living with Mary and Joseph? It was the life of obedience. We can well fancy Him as the boy Jesus in the house at Nazareth, obedient to the call and ready to carry out the wish of His mother when once expressed. When grown up we can imagine Him taking part with St. Joseph, helping him in his work shop, rendering his work light by sharing his labors. Again, during His public life of three years when He came forth to choose His Apostles, was He not carrying out and fulfilling the mission upon which He was sent by His Father of establishing His Church? And finally when the moment came when He was to sacrifice Himself for the sins of the world in order that He might save man; when in the garden of Olives there started up before His vision the sins and iniquities of a thoughtless and wicked world; when every human being destined to tread this earth stood there shifting his sins upon the shoulders of the innocent Jesus, sins that made Him quail with fear and brought the blood in huge drops from His Sacred Body; what was His cry but the cry of obedience: "Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass away, yet not My will but Thine be done."

Take the life of the Blessed Virgin: That too was a life of obedience. Kneeling one day in prayer she was startled by a voice not of earth, and looking up she beheld an angel saluting her: "Hail full of grace." Mary is for a moment astonished, but she is told not to fear, that she is to be the mother of the Desired of Na-

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tions, that she is to be the mother of the long expected Son of God. The Mother of God! What did that entail? "That Mary should hear these words spoken by Simeon; that a sword of grief her heart should pierce;" that Mary should lead a life of constant suffering and sacrifice. It meant that Mary was to be the co-redemptrix of the world, that she was to be the representative of the human race and that she was to suffer and feel in some measure the pangs that our Blessed Lord experienced. It meant that from the very moment in which she would give her consent to be the mother of God, His sufferings and His sacrifices would be ever after vividly before her. Imagine her then a mother, bearing about in her arms that Infant Child, knowing and feeling day after day the sorrows that were in store for Him; imagine her gazing on Him for those thirty long years with these thoughts in her mind. Finally, imagine that mother of dolors following Him through the different stages of His Passion, seeing Him beaten down to earth by the blows of His enemies, hearing the shouts of the mob who were thirsting for His blood. Imagine her hearing the echo of the hammers driving the nails through His sacred hands and feet, hands that have ever blessed and feet that have never tired running after the penitent. The cross is raised and the bitter agony of three hours begins; the blood courses from His wounds, His lips grow livid, and from a breast heaving its life's last sigh go forth the words: "It is consummated." Mary must stand and suffer. Where is the mother who would not refuse to give birth to a child which she knew would perish in her presence upon the scaffold? Yet Mary knew all this, knew that she was to be the mother of the victim to be offered for sin, knew that she must suffer with Him; and yet when the angel made known to her that it was heaven's wish that she should become the Mother of God, and in consequence the mother of sorrow, she manifested her obedience and her

willingness, saying: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word." Where could we find a more perfect picture of obedience.

We might proceed to point out the same virtues for you in the life of St. Joseph and we might then leave that happy family and show you how the saints, who loved and practised it, how they gained heaven as a reward for their willing service. But since we have pointed out this virtue in the life of her we call Mother we need go no farther, for the child is always willing to model itself after the mother. Hence we ask you Children of Mary to begin to sacrifice your will to what is right and proper, as Mary, your mother, has done before you. As one vice alone can cause the loss of your immortal souls, so, too, can the practise of one single virtue bring about their salvation; so let us practise this virtue in order that we may be saved.

When we consider the inner life of any religious community, we see that all goes on orderly, each one attached to some particular work. The whole community acts and moves as though it were but one individual. When we see this the conclusion forces itself upon us that it must be easy for these persons to save their souls, for in every action they perform in virtue of their superior's order they consider it an action performed for God; the will of their superior is God's will. We wish to be like them, we would like to know what God demands of us. No matter what may be our station in life we can be like them by living up to the duties of our station in life.

There are three ways whereby God makes known His will to us and what He would have us do. In the first place He gives us His Ten Commandments, commandments equally binding upon all, no matter what may be our station in life; commandments which tell us of our duties to God and to our neighbor. In the second place His representative, the Church, to whom He has trans-

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mitted His own power and authority, makes known to us God's will in its precepts, and these precepts are likewise equally binding upon all the faithful, from the Pope, who is Christ's own Vicar, down to the young child that has just attained the use of reason. Like the Ten Commandments given to Moses, they admit of no exception; all must obey. Besides these two means of which God makes use, and which are common to all, there is also a special manner in which God chooses to make known His will to man. Whoever we are, or whoever we may be, we are always living in some particular state of life to which God has called us, and in that particular state we have certain duties which we should be faithful in discharging. You then who are the devout clients of Mary, you who are bound by the Ten Commandments of God, and by the Six Precepts of the Church, you are likewise asked to be faithful in the performance of certain duties which you have taken upon yourselves in virtue of your state of life, in virtue of your becoming sodalists and Children of Mary. You are asked to be obedient to the laws of your society, to perform the duties enjoined by those laws, to receive the Sacraments monthly, to assist at Benediction, to show yourselves the worthy daughters of the Queen of Angels and Saints.

Performing these few duties you will be faithful to your mission, you will practise that one virtue which will save you; for it will be the seed of others. You will deserve to witness a scene in heaven like to that which we witness on earth this evening; not the crowning of Mary by her children, but of her children crowned by that good Mother, with a crown, the precious stones of which encircleth the brow of every good and faithful servant; a crown of glory and of happiness which endureth forever and ever.

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PRAYER.

*“ Be not faint-hearted in thy mind ;
neglect not to pray.”*

ECCLES. vii. 9.

WHAT is prayer, and what are its conditions? Prayer, though men may complain and say that they can not pray, is not an art or a science, a task that has to be learned; but it is a cry of need, uttered by the creature when he sees his dependence upon his God. The poor beggar in our streets is not taught to ask for alms, to make known his wants to the passers by. He does not come before them with studied phrase, and assumed manner, but stands a picture of want, in tattered garments, with outstretched hand, trusting to the generosity of those who behold him. Neither should the man who prays come before his God with head erect, with independent air, as the proud Pharisee; telling Him of his virtues, and thanking Him that he is not like the rest of men. As there is nothing more disgusting to men than the proud beggar, so there is nothing more hateful in the sight of heaven than the proud suppliant.

We then ask ourselves what are the conditions of prayer. In the first place we should pray with humility,

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that is to say, pray with the knowledge that we are nothing, have nothing, and can promise ourselves nothing. That all we are, that all we have and will have comes entirely from Him who is the author of our being.

In the second place, we should pray with confidence, trusting in God, trusting and believing in that infinite power that can do all things, realizing the fact that we are not asking from one whose riches can be exhausted or who will deal with us miserly; but on the contrary, that we are asking from One who is all powerful, whose treasures can never fail, and whose goodness endureth forever.

In the third place, we should pray with perseverance, struggling and contending with God, knowing full well if He does not grant our request immediately it is either because He wishes to accustom us to the virtue of prayer; or, like the father who will not give to his child that which will injure him, He sees that what we ask will not profit us unto the Salvation of our souls.

Let us examine and see the effect and power of prayer. If our prayers be humble, be confident, be persevering, and if we ask for what will aid us in obtaining the salvation of our souls our prayers will be infallible in procuring for us from God's treasures whatever we seek. This is a startling declaration, for, how often have we prayed, how often have we asked for some favor, for health, for prosperity, the conversion of a friend, and the heavens seemed to be closed against us; for we did not receive the benefit we sought for; and yet we tell you prayer, with those conditions, is infallible. If we wished to prove the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar we would open the revealed word of God Himself, and we would find that He there promised to remain with us under the appearance of bread and wine. Again, if we wished to establish the infallibility of Christ's Church upon this world in teaching mankind the truth, we would again appeal to the inspired Word,

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and we would hear Christ promising the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who was to come and remain with that Church to the end of time, and preserve it from error. And so, too, when we would establish the infallibility of prayer in obtaining for us whatever we ask, we should turn to that inspired Word and inquire whether Christ ever promised to hear our prayers. If He has so promised, He must be true to His word, and we are as certain of the effect of prayers as we are of the Real Presence, or the continuance of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, abiding with the Church.

Again, if we would establish the Real Presence upon our Altars, we might appeal to another form of proof, namely: That the world has believed it for ages, and that the children of the Church throughout every age have been ready to bear testimony to that truth in the shedding of their blood. Or, if we would establish the infallibility of God's Church, centuries would testify to the fact that despite the numerous persecutions through which the Church has passed and the heresies from which she has suffered, her doctrines are the same for Pope Pius and his subjects in the twentieth century as they were for Peter and his followers in the first. And so, too, if we would establish the efficacy of Prayer we can point to the fact that prayer has even been efficacious in obtaining from God's bounty whatever was sought for by the humble, confident and persevering suppliant. Here then we have the two-fold proof that our prayers may always be powerful, may always obtain that which we ask, for Christ promises and that promise has ever been fulfilled.

Has Christ then promised to hear us when we converse with Him? Has He promised ever to lend a willing ear to our entreaties and petitions? Let us place ourselves in spirit before that great Teacher, and listen to the words that fall from His lips while addressing the Disciples who press about Him on the Mount. Let us

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open the Gospel and seek an answer to our question; we will hear our Blessed Lord say to those who surround Him: "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogue, and at the corners of the street, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you they have received their reward. But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee openly and will give thee whatsoever thou dost ask. And when you are praying, speak not as the heathens do, for they think they are heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like them, for your Father sees what you stand in need of before you ask Him. You therefore shall pray to Him in this manner: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our supersubstantial bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.'"

Ask of your Heavenly Father to make His name known to the uttermost limits of the earth. Ask Him to erect His kingdom within the hearts of men, ask that His will may be done upon this earth by His creatures, ask for your daily sustenance and for the pardon of your offences; ask that you may be preserved daily from all evil both of soul and body, and Amen I say to you, your Father who seeth in secret will reward you; then continuing He says; "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." And then, as though some doubting, were wavering as to whether this sacred promise would be fulfilled, He proceeds to encourage them and to fill them with confidence by reminding them that God is their Father; a Father, and consequently interested in their welfare, one who

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would be ever ready and willing to gratify their just demands, one who regards them as His children who are to be provided for in all their necessities. "What man is there among you," He says, "if his son ask for bread will give him a stone; or, if he ask for a fish will he give him a serpent; and if you, then, being evil, 'being sinners and sinful,' know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them who ask Him?" And then having appealed to their own feelings and sentiments, to the feelings and sentiments of humanity, as a proof that God would grant whatsoever they asked, since God was their Father, He goes still farther, and shows them with what fatherly care God in His providence looks after even the most minute of His creatures. "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? Again, consider the lilies of the field: How they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin, and yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothed the grass of the field which to-day is cut down and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more you, O ye of little faith." Have we not now an answer to our question, as to whether Christ actually promised that our prayers would be powerful, could this power be more explicitly stated, be more expressly given? Time and again He repeats it throughout the Gospel. Nay more he makes use of that solemn form which might be likened to an oath. "Amen, Amen, I say to you, you will receive your reward."

Perhaps there is a question presenting itself to the minds of some of you; for there may be some here present who have asked and have not received an answer, who have knelt in prayer time and again and asked for some particular favor; they will ask how was it that I

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did not receive it? Well we have on the one hand the never failing promise of our Blessed Lord that our Father who is in heaven hears and grants our requests, on the other hand we know that there are times when we do not receive that which we ask for; but our only legitimate conclusion is that we must have asked amiss; we must have prayed for something that would stand in our way rather than aid us in gaining our salvation. We must have prayed without that humility, that confidence, and never tiring perseverance, which makes prayer efficacious; Christ Himself who is the Truth has promised as we have seen, promised even with an oath, that our prayers will be heard and our requests granted.

Let us now turn to our second question. Examine into the power of prayer, examine instances of efficacious prayer. Has prayer ever been heard and answered? If we turn to Scripture we will find its every page testifying to its miraculous power. We will find the Apostles in the midst of storm, trembling with fear and fright, calling upon their Divine Master to awake and save them. In an instant the winds and sea become calm. We will find the sick and infirm carried to our Blessed Lord, and we will hear them commanded to arise and walk to their homes. A father will come, bathed in tears, and in a voice choked with sobs, ask that his daughter may live. He is told that his daughter liveth. A young woman will throw herself before Him distracted with grief and will tell Him of the death of her brother, and that brother, though four days dead, will be restored to her. A lone widow following the remains of her only son will hear a voice commanding the funeral procession to halt, and taking the young man by the hand He will command him to arise, and give him up to his mother. The lepers driven from society on account of their disease will stand afar off on the mountain side and call out to Jesus who is passing: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us," and immediately they

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are cleansed of their leprosy and restored to their families and friends.

In fact, the whole Gospel record is the record of miracles performed through prayer; and so, too, if we glance over the Old Testament, we will see the miraculous power and effect of prayer. The prophet Elias, by prayer, sealed up the heavens for three years, so that no rain or dew fell upon the earth. Going into the town of Seraptha, he prays God to restore life to the child of a widow mother, and his prayer is heard. Joshua prays, and the laws of nature are suspended; the sun stands still in the heavens until he had conquered his enemies. The three children who had been thrown into a fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar were preserved intact through prayer. Prayer, rather than the sword, struck off the head of the impious Holofernes, and preserved Daniel when thrown into the den of lions. Prayer is all powerful, so powerful that God cannot resist it; as we see in the case of Moses when he saved his people from the wrath of God which was about to descend upon them. Moses had ascended The Mount to receive the tables of stone whereon the law was inscribed; the rebellious Jews turned to their idols, and the Lord in His anger spoke to Moses, saying: "Let me alone that my wrath may be kindled against them and that I may destroy them." But Moses besought the Lord his God, saying: "Why, O Lord, is thy indignation kindled against them. No, I will not permit you to strike them; spare them I beseech you, spare them lest the Egyptians may say he craftily led them out into the mountains that he might destroy them. Remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and spare them; remember thy servants to whom thou sworest by thy own self: 'I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and this whole land that I have spoken of I will give to your seed, and you shall possess it forever.'" And the Lord we are told was appeased from doing the evil which He had spoken against His people. But if you would be-

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hold a more touching example still of the power of prayer you will find it in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God wished to destroy those cities on account of their lusts and impurities; but before doing so He acquainted Abraham of His intention. And Abraham immediately began to plead for the safety of Sodom, saying: "Lord, do not be angry with me, thou wilt not destroy the just with the wicked; if there be fifty just men in the city wilt thou not spare the place for the sake of the fifty just; far be it from thee to slay the just with the wicked." And the Lord said to him: "If I find in Sodom fifty just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." And Abraham answered and said: "Seeing I have once begun I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes. What if there be five less than fifty just persons, wilt thou for five and forty destroy the whole city?" and He said: "I will not destroy it if I find five and forty." And again Abraham said to Him: "But if forty be found what wilt thou do?" He said: "I will not destroy it for the sake of forty." "Lord," said Abraham, "be not angry if I speak; what if thirty shall be found there?" He answered: "I will not do it if I find thirty there." "What if twenty-five be there?" He said: "I will not destroy for the sake of twenty." For the last time Abraham spoke and said: "I beseech thee be not angry Lord if I speak once more: What if ten shall be found there?" and He said: "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." And that wicked city, through the prayers of Abraham, would have been saved could there have been found but ten just souls within it.

But what need have we for reciting all the examples that the Scripture offers? Have we not the testimony of six thousand years. Never has a day gone by since man was formed and placed upon this earth but he prostrated himself before God. Nations and individuals alike bear testimony to the power of prayer. The savage in his

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forest home, and the civilized man in the heart of a large city, both alike bow down and adore. Prayer has been the cry of all nations and of all people who are scattered abroad upon the world. Must it not then be powerful since the world still clings to it after a period of sixty centuries? Can we not each one of us testify to the power of prayer in our lives? Ask the religious, shut up in his quiet cell, how it is that he has overcome the world and its pleasures; how it is that he can thus bury himself alive within that living grave, and he will tell you that it is the effect of prayer to, and contemplation of, his God. Go ask within the Sanctuary how that man standing and offering up the Sacrifice of the Mass was raised to that high station of sharing in the Priesthood of Christ, and he will tell you that it is again the effect of prayer offered day after day, week after week, and year after year. Perhaps from his very youth he has been asking God to call him to that high state; now he stands before you the Priest, scarcely knowing how difficulties have been set aside or overcome; scarcely knowing how he has gained that summit. He can but say to you: I desired that office; I prayed for it, and told my God in my prayers that He had promised that if we would but ask it would be granted; and therefore I asked for this office as a means of saving my soul, and God heard that petition and granted that request.

Again, ask the man whom you may have known as the slave of some vice, ask him how he overcame that habit of sin; he will tell you that on a certain day and at a certain hour I entered into myself, saw my weakness, felt how powerless I was if God did not aid me, and therefore I called upon Him and resolved to lead a different life, and asked for the help and assistance of His Grace. Since then I have been a free man, freed from passions which would have enslaved me. Ask even the man who does not make use of prayer as a means of overcoming temptation, ask him the power of

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prayer and he must needs admit it. That man goes to confession, some detestable vice has a hold upon him, weighs him down so that he feels he cannot free himself from it; his confession made, he is given a means of overcoming that particular temptation, perhaps some small prayer, a mere ejaculation, the sacred names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. He goes forth fully determined to use that prayer, the temptation comes, the forbidden pleasure presents itself to his imagination; the prayer, too, comes to mind; he fears to use it, he feels that it would have the effect of saving him, but no, he chooses to fall into the old sin again. Is this an exaggerated picture? Is it not true that we sometimes fear prayer, lest we play the coward as the world holds, when we wish to commit some forbidden action.

Let me extort you then, since Christ has promised to hear our prayers, and since we have seen and now understand in some manner the power of prayer; let me exhort you to pray devoutly and fervently. Make known your necessities humbly, confidently, perseveringly, and rest assured God will listen to your requests and grant whatever you may stand in need of. Pray and ask unceasingly for the gift of perseverance, that you may not waver; pray for friends and relatives, for sinners, pray in all your troubles and in all your necessities, and rest assured that since God has pledged Himself to hear us, our prayers will not go unanswered.

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MARY, OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS AND OUR HOPE.

“Hail Holy Queen, Our Life, Our Sweetness and Our Hope.”

THE beautiful titles which the Church applies to the Blessed Virgin astonish us. We glance over her Litany and there we see epithets that we feel should be applied to God alone. We hear her styled the Mother of Divine Grace, the Cause of our Joy, the Refuge of Sinners, the Help of Christians, the highest among Hierarchy of Heaven. These salutations of praise we know to be the expressions of a heart filled with love; they are the expressions and outpourings of the great heart of the Church, and we feel that it has all but styled her our God, and hence we are amazed. And hence it is no doubt that those who differ from us in religion think that we actually make of her a goddess, and give unto her the worship that is due to God alone. But upon reflection we find that all these terms of love and praise may be showered upon the Mother of God without derogating in the least from God's honor. We find that we may apply to her those strong expressions made use of in the HAIL HOLY QUEEN, “OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS AND OUR HOPE.”

They belong primarily to God, they belong in a peculiar manner to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And if we would realize this, we have but to ask ourselves what would this world be without Jesus Christ, Who is by excellence, our life, our consolation, and our hope. Erase His name, blot it out from the hearts of men and this life of ours is death! For what is our life? Man's life upon this earth is not a mere animal life, it is not to eat, sleep and drink; they are but attributes of the animal part of man. Endowed with reason and intelligence as he is, his life is something more, it is something intellectual; and to live an intellectual life he must have truth.

His intelligence, whether he wills it or not, will propose questions to him which must be answered. They will be: whence he came and whither he is going; why he is here. And if these questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, life is a failure; it would be better for him if he did not exist. But, once answer these questions which his mind naturally proposes to him, and he has the key of life, then he understands its mysteries, and becomes an intellectual being.

But where shall he find their solution? Who will give him the answer to them? If he asks the wise ones of the world they differ and contradict one another. Leaving Christ out of view and consulting the world's past, man will find all manner of solutions offered, he will find the mind darkened, doubt upon every side, and his life an enigma that cannot be solved, but let in the light of Christ into his mind, let him speak and let His doctrines and teachings be accepted, and life is no longer a maze but a wonderful reality; it is no longer animal, intellectual merely, but something more: it is supernatural. He will learn that he has come from the hand of God, that he is going back from this land of exile and separation to his Father, and that that Father is doing all He can to aid and assist him through this dangerous and perilous journey of life.

Again, erase the name of Jesus Christ and where is the consolation and sweetness of life? Would life be worth living without Him? Would it not be miserable and filled with bitterness? Look abroad over the world and see the millions of men who are toiling from early morning till late evening, endeavoring to eke out a miserable existence for themselves and their families in the midst of poverty. Do we wonder at the communistic ideas which are expressed? Would we wonder if we found poverty and wealth continually warring one with another, would we wonder if order and law were destroyed and anarchy held full sway? But again, let in the light of Christ's life into the world, let Him, the God-man, appear; let Him embrace a life of toil, be born in poverty, and have not a place whereon He might place His head, and immediately the poverty and misery which would have thrown the world into a state of disorder is condemned. It is content with its conditions, nay, more, men born to wealth will quit their possessions and take the life of poverty upon themselves, feeling that it has been blessed by the God-man Who embraced it when He said: "Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." Blot out that name of Jesus Christ and what a bitter world this would be. Picture death taking from us our friends, those who gave us life, those whom we held most dear upon this earth. Let us be told that they are dead, that they are to remain a mere clod of earth shut up in a grave; that once passing from our sight they are gone forever. Who could portray the bitterness of heart which would have to be endured by us upon this earth. But again, let in the light of Christ's wonders upon the world; let us hear Him, the God-man, proclaim that He is the Resurrection and the Life, that all who believe in Him, though they be dead, shall live, and all shall arise and live forever in happiness. Let us picture Him while upon this earth, stepping to the bier upon which the corpse is borne out for burial, and let us behold Him standing at the side of the

grave and calling back the dead to life; let us finally see Him rising from the dead Himself, and we cry out: "Oh grave, where is thy victory! Oh death, where is thy sting?" The grave is robbed of its horrors, and death comes to us as something to be desired; for it is the passage from this life with its cares and anxieties to a life which knows but joy and perfect happiness.

Once more let us blot out the name of Jesus Christ from the world, and what becomes of the virtue of hope, hope which lights up this world for us, changes the storm into sunshine, and even in our darkest hours rises like the moon in the calm quiet heavens, and tints our little troubles with its own peaceful light. What becomes of it? It is banished from the world, and we move about in a living grave wondering at our very existence. Groping about even as men would grope about if the sun were snatched from the heavens, all light, all life, all strength and beauty would be extinguished; we would wander about as in a labyrinth without being able to extricate ourselves, we would feel our passions warring with our better nature. To-day they would be our idols, and to-morrow we would endeavor to destroy them; one moment they would be our master and we would be ruled by them, while in the next we would hate them, and sorrow that they so governed us. We would regard life as a ceaseless warfare, only to find rest in the darkness of the tomb.

But again, let the light of Jesus Christ into the world, let us hear the consoling truth that this life is but a trial, and that a reward awaits the struggle beyond the grave, if only we prove ourselves victorious. Let us learn that these passions of ours are but the outgrowth of the first sin of disobedience against God, that man rebelled against God, and that revolt brought with it the rebellion of man's passions. Let us learn that He, the God-Man, will die for us, let us see the bold figure of the Cross, with Christ hanging upon it, with our passions nailed to it; let us learn that He is purchasing for us the world which we

had lost, that He will found a Church which is to bring light to the world, that within that Church He Himself will remain to strengthen us by His grace and by His Sacraments, let us be told that in our last hour when we are stretched upon a bed of sickness, and life is fast ebbing from us; let us be told that He our God will be brought to us, that we may receive Him, may become one with Him, and this world, with all its faults, with all its failings, will be a paradise, will be a foretaste of heaven compared to the world without the saving name of Jesus Christ. He then is our Life, our Strength and our Hope, He is indeed the Way, the Truth and the Life.

But you will ask me what has all this to do with the Blessed Virgin; how is she our Life, our Sweetness and our Hope. She is so by participation with Christ; the nearer a man approaches the perfection of Christ the more Christlike he becomes; the nearer the saint approaches in his life, the life of Christ, the greater saint he becomes. We call him a saint who has put on the holiness of Jesus Christ, we style him holy; neither does the glory of God suffer by styling those holy who strive and endeavor to become like Him; on the contrary, becoming like God in His perfections we naturally apply to him the epithets we apply to God. We call him just, while acknowledging God to be justice itself. We call him holy, while acknowledging God to be holiness itself. We style him pure of heart, though acknowledging God to be purity itself. And so it is with the Blessed Virgin; she shares in the perfections of Jesus Christ, she is more Christlike than all others; besides and in consequence thereof she shares in all His beautiful titles of honor. Consider the Mother and Son, how like they are; the perfections which are to be met with in Jesus Christ are to be met with in Mary also. As God possesses all perfections by nature, Mary as His mother possesses all her perfections through Him and by grace. Jesus is the fountain, the *origo et fons*. Mary is the receptacle, the vessel which took that

grace into her heart, in order that she might diffuse it among Christians, for as Richard of St. Victor says: "The Holy Virgin begot grace itself, nay the fountain of all grace."

Jesus is omnipotence itself and Mary possesses almost unlimited power, since all things, even God Himself, bend to her will; for whatever she could desire, as St. Anselm tells us: "He will be very condescending and disposed to hear." No one is more Christlike than Mary, and therefore no one can lay claim to a participation in His titles of honor more than Mary. She is His faithful image. On this earth the life of the Redeemer might be summed up by saying that He was the most humble, the most charitable, self-sacrificing, simply because His humility was the humility of a God, His charity the love of God, His self-sacrifice the sacrifice of a God. So likewise of Mary; we may say that her humility was the humility of the Mother of God, her charity the love of the Mother of God, her self-sacrifice the self-sacrifice of the Mother of God.

One and the same spirit animates those holy hearts, one and the same love binds them to us. Theirs was one and the same holy life. Hence it is that the Church may style Him our King, our Teacher and our Lord, while it may call Mary our Queen and our Lady. Hence it is that we may style Jesus our Advocate, for we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Just; Mary also is our advocate with Jesus. Hence it is that we may style Jesus the way to heaven, and Mary the gate of heaven. Hence it is in a word that we may sum up all and call Him our Father, while we address Mary as our Mother. She modeled herself upon all the perfections of God through His grace. She is our Life, our Sweetness and our Hope, for she is the Mother of Him who bringeth life, consolation and hope to the world. Let me then exhort you to be devout children of Mary, to show your love for Mary publicly and before the world.

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Come to her you who have been forgetting your devotion to the Mother of God. Come back to her and begin anew your devotion in her honor. Come to her you who are cast down in sin, for remember that she is the mother of life, the mother of Divine Grace; come to her you who may be troubled by the adversities of life, you who may have lost some dear friend in death; come to her, for remember she is the healer of our miseries, she is the sweetness of our life; come to her you who despair, who feel that God has abandoned you on account of your unfaithfulness; come to her, for remember she is our hope; come all to her, for she is a mother to us all, and has for us all a mother's love. Above all things else let me induce you one and all to have some devotion, some daily devotion to the Mother of God, and if I recommend one let it be that of her Holy Rosary. Reserve some niche, some corner in your homes for her statue, and in the evening gather about it, with your beads, in family prayer.

Some of you no doubt, now advanced in years, can remember a good father or a good mother collecting the members of the family in evening prayer before some little shrine of Mary. They have passed away, good pious souls and devout children of the Blessed Virgin, but perhaps their good example is lost or but seldom imitated. This should not be. If there is any one pleasant reminiscence they have left behind them it should be this, and if there is any wish of theirs which you know they would have you respect, it is that you, like them, should continue the good work in the midst of your families. Renew then your devotion to Mary, purchase a chaplet of beads, and let it be your constant companion. Carry it about with you, and recite it daily. I know full well that it is regarded by some as the companion of the ignorant, that it is meant only for pious souls who cannot read. This is not the intention of the Church, it is meant for all her children, from the Pope to the most ignorant child in her ranks. It is not intended only for the ignorant,

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else why should she hang that chaplet of the Virgin from the belt of Missionaries and Sisters, and ask them to recite it daily. It is one of the Church's devotions to Mary, it is if you will the devotion of the poor, of Christ's poor; but it should be the devotion of all.

If we who use our nicely covered books with gilded clasps, if we were examined and asked what lessons of piety and devotion we took from those books that the poor of Christ could not find in the beads, we are afraid many would be startled and would hear that strong saying of one of the Fathers of the Church ringing in their ears: *Surgunt indocti et rapiunt regnum Dei, dum nos cum literis Nostris mergimur in profundum.* They would be judged with the Pharisee in the Temple rather than with the Publican.

Pray to her then, call her by the sweet name of our Life, our Sweetness and our Hope. Tell her that as banished children of Eve we call upon her to turn her merciful eyes upon us, as we journey through this vale of tears, and entreat that when our exile is over, she may show unto us the blessed fruit of her womb, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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PRAYER.

*“ Let us go therefore to the throne
of grace, that we may obtain mercy.”*

HEB. IV. 16.

WHEN we read this Gospel and close the volume which contains it, two things come most forcibly before us when we ponder upon its meaning. The first is, the littleness of man; the second, the greatness of God. Man turning the powers of his soul in upon himself and considering what he really is in the sight of heaven, must conclude that he is indeed powerless; he sees that he is entirely dependent upon some other being, unable to do anything of himself. He realizes that the life which he enjoys, the strength of body, and the power of soul which he possesses are in the hands of another. Freely he obtained and freely can they be taken from him again; he begins to plan and speculate, talks of the future as though it were the present, speaks of what he will do, speaks as the man in the Gospel, of pulling down and of building up and presently a voice is heard saying: “Thou fool this night will I demand thy life of thee.” To-day he appears strong and powerful, robust and healthy, and on the morrow we find him beaten down by disease, brought in the short space of a few hours to the very verge of the grave, incurable, fading as the grass, and as the leaf that spring-

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eth out on a green tree, in a word utterly powerless. Contemplating God we find Him all powerful, subsisting of Himself, dependent upon no other. He but speaks and the world appears with its myriad wonders starting into life. He speaks, and man the only being capable of knowing and of loving Him stands before Him, wholly conscious of his dependence upon that Supreme Being. Again He speaks, and this time reveals Himself to man in the mystery of the Incarnation; and in this Gospel we find Him telling us how powerful in every word and deed He is. Though without the wealth of the world, and despised by men, He tells His chosen followers that He is all powerful, tells them to ask for any thing in His name and they will receive it. He speaks indeed as the Monarch and as the King of Creation, for never was man before heard to say that he could give whatever was asked of him. Never before did sage, or king, or conqueror dare to say: "Ask for anything and you shall receive it." King Assuerus in all his power, when Esther, his wife, wished to offer her petition, could but say: "What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee; and what wilt thou have done? Although thou ask the half of my kingdom thou shalt have it." Christ alone could say: "Ask and you shall receive." And in that declaration we recognize His supreme power, we recognize a greatness which is infinite, a greatness which can bestow upon man the object of his desires; whether it be power, or glory, or riches, or even the kingdom of God, eternal life. The two things in this Gospel which arrest our attention are: The littleness of man and the greatness of God, which lead us to the conclusion that prayer is necessary for us, that we must have recourse to God.

We will propose a few questions to ourselves on prayer. We will ask what prayer is. How are we to pray in order that our prayers may be efficacious, and finally we will ask how it is that our prayers are not always heard; for often we pray and ask favors from God that are never granted

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to us. What then is prayer? We hear people say that they cannot pray. One would imagine that God had enjoined a duty that man could not fulfill; they cannot pray, they do not know what prayer is. It is not an art nor a science that they must study to acquire; it is not a lesson that they must learn, but it is simply the acknowledgment of our dependence upon God. Look upon the poverty-stricken who pass by you on the streets, who come knocking at your door soliciting alms, who meet you on the public thoroughfares with outstretched hands; ask them who taught them to beg. Go through the hospital wards in any city and view the patients tossing on their beds of pain, and watch their countenances; though not a word is spoken, how beseechingly do they look at you as though they asked: Can you do aught to ease my pain, to afford me relief in my suffering? Who teaches them how to pray? Who teaches them to look at you so imploringly as you pass by them? Again, behold the man of the forest wild; he stands at the foot of a lofty mountain peak, he sees the blinding lightning dart across the heavens, he hears the deafening thunder rolling overhead and reverberating through the hills, feels that danger is near and calls upon the mighty power that rules the storm to spare him. It is the cry of necessity, the cry for assistance; it is a prayer. Who has taught that savage? Take up the Inspired Word and you will there read of the poor publican coming into the temple; he stands at the door, strikes his breast and says: "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." That man goes down to his home justified by the mercy of God which he had implored. A leper comes down from the mountain, and casting himself before our Blessed Lord, says: "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" and Jesus stretching forth His hand touched him, saying: "I will. Be thou made clean." The Centurion came to Him telling Him that his servant lieth at home sick of the palsy and is grievously tormented, and Jesus makes answer, saying: "I will come and heal

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him." Two blind men sitting by the wayside hear that Jesus is passing by, and cry out: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us;" and Jesus, having compassion on them, touches their eyes, and they see. Who taught these to pray? Their words and phrases are not studied, but in their cry for help, and for assistance there is a seriousness, a faith, a confidence most astonishing.

Prayer then, is not a difficult task, it is but a devout conversation with God. It is the soul coming before God and telling Him of its wants, representing to Him its weakness, discovering to Him its temptations, begging pardon for its coldness and unfaithfulness; it is the soul conversing with Him who is the Lord and Master of all things. Yet how coldly, how carelessly do we speak to Him at times. If one of earth's great sovereigns were expected to visit us, how we would prepare for his coming; or if we had obtained permission to have an audience with one of the rulers of this world, how gratefully would we carry ourselves in his presence. Highly honored indeed would we consider ourselves; and while in his presence how attentive to his every word, how careful in our expressions, how watchful over our every action would we be. Yet when we go before God morning and evening, as we should do, with what an air of indifference and with what an air of coldness do we kneel before Him, "our words fly heavenward, our thoughts remain below." We make use of a set form of prayer, we repeat the words hurriedly, never thinking of their meaning, and before we are aware of it, we have finished and we scarcely know what we have been saying, what we have been asking for. How are we to account for this? How is it that we arise from our knees feeling that we have performed that duty. How can we correct this fault and pray without distraction, and converse with God devoutly and attentively. There is but one thing to do, we must prepare ourselves for prayer. If we were going to do any very particular work we would not rush into it hurriedly, we would first

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prepare ourselves for it, think how we would best accomplish it. If we were going to visit some person of rank, we would while on the way no doubt be occupied in preparing what we should say and how we should say it. In the same manner when saying our prayers we ought to prepare ourselves, think of Him to whom we are going to appeal, to Him who is Lord and Master of creation, to Him who holds this world in the hollow of His hand, to Him who holds our lives in His power, what are we going to say to Him; we are going to make use of the very prayer which He Himself has taught us, the Our Father. We are going to make use of that other prayer which was addressed to the Blessed Virgin by the Angel Gabriel, by St. Elizabeth and the Church: Hail Mary. We are going to make our profession of faith, telling Almighty God that we believe in the divinity of His Divine Son and in the truths of the Church. We are going to acknowledge most humbly before God and His Saints that we are sinners, and sinners through our own fault, and we are going to pray to Him to have mercy on us, and to grant us pardon and absolution for all our offences through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Do but this before you begin to pray. Let those few thoughts be in your mind and your words will form that attentive and devout conversation with God which constitute prayer.

But how are we to pray? What conditions are necessary for prayer in order that it may be efficacious? In the first place we are to pray with humility. God loves truth and if there be any truth on this world known to us more than another, it is that we have nothing that we can call our own, and that we continually stand in need of the divine assistance; from this acknowledgment it follows as a consequence that we should be humble, that we should appreciate and fully understand our real position, that we are really nothing, and that we have nothing except what we are, and what we have in the sight of God. This knowledge of ourselves constitutes the essence of hu-

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mility and it is with this proper conception of ourselves we must come before God if we expect to be heard by Him. Come before Him as the poor man before the wealthy one, saying to Him: "My Lord, behold my poverty, I hunger and thirst after your graces, I am devoid of virtue, I have gone to creatures and asked them to nourish my soul, and they have answered me that they could not, that but One alone was great and could do all things for me." If we go with these sentiments to our knees our prayers will infallibly obtain whatever we may ask, for it is written: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." "He hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and hath not despised their petition," "He resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble." Go before Him with the sentiments of the woman of Chanaan. You remember her humble prayer. St. Matthew tells us that when our Blessed Lord came to the confines of Tyre and Sidon, a woman of Chanaan followed Him, crying out: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously tormented by a devil." He heard her calling after Him, but took no notice, answering her not a word. The Disciples were troubled by her cries and asked Him to send her away, and thus keep her from crying out after them in the street. Jesus turning to her said: "I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." As though He would say I have nothing to do with you, since you are not an Israelite. This was a strong rebuke to the poor woman, but she did not seem to heed it; on the contrary we read that she worshipped Him, saying: "Lord, help me." And then turning to her again He said: "It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs." This was severe, it was even insulting if you will; but still the good woman in her humility admitted that though she was not of Israel, of the chosen people of God, if she could not eat at the Master's table she might be permitted to partake

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of the crumbs that fell from it; so she answered: "Yea, Lord; for the dogs also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their master." Her humble prayer had pierced the clouds of heaven, it had pierced the tender heart of Jesus, and she heard these words falling from His lips: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done unto thee as thou wilt," and her daughter was cured from that hour.

How far different is our prayer. She was a Pagan, and though a Pagan she prayed with humility. We are Christians, born in the full knowledge and light of revelation, knowing our littleness and our dependence; yet how do we pray? With pride in our hearts, we pray as though God were bound to hear us, we ask for graces and favors not as suppliants, but as masters who can command. If we receive our demands we never acknowledge them; if they be refused, we murmur and complain; complain as though God were obliged to give us whatever we choose to ask of Him. Then again our appearance in prayer; what is it do you think? Is it that of an humble suppliant who resigns himself wholly and entirely to the will of heaven? Consider the ostentation we betray even in the house of God, the look of pride we bear about with us, the affected position we assume when praying, the critical eyes that we are casting about on our neighbors. Is all this, think you, the exterior of a soul thoroughly understanding its position before God? Such a soul is naturally disappointed after its prayers are put up with mock humility to heaven.

In the second place we must pray with a lively faith and confidence. We know and fully understand that nothing transpires in this world without God's knowledge; and as He knows, likewise has He power to dispose of things as He wills; hence when we come before Him we should come as St. James tells us, "asking with faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea that is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore

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let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." We should come before Him with full confidence, feeling that He is all powerful and can grant us whatever He will. We are not asking of one whose power is limited, nor from one whose treasures will fail; we are asking from one who can do all things, from one who possesses all things. Neither are we asking from one who will deal with us miserly; but from one who is rich in mercies, from Him who in His mercy gave us Himself. All this should inspire us with confidence, and that confidence will obtain for us whatever we ask. It is a strange fact which will strike us when reading the prayers of those who besought Jesus to cure them; that He almost invariably attributed the effect of their prayers, not to His own goodness or His mercy, but to their faith and confidence in Him. Thus in the instance of the woman of Chanaan, of which we have just told you; He tells her that He has not found such faith as hers in Israel, and adds therefore: "Be it done unto thee as thou wilt." It is a primary condition that He seeks for before working any of His miracles, and we have an example of it in the case of the death of Lazarus.

Jesus comes to the house of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, and Martha hearing He was coming goes out to meet Him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died, but I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give Thee." Jesus said to her: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha answered: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus saith to her: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me although he be dead yet shall he live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever. Believest thou this?" She said to Him: "Yea, Lord; I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God who art come into the world;" and when she said these things, Jesus raised

Lazarus from the dead. Again, we read of a certain woman who had been troubled with an issue of blood for twelve years, and the inspired writer, St. Luke, tells us that she had bestowed all her substance upon physicians and could not be helped by any. She came behind Jesus and touched the hem of His garment and immediately the issue of blood stopped, and Jesus saith: "Who is it that touched Me?" and when all denied, Peter and they that were with him said: "Master, the multitudes throng around Thee, and Thou sayest 'who touched Me?'" And Jesus saith: "Somebody touched me, for I know that virtue is gone out from Me." The woman seeing that she was discovered came trembling and fell down before His feet, declared before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was immediately healed; but He said to her: "Daughter, go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole." Oh! What faith and what confidence did the people have in the power of our Blessed Lord; how different from us who come before Him like Peter upon the waves, half doubting, half believing, calling upon Him for help, yet scarcely believing that He will hear our prayer. We call upon Him when all other means fail us, when we have tried the world, tried its power and strength; then and only then do we call upon Him who has promised to hear us and grant us all our requirements. Is it any wonder then that our prayers are not heard, confiding and trusting in God, as we do, only when men say they can do nothing for us.

The third great condition by which we make our prayers efficacious is perseverance. That is to say, we must sometimes struggle and contend with God, so to speak, in order that we may obtain His favors. He is the Master of them and dispenses them when He chooses, as the man of wealth asked for alms, may be asked time and again before He may see fit to grant them. Besides, God has His own wise ends in view in delaying the favors that

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we ask of Him; it may be that He so delays in order that we may be led to appreciate them the more; or it may be that He wishes to accustom us to a life of prayer, for He Himself tells us that we must always pray. It is our armor in times of temptation and trials, it is the mysterious ladder of Jacob upon which the angels ascend bearing our requests, and descend bringing to our souls the gifts of God. It is the key of all graces, and hence because it is so necessary to our salvation, God would accustom us to lead a life of prayer, to ask and ask Him time and again for the favors we crave of Him. If you renounce this habit of prayer, you give up the assistance of God, you trust to your own weakness, and may expect to fall a prey to your own passions and bad inclinations; faith will then be extinguished, hope will die, and charity, that virtue which should bind you to God in bonds of love, will be destroyed. It is from this we learn the necessity of perseverance in prayer, that God actually confers the greatest favor upon us when He does not immediately hear our prayers. He is teaching us to pray, He is teaching us that saving habit of always praying. Well did the woman of the Gospel understand this condition of prayer when she sought the cure of her daughter. Though our Blessed Lord had told her that He had not come but for the house of Israel she persisted and even when He went so far as to insult her, as we might say, she still persisted in her prayer and thus obtained what she asked of Him.

In St. Mark we read of a blind man named Bartimeus who was sitting by the wayside begging, and hearing a great crowd passing he inquired the cause of it, and was told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He immediately began to cry out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." And many who were by rebuked him, telling him to be quiet and to hold his peace. But he only cried the louder: "Son of David have mercy on me." And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be

called, and they said to the blind man: "Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee." And Jesus said to him: "What wilt thou that I should do to thee?" And the blind man answered: "Rabboni, that I may see." And immediately the blind man saw. Here was the reward of humility, faith and perseverance in prayer. Men told him to be quiet, to cease praying, that Jesus was paying no attention, told him as we are often told, to cease praying for a certain favor or blessing, that God will not hear us; but the blind man cries the louder, whereas we give up praying perhaps at the very moment when it might be pleasing to God to grant us our request.

But how is it that we pray and our prayers are never heard, granting even that we pray with all these conditions? Why is it that our prayers are not heard? Christ Himself says if you shall ask the Father anything in my name He will give it to you. St. Augustine discoursing on this text of Scripture says: "Observe that this word anything, by which our Saviour lets us understand that we ask in His name, shall be something and something worthy of Him, because on the other supposition it would be improper for Him to exert His power for us." As often then as we ask for favors prejudicial to our salvation, or useless for our salvation, we cannot expect to be heard. Christ came to confer upon us all the benefits of salvation; hence when we pray for anything which aids and assists us in obtaining that end, we have every reason to expect that our supplications will be heard and our requests acceded to. We pray for health of body to rise from our sick beds, to regain our strength. Why do we pray thus? Do we ever halt in our prayers to ask that question? Why do we pray for all this? Is it that we may spend the remainder of our days in God's service; or is it that we may begin to take pleasure in amusements dangerous to our salvation? What is the real reason of our prayer? Is it not that we may act just as we did before taken down with our sickness? If so, think you

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that God would hear your prayer? We pray for things temporal; riches, position in life, honors, favors for our families, we pray for all these, and at the time they may be refused us. We never once ask ourselves the motive; perhaps if we did we would find that our prayers are but the result of an ungovernable ambition, an ambition that seeks happiness in the present without for a moment reverting to the future; an ambition that aspires to the possession of this world's goods, but never looks beyond the limit of earth. We pray to attain some particular station in life, pray to God perhaps for the grace of devoting our years to His service in some religious community; we have prayed for years but the grace has not been accorded us, we wonder why it is that God will not grant us a favor so likely to obtain our salvation; but if we acted thoughtfully our wonder would be only that of a child who discovers that if its father had given it all that it asked and cried for, it would long since have been dead. God alone knows what to give us. To ask, that is the condition, though we may sometimes ask amiss. And when we do ask for any gift we should always beseech God to grant us our request provided it be conformable to His will and conducive to our salvation.

Let me then exhort you to pray fervently and devoutly; this is necessary, for we can do nothing of ourselves; it is not difficult when understood rightly. But above all things when we pray, let us pray with humility, recognizing and acknowledging before God what we really are, trusting with confidence to God as a child to its father; with perseverance, contracting the habit of prayer, and finally pray in conformity to His will, knowing well that He but wishes the salvation of our souls and all that leads to it. Praying in this manner we may hope to be heard, and we may hope to work out our salvation and spend the everlasting years of the future world in conversation with God.

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THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH.

“ To hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.”

ALL the faithful of Christ's Church are obliged under pain of mortal sin to hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation. Before entering into an explanation of this Precept it would be well for us to ask the question whether or not the Church has the right and the power to make laws which bind our consciences; for if that question be not answered in the affirmative we are not obliged to obey, but on the other hand if the answer be that the Church has power to impose them upon her children we, as faithful children of that Church, must be obedient to them.

Has then the Church any legislative power? In order to answer this we need only consider the fact that the Church is a society, and as in every society there must be some in whose hands the power of making laws are so placed that order and harmony may be preserved, likewise in the Church, which is a society or congregation of all the faithful, there must be some person or persons clothed with authority for framing the laws which are necessary for the good government of the general body. This truth is so simple that it scarcely needs elucidation. We all know what a scene would be presented by a family be it ever so small, if it had no head. Therefore, if we

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pass to the consideration of society at large what dreadful anarchy would prevail if men were allowed to act as they choose; society could not exist; hence the necessity of law. And if law be necessary, so then is the legislator or law-maker equally necessary. All will immediately grant this axiom as far as civil society is concerned. It is the only way to preserve society, to keep men together, to bring order out of chaos. If then this apply to civil society, it must likewise hold good for the Church which also is a society; a society of minds and hearts, a society of men with one common interest; the salvation of their immortal souls. Therefore in order that they may be bound together and made to work in unison for that common end, law and a legislator or law-maker is necessary. That power must reside in the Church. Without appealing to the Scriptures at all; humanly speaking, the Church must have laws regulating the actions of her members in all that tends to their common object.

But if we appeal to the Scriptures we shall find this power of making laws given to the Apostles and their successors. After the resurrection we read in the Gospel of St. John that Christ appeared in the midst of His Apostles and Disciples and said to them: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth, as the Father hath sent Me, also do I send you; go therefore and teach all nations." Now, no man will say that Christ had not the power of making laws for those who were to be His followers; for He tells us Himself that God had given Him all power and sent Him into the world to teach the truth. And we hear Him delegating that same power to the Apostles and their successors in the ministry. Again we read in St. Matthew where Christ says: "If thy brother offend thee go and reprove him between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee thou shalt gain thy brother; and if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand." And if he will not hear them, what

is to be done? "Tell the Church;" and if he will not hear the Church; what then? "Let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." If he will not hear the Church which is the highest court, if he will not hear her law, then let him alone even as you do the heathen and the unbeliever, for: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatsoever you loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven." As though He would say: when you bind the conscience upon earth, it shall likewise be bound before God who is in Heaven; and when you shall loose it, that is not bind it, it shall be loosed; that is, not bound before God who is in Heaven. Again we read in the Gospel of St. Luke: "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me. And he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." If we take up the acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul, we shall find this truth preached by Christ, and acted upon by the Apostles. Thus in the Acts we read that St. Paul in his discourse to the ancients of the Church of Ephesus, when he was taking his leave, said to them: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops to rule the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. I know that in time ravening wolves will enter in among you not sparing the flock." Therefore he tells the Bishops to be mindful of their duty, to beware, and rule their Church carefully; that Church which Christ has purchased with His blood. Again; we read that this same Apostle St. Paul went through Syria and Celicia, confirming the Churches and commanding them to keep the precepts, the precepts, mind you, of the Apostles and the Ancients. Again in writing to the Hebrews he tells them: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them." For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy and not with grief; for this is not expedient for you.

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From all this, my friends, we see that the Church really has the power of ruling over us, of making laws for us; nay more, we might go on and show that she ever exercised that power and that her children have ever admitted it. Listen to the defiance which St. Basil one of her Bishops hurls at the Prefect Modestus in the early days of the Church. It was in the time of heresy when the Arians had broached their impious doctrine and the Bishops were called upon to allow the Arians to come into her communion. The Bishop Basil is sent for by the Prefect Modestus, who asks that Bishop to yield to the Emperor's request. Basil refusing, he threatens him, asks him if he can be really so mad as to resist the imperial will before which the whole world bows. "Do you not dread the indignation of the Emperor? Has he not power to deprive you of your goods, to banish you, to take away your life?" "Such threats move me not," said Basil calmly, "he who hath nothing to lose need not dread confiscation of goods; you cannot exile me for the whole earth is my home; as for death I do not fear it, it would be the greatest kindness you could do me. Long years have I been dead to the life that now is; torments cannot harm me, my body is so weak and so frail, that one blow would end my life and my sufferings together. It was the first time that the courtly Modestus had ever heard such words, and he said: "Never before has any one dared to address me with such freedom." And Basil quietly answered: "Perhaps Modestus never before measured his strength with a Christian Bishop." Now what does this example show? It proves to us as many others might do, that men acted upon the truth that in the Church there was a power which claimed obedience, no matter how great, or what was, the power that attempted to gainsay it. We might cite another instance that of Sir Thomas Moore, the illustrious Chancellor of England. He is asked by his king to assert the king's supremacy in spiritual matters over the supremacy of the Pope. They try to win him over

by kindness and favor, but the God-fearing man is not to be induced to betray his conscience. They then throw him into prison and endeavor to extort from him by punishment what kindness could not obtain. His friends argue with him, tell him that he should not be so obstinate, that the whole English Parliament obeyed, and that therefore he should likewise, since he stood one against so many. The Chancellor replied: "It is true you have the English Parliament, but I have the Christian world with me, and therefore cannot assent to the declaration.

Again, in France we cite the celebrated Fenelon, the Archbishop of Cambray. He writes a book, and in that book are found propositions dangerous to faith. His case is brought to Rome, and the propositions are condemned. Fenelon, that most learned of Bishops of the French Church, is the first to condemn his own work. These were men who fully understood the truth of which the Church, the representative of Christ in this world, is the guardian, that when she spoke her words were the words of Christ and consequently must be followed. They were men who fully understood the words of Christ: "He who hears you hears Me, and he who despiseth Me despiseth Him who sent Me." They were men who fully understood the words: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

Our duty then, is to find out what the laws of the Church are which we are bound under pain of mortal sin to follow, and once knowing our duty, to act like men having right upon our side and do what her Commandments enjoin. Now the Church enjoins Six Precepts upon the faithful, the first of which is as I have said: To hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation. It is therefore our duty to assist at Mass on Sundays in the first place, and secondly to assist at Mass on Holydays of Obligation. Now with regard to these two classes, there are Holydays of Obligation, and Holydays of Devotion. There are six days Holydays of Obligation in the year

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on which we are bound to hear Mass. These are: Christmas, Circumcision (or New Year's Day), Ascension, Assumption, Immaculate Conception and the Feast of All Saints. These are days upon which we are bound to hear Mass. Holydays of Devotion are days such as Ash Wednesday, the Feast of Corpus Christi, or the Feast of the Holy Name; they are days upon which it is well to assist at Mass, but still anyone staying away would not be guilty of a mortal sin. It is well to bear all this in mind so that in your confession you may not accuse yourselves of having missed Mass upon Holydays when perhaps you were not obliged to assist. Here then is the law: To assist at Mass on all the Sundays of the year, and upon these six Holydays of Obligation that we have just mentioned to you. But besides assisting at Mass we are to abstain from all servile work if it can be done. In this country where we are mixed up with so many who differ from us in religious belief it is more difficult to do this than in a country where all are of one faith, and therefore the Church is more lenient in this matter, especially where Catholics are engaged and working for those who are of a different faith. If in that case Catholics cannot abstain from work on Holydays, if their employers will not permit them, then the Church, like a kind mother, indulges them; but they are to hear Mass if it can be done before going to work. There are times and circumstances in which we are excused from hearing Mass, and Theologians tell us of two cases, on Sundays and Holydays when we are not obliged to be present at Mass. We may be, they say, either physically or morally impeded. Physically, as for instance, when we are so sick that it would be dangerous for us to venture out; morally, as for instance, when a member of the family is sick, and it is our duty to remain home to provide for his wants.

When we do assist at Mass we should in the first place be present at the entire Mass. To omit what is called a

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notable part of the Mass, which is generally thought to be a third part of it, without any reason and voluntarily, is to be guilty of disobeying the Precept. For instance, those who are not to Mass before that part known as the Offertory, do not fulfill the Precept of hearing Mass, and if they can, must assist at another Mass. Or again, if a person were to come in time and leave the Church before the Consecration, that person would not have fulfilled the obligation and would be obliged to wait for another Mass if there was one to be said. We must if possible be present at the entire Mass. It is only giving to God a small portion of the time which He has given to us; He has given us life, strength, health, and He requires us to return as it were some of that time to Him on Sunday by presenting ourselves in the Church for one-half or three-quarters of an hour at the most. Surely our time must be very precious if we cannot offer Him so much of it weekly.

In the second place we must be morally present, that is to say: we must be in a position where we can either see or hear the Priest, or at least we must be so connected with those who assist at Mass as to be able to tell from their kneeling or rising what part of the Mass is going on. And here we think we might call your attention to the fact that there is no need of standing outside in the porch and on the gallery stairs. When you assist your place is in the Church where you can see or hear what is going on; there is plenty of room in the different aisles for those who cannot be accommodated with seats. By assisting at Mass in this manner you will see what is going on, and your mind will be less distracted; whereas people standing in the lobby and on the stairs may come Sunday after Sunday, and when a Holyday or Fast Day is given out they will know nothing at all about it.

Besides being present at the entire Mass and being what is called morally present, you are supposed to assist with recollection and attention. Corporal presence is not suffi-

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cient, it will not do for us to come and sit in our seats or kneel on our benches as though we did not know what was going on; our actions and manners should bespeak the greatness of the work we are engaged in. When at Mass we are doing the highest possible work of adoration and praise that is offered to God; consequently we should appear like persons who believe that truth. We are being present at the Sacrifice that was offered for us on Calvary; the only difference is that upon Calvary Jesus Christ was offered in a visible manner, whereas upon our Altar He is offered in a mysterious and invisible manner. If we had been on Calvary when that Sacrifice was offered for the first time, surely we would not have been so inattentive, so cold, so indifferent as persons sometimes are in Church. They come, and they come without prayer book or without beads, the whole time of Mass goes by, and they have scarcely realized where they have been or what they have been doing. They stand, they kneel, and they sit down with others; but they go through all that like so many figures, without a particle of reflection. Hence then to assist at Mass with understanding, if you can read, bring your prayer book with you, and endeavor to follow the priest through the different parts of the Mass. If you cannot, bring your prayer beads, and as you recite them call to mind the different mysteries of our Lord's bitter Passion which are being then celebrated. By doing this your time will be well spent, and you will share in that fruit of the Mass which is especially given to those who assist at it with respect and devotion. Act like persons who believe that Jesus Christ is actually present upon the Altar, and say to Him what you would have said had you been present on that Good Friday which saw Him hanging upon the Cross.

But where should we assist at Mass and at what Mass should we assist? We need scarcely tell you that as the Priest is bound to preach and instruct his people, so are his people obliged to hear him at times; consequently in

a parish such as this where an instruction cannot be given at every Mass, you are obliged to be present at times when a sermon is preached; either in the morning at the High Mass or in the evening at Vespers. If we do not hear the word of God explained, and if we do not understand its application with regard to ourselves, there is every danger that in time we will forget the lessons of our youth and grow careless in our religious duties. We may come to Mass, but we will scarcely ever be found at Confession or Communion, for the simple reason that we are not reminded of our duties. No doubt there are some who hear sermons and perhaps do not receive the Sacraments as often as they should; but we must remember that the word of God is like seed; as Christ Himself says, it sometimes falls upon good ground when it takes root and brings forth a hundred fold, but it likewise falls at times upon stony ground, upon hearts that cannot be moved or swayed by anything save worldly gain or worldly profit. It was by preaching that the Apostles converted the world; it is by preaching the word of God that zealous missionaries add to the Church every day, some soul which has been born out of the faith and in the shadow of death. It is by preaching that souls grown careless and lukewarm are aroused to a sense of their duty and made practical Christians. How many by hearing some simple remark, dropped during the course of an instruction, have changed their lives and become fervent Christians. There are some who come to Mass on Sunday morning, go home and devote the rest of the morning to running over the injustices, crimes and sins of a week published in some daily or weekly paper. If they are not engaged in this, it will be the latest sensational novel, or one of the monthly gazettes with its tales of love and nonsense. To such the word of God is tiresome, but the word of man most enjoyable.

The place where you should assist at Mass is in your own parish, whenever possible, for many reasons. In

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the first place your Priest should know you; he is appointed to watch over your spiritual interests, and this he cannot do unless you fall under his observation. In the second place, you should hear Mass in your own Church because sometimes your pastor may have to speak to you of matters which relate to the parish itself, which you as members of the parish should be interested in. Again, there may be announcements to be made, announcements of Fast Days or of Holydays of Obligation; and if you be in a Church where you cannot understand these announcements, there is danger that the Holydays will pass by without your hearing Mass, or the Fast Days without your observing them. Finally there are other reasons which might be given, sufficient to show your duty in this regard. Try then to live up to the spirit of this the first of the Church's Precepts: To hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, unless legitimately excused. To assist at the entire Mass, to be present not only in body but in mind; to come at times to hear the Word of God explained, and to confine yourselves as much as possible to your own parish Church; by acting in this way you will show yourselves true children of the Church ever ready and ever willing to carry out her advice and counsel.

XXVI. SERMON.
SINS OPPOSED TO FAITH.

*“ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will
give unto thee a crown of life.”*

REV. II. 10.

CONSIDER the vices opposed to the virtue of Faith, they are three-fold: In the first place we have the vice of infidelity, the infidel opposed to the Christian, the unbeliever in conflict with the believer. An infidel is one who is not baptized and who has not Faith, of whom Christ says: “ He that doth not believe and is not baptized shall be condemned.” He is one who has heard of the truths of Jesus Christ, but gives no heed to them, and therefore shall be condemned. Such a man is intentionally and willfully an infidel and therefore cannot expect Salvation, for he despises the means which God has given to him and which if used would successfully conduct him in this life to that better and happier world beyond the grave. Then we have the man who has never heard of Jesus Christ, who has never heard of His truths, never had the opportunity of making himself acquainted with them. Such a man is likewise an infidel but not intentionally so, and therefore in God’s justice and mercy will not be dealt with as the former; he will be judged according to the lights which are given him. As St. Paul tells us, he bears within himself the law which Almighty God has inscribed upon the hearts

of all men, and if his life be conformable to that law, if he seeks to do all things to please God, and is prepared to do that which He would ask of him, that man may expect salvation through God's infinite mercy.

The second sin opposed to this virtue of Faith is that of heresy. Now in order to properly understand the nature of this sin and its effects, we must go back to the institution of the Christian Religion under the New Dispensation. All who admit that the second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity became man and appeared upon this world, admit at the same time that he must have had some object in view in thus acting. Even if Christ Himself did not tell His intention in being made man we would naturally infer that He had some important mission to perform; and considering the state of the world at the time of His coming, that men were idolaters, worshipping the creatures of their hands, setting up gods of their own fashioning in their temples, idolizing vice and sin; seeing men of the highest intelligence wandering about and groping in darkness, knowing but little, and uncertain of their first beginning and last end; seeing all this, we would consider that He came to rescue mankind from their errors, to establish a new era of things, to promulgate the true relation between God and man, to establish a Religion which was to last not only for His particular time and place; but was to endure for all time; and which was to be spread abroad throughout the whole world. This Christ says Himself in numberless places in the Inspired Word; open it, and you hear Him proclaiming that He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life;" open it again and you will see Him choosing men, setting them apart, instructing them, telling of His assistance even after He shall have died and disappeared from the world; promising them that no matter what opposition is brought to bear against them, they will surmount it, even though it be the opposition of hell itself. Again open it, and you will read of a

sheepfold of chosen souls which He has gathered together; yet He is not unmindful of those who are without. He will pray for them that they, too, may be brought into that one fold. Again you will hear Him speaking of His Church as a light that is not hidden, but as a city placed upon the mountain top, visible to all mankind. If then He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, men must follow Him and embrace His truths. If these truths have been left in the keeping of a teaching body of men to whom He promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit in order that they may be preserved from error, then we must become acquainted with that teaching which embraces all the truths proposed by them as coming from Christ Himself. If there be but one sheepfold, we must enter it. If there be a light set up in the world we must not close our eyes to it. If His Church be as the city placed upon the summit of a mountain, we must be numbered among its inhabitants if we would be saved; for we know that there is no salvation other than through Jesus Christ Himself.

Now who is the Heretic? The Heretic, the man who is guilty of the sin of heresy before God, is the man who hears Christ proclaiming that He is the Way and yet will not follow Him; that He is the Truth, and yet will not embrace that Truth; that He is the Life and yet will not seek Him. He is the man who fully understands that Christ has established a teaching body of men upon this earth, to whom He has promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide and assist them, and yet he will not receive their teachings as the teachings of Christ Himself. He is the man who wishes to select and choose doctrines for himself, who believes that Christ is God, yet makes use of his own private judgment to determine whether or not Christ actually taught this or that particular doctrine. He is the man whose principles if carried out by all men would destroy the religion of God entirely, and in its place would set up the religion of

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man, the religion of the creature. Each individual assumes and arrogates to himself the right to say what truths God has left us, and we have as many opinions on the matter as there are individuals. To-day, if left to my own private judgment I may conclude that there is a hell where the wicked are punished for all eternity; to-morrow I may conclude there is a hell, but that its punishment is not eternal, whereas on the following day my conviction may be that there is no such a place, and as with this truth so with all others; my ideas of religion will be like the fleeting clouds, as the Apostle says, driven here and there by every change of wind.

The third sin opposed to the virtue of Faith is to doubt respecting any article of faith. We are certain of all the articles of our belief for we have God's own words for them; they may be above our comprehension, and are for that reason the truths of another and higher world, but are nevertheless true since we have God's own words for them, who is truth itself, and who cannot deceive nor be deceived. If then we doubt any of these truths proposed for our belief, we doubt the word of God Himself, we question His Word, make of Him a liar as it were, and consequently sin against the virtue of Faith, which is belief in God's Holy Word. But we must know that we do not sin every time a doubt comes into our minds. There are various kinds of doubts. There are times when thoughts wander across our mind and we feel disturbed; these thoughts come to the mind without any reason; we do not know whence they come, we have not exposed ourselves in any way; we have no reason, or at least, none is then present in our minds, and yet the thought will occur again and again. In such cases we have but to treat such thoughts with contempt, for they are but the effects of imagination, or suggestions of the devil; consequently they are to be rejected. Then at other times we have doubts which are accompanied with false but specious reasons, which make an impression on our minds.

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In this case we must be very careful to rid ourselves of them as soon as possible, not to permit our mind to rest upon them, for by so doing we would only involve ourselves in greater difficulties. We must remember that the truths of faith are above the power of human reason, otherwise they would not be truths of Faith. We are certain from God's own revelation that they are true, although we do not and cannot comprehend them; consequently if we begin to examine them in detail to satisfy our difficulties through our reason, we shall never be able to come to any conclusion. There are times when these difficulties arise in the mind because men are not sufficiently instructed in that which their holy religion teaches. In this case they should seek for proper instruction by reading good books which treat of and explain the particular doctrine in question, and if this cannot be done then they should seek instruction from their Priests, from their Confessors, by making known to them their want of knowledge. In all these cases and others such as these, when thoughts of unbelief cross the mind, we should be careful never to yield to them; we should be still more careful in expressing them to others who can afford us no help; careful about expressions such as are sometimes uttered in the presence of children, as who knows whether there is a heaven? Who knows whether there is a hell? Who knows which is the true religion? By yielding to such doubts, by expressing them seriously, we are calling God's own words in question; for by doubting them, we grant that they are uncertain and that therefore God in revealing them to us is deceiving us; we are doing an injury to the attribute of truthfulness found in God. We are telling Him: Though you, my Lord and my God, have said that heaven and earth shall pass away but your word shall not pass away; still we do not believe you.

But perhaps you are asking yourselves, why it is that we are speaking to you about these different sins that are committed against the virtue of faith. You are not in-

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fidels, you are persons who are full of faith, lovers of your religion, your souls have been washed in the waters of baptism, you have been born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, you believe, and are baptized, and therefore hope for salvation. You are not Heretics, you believe the whole teaching of the Church without exception, you believe its every doctrine; you do not exercise your private judgment in matters of faith, you are fully conscious that Christ has established a Church in this world which is to teach all truth to the end of time, and you are members of that Church. Why therefore do we speak to you of Infidelity and of Heresy? You do not doubt any of the articles of faith proposed to your belief, though you do not comprehend them, nor do we; yet we believe them for they have been revealed to us by God Himself; and we as His creatures subject our intelligence and our will to them; we are like the glorious Apostle Peter, believing all that Christ has said, and though we do not comprehend nor understand His teaching, the mysteries, the hidden truths that He has proposed to us, still we cry out with Peter "Lord, whither shall we go? We know that Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God, and that therefore Thou hast the words of eternal life." Why then do we speak to you of these sins against Faith? For the very simple reason that we are living in a country and in an age wherein we meet with persons and occasions dangerous to our faith. We are living in a country that is not Catholic, but one-sixth of whose inhabitants are of our faith and of our religion. We are living in an atmosphere that is vitiated, among people whose ideas respecting religion are fluctuating. We are a people into whose hands papers and books are daily thrust that convey with them loose notions respecting religion. We are living in an age that is idolizing and setting up as leaders of thought men who have no fixed religious principles or convictions; we are living in an age in which we may look in vain for Catholic governments. Italy which was once the centre of Catholicity,

to-day is not Catholic. France, styled the eldest daughter of the Church, is not Catholic. England, once the defender of the faith, is not Catholic; and Germany, the legacy of St. Boniface, is to-day in her government the armed enemy of Catholicity. Living then as we do in the midst of danger, it is well to be warned of it; that we may perform the mission that Catholics of to-day should fully realize; we are the members of Christ's mystical body, and as He said to the world that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life, so should our lives be such as to show to the world that the Church, His representative, is the Way, that except through Her, men cannot embrace the Truth which they must embrace if they would share in the immortal Life of the next world. We must realize that we are the inhabitants of that city seated upon the summit of the mountain, and that therefore our lives must be a light to the world; we must show to the world that we have a religion and that we are living up to all that it requires of us. Thus we shall be shielded from the contagion that surrounds us, and then like the fathers of old who went into the desert and showed by their lives that their religion was not a mockery but a reality, we will reconvert the world. In those days of Paganism men saw the thousands who changed deserts into cities in endeavoring to live up to the tenets of Gospel, they looked on and said: "These are certainly wonderful, earnest men, whose religion is a reality, we have our gods, but we would never die for them. We have our gods, but through them we could never be induced to lead such lives of mortification. It is a reality that has forced these men from vice, it is a reality for which they are struggling," and the lives of these men, their earnestness and their devotion to their religion overthrew the idols of Paganism and made the world Christian.

There is another reason why we speak to you of the sins of Infidelity and of Heresy. We speak for the benefit and the instruction of parents, too many of whom are allowing their children, nay forcing them, into occasions that

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tend to weaken and destroy their faith. To-day parents have the very laudable desire of wishing their children when they arrive at a certain age to enter what they call society, good society; and they are right. Fathers and mothers should wish and endeavor to have their children form good associations; but are there not times when parents err in their judgment of fit society for their children? By that word society do they not too often mean wealth, do they not too often mean that their children are to associate with people of means? Do they ever take into consideration the religion of such associates? Is it not too true that in the name of society they allow their children to associate with people of no religious creed or profession? What is the consequence? Being brought up in this manner, by daily contact with individuals of no religion, in time the faith of your children is weakened; they take up the false idea that they must work for a position in life and soon you will meet them on the highway of life, young men and young women who are very liberal in their religious notions, who would just as soon be found in one of the modern revival meetings as at a two weeks mission in their own Church. Wealth is not society, fashion is not society; by good society we mean those who recognize that they have duties with regard to God and their neighbor, and who endeavor to perform these duties despite the opinions and censure of men.

Another danger into which parents thrust their children is sending them to schools where no word is said about religion. If there were any well founded reasons for sending their children to such places they might be excused. If a reason be asked they have none to offer. They cannot say that our teachers are inferior. It is difficult to imagine what their reasons are; stranger still, when Sunday comes we cannot find their children in our Sunday schools, you can only find them when instruction is being given for Confirmation and first Communion. If you ask them why they are not present, they can say nothing ex-

cept that their fathers and mothers will not permit them to come. There was a time, and that not many generations ago, when our forefathers preferred to remain ignorant rather than to take the dangerous education which was offered them. They saw that their religion was endangered; that was sufficient; and they preferred to meet on the hill sides or in the open fields or wherever a teacher or a priest could give them a few hours of instruction, than barter their faith for secular education. You will say we do not anticipate any danger, we do not see any harm in sending our children to such schools. Against this we array the judgment of the Church, the judgment of men appointed by God to be our teachers who tell us that the faith of your children is thereby placed in danger. We array against you the intelligence of every country. Take England and you will find the battle of education raging and you will find the mind of the country upon the side of Christian Catholic education. Of Germany the same may be said; and in our own country we might array against you the judgment of your Bishops, the judgment of your Catholic editors, nay more the judgment of many fair-minded, right-thinking men who differ from us in religion. Is the judgment of these men worth nothing? Think you they are fighting merely for an idea, or is it because they have seen the many sad consequences which follow such a system? Rest assured that there must be some reason for the warnings which they give us; they do not sound the alarm and cry danger unless there really is danger, therefore our duty is to listen and to obey; to see that our children are removed from the danger, to place them where they will be instructed in the truths and mysteries of their religion; where the beauty of their faith will be shown them, and where they will learn to love and what is more to practise it. In doing this you will not be endangering their faith, you will be doing all that you can to cherish it, and in cherishing it you will likewise cherish the hope of one day meeting them in heaven.

XXVII. SERMON.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

“ I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.”

MATH. XVI. 18.

WHY did Christ come upon this world? Was it not that man might believe in Him? Was it not that men might believe in His teachings and act upon them? For if He were God then truly should He be listened to, then should men take hold of the great truths He came to reveal. Then should all, despite all difficulties, investigate those doctrines, convince themselves of their truth, and immediately strive to make their lives conformable to them. But where are these heaven-sent truths, these God-given doctrines to be found? Some eighteen hundred years have passed since Christ walked with us in the flesh, His voice we no longer hear, His Apostles, like all men, have passed from earth; there remain none who have seen Him, none who have beheld Him as He moved on this earth, none who can give testimony of Him, none who can tell us what His living words were as they fell from His lips. Are there then none who can tell us the great truths that He spoke to the world? If there be none such, if there be no witnesses, if these truths are lost, or if they be, what every man left to his own individual resources supposes them to

be from his own private reading of the written word found in the Scriptures, then indeed we must conclude and assert, that which we shrink from doing; that Christ but ill-fulfilled His mission of teaching truth to all mankind, and that He has left the World in a darkness more Egyptian than when He appeared. But no! Thank God, that doctrine is still preserved. God alone could conceive the plan, and the finger of God alone could mark out the manner in which these truths were to descend from age to age and from man to man, even to the consummation of ages. The spirit of truth was to be the witness until the end of time, and that spirit of truth, the Paraclete, was to be the guardian, the teacher; the abiding spirit which was to direct and move the body of Apostles appointed by Christ to teach the world, not during their life time only, not during three or four or five centuries, but on through ages, on down through the whole period of time; till earth would be no more and man would have attained the great end for which God created him.

The individuals composing and making up the body were to die, but the soul of it, the Paraclete, was to remain still teaching and preaching through the world. The Apostles would disappear, but their office would endure, and the spirit of truth still remaining would shed light upon the world by and through the successors chosen to carry on the office and the mission of the Apostles. The members of Christ's Church would be called away to enjoy the reward of their labors; but the Church itself, built upon the Apostles with Christ Himself as its corner stone, would go on through the assistance of the Holy Ghost promised by Christ Himself when He said: "I will be with you all days even to the consummation of the world." These are Christ's own promises to the Apostles. The Paraclete would remain with them and would bear testimony of Him to the world: "But when the Paraclete shall come whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of

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me." And again He says: "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you." Knowing then as we do, that the Catholic Church is the one only Church that claims this infallibility of the Holy Spirit guiding and directing it in matters of faith; and believing as we do that the truths promised by our Lord are within the Church, teaching and calling to mind whatsoever Christ taught the world, we must of necessity admit that the Catholic Church is the representative of Christ in this world, and that consequently if we do not hear her voice, we do not hear the voice of Christ; and if we despise Her, we despise Christ Himself. When therefore her truths are put before us our first duty is to receive them as coming from God Himself. But this is not sufficient. Our second duty is to practise them if we would show ourselves consistent Catholics.

Now the Gospel of to-day affords us an opportunity of considering one of the great truths of the Church; the truth that Christ gave power to men upon earth to forgive sins. It is a truth with which every Catholic is familiar. In his very infancy he becomes acquainted with it. No sooner does the age of reason dawn upon him, no sooner does he become capable of committing sin, than the Church lays hold of him and tells him of her salutary doctrine that he is not without hope; that she has the power entrusted to her by Christ of forgiving whatever sins her children may have had the misfortune to commit. With this great truth we are all familiar, but it is sad to see so many who scarcely ever make use of this great means of salvation. In order that we may stir up the faith that is in us, let us ask ourselves what the Church teaches on this particular point, and in the second place, let us ask ourselves whether we act as Christians professing belief in the Church; in other words are we consistent Catholics.

The teaching of the Church is as you know, that the

Sacrament of Penance is necessary for Salvation for all those who after Baptism have fallen into mortal sin. It is a Sacrament as our Catechism tells us in which all sins which we have committed after Baptism are forgiven. Hence the person who has lost his baptismal innocence must needs avail himself of Penance, which is the only means whereby any sin committed after Baptism can be forgiven. We ask in vain for any other way by which we may obtain God's pardon. We read the inspired word, and no other way is made known to us. We ask the Church, and she tells us that there is no other way save in confessing our sins with sorrow of heart to some Priest lawfully ordained and commissioned by his Bishop to exercise the power of forgiving sins. But we naturally ask whence have the Apostles and the Priests the power of forgiving sins? Does it not seem blasphemous to assert that a mere man of flesh and blood should exercise this power? That a mere man can absolve and free his fellow man from sin in which he is entangled, that a mere man can pardon the offences which may have been committed against his God? Christ our Lord did not think it blasphemous. He did not think that placing that power in the hands of men would in any way prove derogatory to Divine Omnipotence, and hence He gave it. No person who admits that Christ is God, would deny it and say that He did not possess this power of forgiving sins Himself; if He possessed such power why might He not delegate this to others as He did all other powers to his Apostles. The power and the right of baptizing, of preaching, to convince ourselves then of truth, we have but to inquire if Christ really possessed this gift Himself, and if He did actually commission his Apostles to exercise the same. Christ certainly possessed it if He proved in any way that He exercised it. And in to-day's Gospel we have a beautiful illustration and proof that Christ actually exercised this power and that the bystanders believed in it. We are told that a man sick of the palsy is brought to Him. They came to Him full of

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faith, firmly believing that our Blessed Lord can cure the infirmity. And Jesus we are told, seeing their strong and ardent faith that made them carry this man to Him while yet lying in bed, said to the man sick of the palsy: "Son, be of good heart thy sins are forgiven thee." Our Blessed Lord seized the occasion to preach and make known to them, His power of forgiving sins. How did they receive that declaration? They certainly understood Him, but how did they receive this new doctrine? Much after the manner in which people who have not the faith receive it to-day. They began to murmur and said within themselves; he blasphemeth, and Jesus reading their thoughts said: "Why think you evil in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say: thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say: arise and walk. But that you may know"—as though he would say, not as God but as man—"that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins;" then saith he to the man sick of palsy: "Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house, and forthwith he arose and went into the house, and the multitude seeing it, feared, and gave thanks to God who had given such power to man." Here then is a miracle: the man sick of the palsy is healed by a mere command to arise and walk. And why this miracle? To prove to those who stood around him that He, Christ as man, had the power of forgiving sins, and exercised that power. The multitude goes away convinced. They admit his power and they depart glorifying God who had given it to men.

And to-day, if people were less prejudiced, if they were to take up and study this power of forgiving sins as exercised by the Priests of Christ's Church, would they too not have to go away glorifying God for the great gift which He has given to men? For is it not true that many a conversion has been wrought in the confessional? Is it not true that many a greater miracle has been wrought there than the cure that we read of in to-day's Gospel? Is it not equally true that people stay away and avoid that confession, because they know that if they once present them-

selves there a miracle must be wrought in them. Is it not because they must give up some darling vice, some long pampered passion; because they must avoid some dangerous company, or must restore their ill-gotten wealth and possessions, though it should lower them in the eyes of the world, they must do all this, and hence it is that they remain away. The cry goes up that the Church blasphemes when she asserts that her ministers possess this power. Christ, when the multitude asserted that He blasphemed, proved that he possessed it by working a miracle, and so might we say that the Priests of the Church prove their power by miracles—for what conversions have not been wrought within the confessional! The sinner has gone there after years of sin and shame, has gone there when his own friends despised him and when the world which he had served deserted him. No power on earth could give ease and quiet to his distracted conscience, thoughts of death haunted him even in moments of pleasure, thoughts of the future welled up within him, he beheld himself covered with the leprosy of sin, with the leprosy of false doing and hidden crimes; and in the bitterness of his heart he seeks to throw off the heavy load, and wishes almost hopelessly for the innocence of youth. He seeks the confessional, he begins to narrate his life of sin and shame; he meets with no rebuff; firm, yet sincere and kind are the words that are spoken to him. He is told of the prodigal who wandered from the house of his good kind father where there was plenty and abundance, he is told that notwithstanding his sins and transgressions the arms of his Father are open to receive him if he is but sorry and resolves to do better for the future. Off that heavy heart he feels the load taken, tears of gratitude come to his eyes, and he rises, even as did the man sick with palsy, full of joy and happiness, glorifying God.

Ah yes! The miracles of the confessional are numerous. Where is the power upon earth that can take a man out of his crimes and set him along side of his fellow man and

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restore him to honor and self-respect? Where is the power which can take up the poor degraded wretch who wallows in his drunkenness, and make of him a God-fearing, a God-loving citizen? Where is the power which can subdue the heart wild with anger? Where is the power which can make the man that plunders go back and return you cent for cent and dollar for dollar? Where is the power in fine than can throw its protecting mantle around us and shield us from the atmosphere of vice and corruption? Law cannot accomplish it, and force would never succeed. The law cannot lay hold of the hidden offender, the law cannot bring a man to justice until he is found publicly guilty. The law can never force a man to the confession of his guilt. One power alone can lay hold of him and make him turn his eyes upon himself until he becomes sick at heart of his own doings, then compel him to a confession of his crime, pledging his word that he will show himself a better Christian to the world. That force is the miraculous power of the Confessional.

But not only have we miracles to prove that the Priests have power to forgive sins, we have the Scriptures which will testify that Christ gave this power, which He possessed and exercised upon so many occasions to the Apostles and their successors. We read in the Gospel of St. John that on the very day of His resurrection the Apostles were shut up in a room for fear of the Jews; and whilst they were there with the doors closed upon them, Jesus Christ suddenly stood in the midst, and said: "Peace be to you." And when He had said this he showed them his hands and his feet. The Disciples were glad when they saw their Lord, and He said to them: "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me I also send you"—consequently with the same powers that He as man had been sent into this world with these same powers do I send you abroad over the world to act as my substitute even with the power of forgiving sins. And He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are for-

given them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." Again we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew that He bestowed this power upon them. "Amen! I say to you: whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in Heaven." Here then is the testimony of the inspired Word in clear language. Could our Blessed Lord have stated His desire to bestow this power more plainly? It will not do to assert that this was conferred upon the Apostles and that it was not to descend to their successors, for then we break down and destroy the whole edifice of Christianity. If this power is not to be exercised by the successors of the Apostles, then neither have they a right to baptize; if this power be not left to their successors then neither have they a right to preach; and if they have not the right to baptize or to preach then we destroy Christianity; we destroy the Priesthood of Christ which was to remain forever. The Christian religion then becomes a subjective religion, a religion that each individual may frame and fashion for himself, not objective, not a religion enjoined, a religion beyond and above man; but a religion of the creature, not that of the Creator. This then is the doctrine of the Church on the Sacrament of Penance.

But do we act as though we believe it? In other words are we consistent Catholics in this particular? Is our practice in keeping with our faith? It seems to me that there are Catholics who are not consistent in this matter for they believe all that we have said and yet they do not practise their belief. One class is made up of those persons who go to Confession but once a year. They imagine that they have done all that is enjoined upon them, and so they have—as far as the law of the Church goes—for they are commanded to go at least once a year. But this is measuring out matters with a sparing hand, it is not dealing generously with God. Such people have never perhaps asked themselves why the Church ever made such a law. It was principally on account of the careless, irreligious, indiffer-

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ent life of her children. It was not made—as some would seem to think, judging from their practice—to forbid people from coming oftener to Confession, but it was a law that was forced upon the Church by the indifference, and by the carelessness of her children. The person who goes once a year lives up to the strict letter of the law, and as far as the law goes he has done his duty. But what of the law of charity? What ought the law of love prompt a man to do? It is very strange that man is so selfish in matters that pertain to his religion. Let an opportunity present itself of striking some sharp profitable bargain, and immediately he avails himself of it. But when it comes to a matter of the kind of which we are speaking, when it comes to an alliance of friendship with our Blessed Lord; then we live on in sin, taking our chances as though we were certain that when the time of our death comes we can obtain all the consolations of our religion. We realize that the soul is to be saved, but we forget and fail to make use of its means amid the thousand and one distracting cares of the world.

There is another class of persons who do not go even once a year to Confession. They wait for stated periods, they wait for a mission, they wait for a Jubilee, or they wait for their death bed to make their peace with God. Why is it so? Surely it is not because they are men without faults, without sins; and if their souls are stained with sin then it was for them, and for them particularly, that this Sacrament of Penance was established, for Christ says: "I came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance." Now if there be any such persons present, we would ask them to reason thus with themselves. Why am I putting off my confession from year to year? Do I believe that the Priests of the Church have power to forgive my sins? Yes! I cannot deny it; for I see our Lord after His resurrection breathing upon them and telling them to act as His substitutes in this world. Do I believe that Confession is necessary for the salvation of my soul

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if there be a single mortal sin upon it? Yes! For I know that mortal sin kills the soul and deserves Hell. I know of no way of obtaining pardon for my sins but by confessing them, and if circumstances are such that I cannot make my confession, then I must have what is called perfect contrition, together with the desire of going to confession when I can.

This I firmly believe to be the only way of obtaining remission of my sins. Why then do I stay away, why do I put it off? With this mortal sin upon my soul I know that I am already condemned. If I wish to be saved and to enjoy happiness I know that I must make my confession sooner or later. The present time is the only time I am sure of, the future is very uncertain, and I cannot promise it to myself. Since then this confession must be made, I will at once set about it.

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“ Amen, Amen, I say unto thee unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

JOHN III. 6.

THE Sacraments are channels of grace instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls. It is scarcely necessary for me to state that it is the express wish of the Church, made known to us by her Bishops, assembled in council, that Priests having the charge of souls resting upon them should every year speak to their people of the principal Mysteries of Religion; The Sacraments, the Ten Commandments of God, and the Six Commandments of the Church; for the person who possesses a knowledge of these things is rich in possessing the knowledge of things above and beyond this world; a knowledge of things supernatural which will bring forth fruit in everyday life, whereas the man ignorant of these truths will miss the whole end and aim of his life. But, in addition to the wish of the Church, there is another reason which prompts the Priest to speak of these truths and practices. He is a man who does not live at home, in fact he may be said to be a man without a home. His office is to move among the people, and as he moves, he must observe their wants, and we think that there is none which falls under his observation oftener than the fact that his

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people need instruction. We do not mean that they are more ignorant than other people; that they have not had a worldly instruction; they may possess a knowledge of business, a knowledge of what is going on in the world, a knowledge of trades and professions. All this they have in common with mankind; but what they stand in need of, his observation tells him, is religious instruction; that they be taught the Sacraments and their effect upon the soul; that they be taught the Ten Commandments of God, and that they be taught the precepts of the Church. Day after day he meets with full grown people who cannot tell him, if asked, the Mysteries of their holy Religion, and Sunday after Sunday he meets with children who know nothing of these truths, whose parents never trouble themselves to ask if their children know anything of such things. These children, poor innocent souls, are not culpable, it is not their fault. Speak to them of these things and they are ready and anxious to learn. Their parents who are charged by our Blessed Lord Himself not to scandalize one of these little ones, are careless in instructing their children, and many of them though not able themselves to give them this necessary instruction, will not send them to their own schools, and particularly to Sunday school. Time and again complaints are made from the Altar that we cannot get the working boys of a parish to a Sunday school where they might spend an hour in the week listening to the explanation of the Catechism. And why is it? Surely it is not because they know it sufficiently, for there is no Priest who cannot tell you of having met young people from fifteen to twenty years of age, who do not know the Seven Sacraments. There is no Priest who cannot tell you of sick calls where he is compelled to sit at the bedside and teach the dying person the very first lessons of the Catechism.

And as for the Commandments and Sacraments, they know nothing of them. They have a very vague idea of right and wrong. They know that they have been bap-

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tized, but they do not know what Baptism is. Confirmation they have never heard of, the Eucharist is a very strange word, and a Confession is something that they have never made. Now this may look very much like an exaggerated picture, you may be surprised to hear that there are people so careless about the salvation of their souls; yet it is the truth, that there are many such people to be found. And where do you suppose lies the fault? We have no hesitation in saying that it is the fault of the parents. There may be exceptional cases, but they are rare, very rare, where the good father and mother are worried to death by the faults of their children who have become ungovernable or unmanageable. But as a rule the fault lies at the door of the parent. You will find that many of them are children of a mixed marriage; the Catholic side through association has fallen off, or is falling rapidly off, from the practice of his or her religion. The children are brought, perhaps privately, for Baptism; they grow up and see father and mother very indifferent to religion; the consequence is that they become infected by the irreligious atmosphere in which they move, and we meet them in after life, as very liberal minded people, who think one religion and one creed just as good as another, no matter how contradictory they may appear. Or again, you will find them to be the offspring of drunken parents, of men and women who might be comfortable if they were to look after their little earnings, but who squander them upon drink. The consequence is that their children are neglected, they cannot send them to school; for as soon as they are able to work, they are compelled to look out for their own living, the father and mother being barely able to look after themselves. Now imagine a young child in that state, and there are many such; what think you will it know of its religion in after life? Its father has done it an injustice, he might, had he been a careful and frugal husband, have sent that child to school for at least a few years, where it would have learned its duty to God and to society at large. But it is

allowed to grow up in ignorance of these duties; as a consequence it is met in after life as the young man or woman who asserts that he or she is a Catholic, whilst they do not live up to a single law of the Church, and never kneel to acknowledge their sins and transgressions until they call for a Priest on their death bed.

This is certainly sad. Now how can we set about removing this indifference on the part of some regarding a knowledge of their religion? It is a difficult matter for a Priest to say how this is to be done, for he knows that his voice will reach but few of this class from the pulpit. They are not here to be spoken to, they are not here to listen and to be instructed. But you, you can do a great deal to spread this religious instruction; you move among these careless Catholics daily, you may be able to influence them to come to Sunday evening instructions, when they will hear some truths of their religion explained, you may take away with you what is said on these points and talk them over within the hearing of those careless ones. Thus you will be spreading the knowledge of God's Word and the knowledge of His Holy Religion in the hearts of those who are wayward; thus you will be co-laborers with Jesus Christ working with Him for the Salvation of souls.

Having thus given you reasons why the Priest should speak upon the Sacraments, because it is the wish of the Church and because people stand in need of such instruction, we will say a few words upon the necessity of Baptism, the first of the Sacraments.

Baptism as you know, is a Sacrament which makes us Christians, children of God and heirs to the kingdom of heaven, cleanses us from original sin, and also from actual sin if we be guilty of any. Now in this simple definition of your Catechism we see the necessity and the effect of this Sacrament, the two things of which we propose to speak. We are told that it makes us Christians, children of God and gives us a right to heaven; hence if we would be Christians, if we would be children of God, if we would

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be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, we must be baptized.

But what do we mean when we say that Baptism is necessary? Do we mean that a person cannot be saved without it? Cannot the child who is born into this world without the power of exercising its understanding, and incapable of an act of the will, cannot that child enter into the kingdom of God and enjoy the happiness of heaven without being baptized? Yes, we mean that no man can expect to see the face of God who has received this Sacrament, that no person born of woman can ever expect to enjoy the happiness of heaven without being baptized. For this bold declaration we have the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. St. Matthew tells us that His commission to the Apostles was: "To go and teach all nations and baptize them." Their baptism was to be co-extensive with their teaching, and St. Matthew tells us that Christ after His resurrection gave this command to his Apostles when He was sending them to spread the truth to the confines of the earth: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Could we wish for a declaration more positive, for a proof more convincing? Christ Himself says: "He that believeth and is baptized he shall be saved." All admit that faith is absolutely necessary for salvation, yet a man will be condemned without it; though Christ Himself says expressly: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." As though he would say, that he who hath the faith and at the same time is baptized, he shall be saved, but he who hath not the faith and is not baptized he shall be condemned. But there is a still stronger proof of the necessity of baptism for Salvation to be found in the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. There we are told of a certain ruler by the name of Nicodemus who came at night to our Lord to be instructed. He came as it were expressing faith in Him for He said: "Rabbi we know that thou art come a teacher from God, for no

man could do these miracles which thou doest unless God were with Him." But Jesus our Lord wishing to make known that His faith in Him was not sufficient of itself, answered: "Amen, Amen, I say to thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And Nicodemus made answer and said to Him: "How can a man be born again when he is old, can he enter the second time into the womb of his Mother and be born again?" Jesus answered; "Amen, Amen, I say to thee unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost He cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

We must be born again therefore if we ever expect to enter into the kingdom of God. The declaration of Christ is general and embraces not only the old and the advanced in years, not only those who have gained the use of reason and have attained the age of manhood, but likewise the little child which has just been born into this world; all without exception must be again born of water and the Holy Ghost, must be regenerated in the saving waters of Baptism. We are born into this world of sin, but we must likewise be born into the spiritual world, the world of grace; we must be incorporated with Christ Jesus our Lord, we must become members of His mystical body, the Church, and to do this we must be baptized. That the Apostles understood these declarations of Jesus Christ as we have explained them to you is evident from their manner of acting. They baptized all who came to them professing and believing in our Saviour. St. Peter in his first sermon to the people exhorted them to believe in Jesus Christ, showed them that he must have been God since he wrought such wonderful works in their midst, showed them that none but God could raise Himself from the dead, proved to them from their prophets that this man Jesus whom they had crucified was the Messiah promised to their fathers. And the thousands who stood by listening to him, we are told in the Acts, had compunction in their hearts and said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles:

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“Men, Brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter made answer and said to them: “Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost.” We read that they who received His word were baptized, “and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls.”

Again, St. Paul giving us the history of his conversion, tells us how he was struck to earth, and blinded, on his way to Damascus, where he was going to persecute the Christians. Whilst lying prostrate he asks; “Lord what shall I do?” And a voice answers; “Arise and go into Damascus where it shall be told thee the things thou must do.” Now what was he told when he came to that city; he was led there by his companions and when he came there one Ananias, a man having a good character according to the law from all the Jews dwelling there, came and said to him: “Brother Saul receive thy sight, the God of our Fathers hath pre-ordained thee that thou shouldst know his will and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice from His mouth, for thou shall be His witness to all men of those things which thou hast seen and heard. And now why delayest thou, rise up and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling upon His name.” Here we see St. Paul chosen as the vessel of election, and yet before bearing Christ’s name to the Gentiles, he must be baptized. Another remarkable instance of the practice of the Apostles is given in the Tenth Chapter of the Acts, where we read of the Conversion of the Centurion, Cornelius, with his family and friends. He was directed in a vision to seek out the truth and St. Peter was sent to him. He instructed them, made known to them the Divinity of Jesus Christ, called upon them to believe in him, and then perceiving that the Holy Spirit inspired their hearts and that they spoke in tongues, he cried out: “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” And he commanded

them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely this is a striking proof of the necessity of Baptism. Peter and the faithful who were with him heard Cornelius and his family speaking in divers tongues as when the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles themselves; this was a sure sign that the Holy Ghost had come down upon them; yet St. Peter showed that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was not sufficient, something is still necessary: they must be baptized. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We might introduce other instances from the Scriptures showing the belief and the doctrine of the Apostles concerning the necessity of Baptism, but we have sufficient testimony; we have the words of Christ Himself. But the question may arise in your minds: what of those who cannot receive the Sacrament? Do we mean that in no case whatever can a man be saved unless he receive the baptism of water instituted by Jesus Christ? Yes, we mean that no man can be saved unless he receives this Sacrament, except in two cases. First: if an unbeliever were to hear of the truths of Christ and were to embrace them, but yet under such circumstances that he could not possibly be baptized with water, he would nevertheless be justified by what is called the baptism of desire; that is, he believes in Christ and His teachings, he has perfect contrition for his sins, and would if it were possible for him, receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Thus if a man were to come for instruction to a Priest in order that he might prepare him for Baptism; if he knows of the existence of God, has a knowledge of the Trinity, and that one of the Divine Persons became man and died for his salvation, and if he knows moreover that the Catholic Church has been instituted by Christ for the Salvation of mankind, and wishes to become a member of that Church by Baptism; then if he is perfectly sorry for his past life and past sins, a day is appointed for his reception into the Church, but suddenly death comes upon him and before the saving

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waters of Baptism are poured upon him, he lies a corpse; that man is justified and saved by what the Theologians call: Baptism of Desire.

The second case in which a person may be justified, without the reception of this Sacrament is, when he suffers martyrdom for Christ's sake. For instance, if a person had heard of Jesus Christ and believed in Him, and on account of that belief was led off to death, as many were in the early ages of the Church, before he could receive the Sacrament of Baptism, that person would be baptized in his own blood and would receive what theologians call the Baptism of Blood and would be saved. For Christ Himself has said: "Whosoever shall lose His life for my sake and for the Gospel shall save it." That is to say whoever shall be put to death and leave this present life for His sake, or for the Gospel, shall find in its stead life everlasting in the next world.

You may ask about the children who die without receiving this sacrament. They cannot have the baptism of desire for they have not attained the use of reason, neither do they die as martyrs, consequently they have not the Baptism of Blood; what of them? To this question all that we do know for certain is, that without Baptism, Christ Himself has said they cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and again He asserts that nothing defiled can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. These souls are defiled by Original sin. We do know then for certain that they do not enjoy the happiness of Heaven, but what their future is we do not know, for as Almighty God has not been pleased to reveal it to His Church, we know nothing with certainty about their future. We know that they do not enjoy God, we have reason to hope that they are not condemned, since they have not committed any actual sin; but what is their state of life after death we do not for a certainty know.

Here then we have the Doctrine of Christ and His Church on the necessity of Baptism. Since it is so necessary for

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salvation, parents and others who have the care of children should fully realize their responsibility in this matter, and should see that their children be baptized as soon as possible after their birth. There is no excuse for putting this off beyond one week, no excuse for deferring it for a month or months, or for a year or years, as we sometimes find careless parents doing; it is the only means of Salvation offered to the innocent child, and in consequence the parents sin grievously and mortally who put off Baptism for a long period. They imperil the eternal salvation of their offspring by rejecting the only means of Salvation offered to the child, and in consequence sin mortally.

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THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“Honor thy father and thy mother.”

SOME hundreds of years before Christ came upon this world there lived a man named Solomon, noted as The Wise, for to him Almighty God had given the gift of wisdom. He was the wisest of men and was the king of God's chosen people. But, in the midst of all his glory as king, surrounded as he was by all that he could desire, he never forgot the honor that he owed to those who after God gave him life and being.

We read of this great king that, one day, while seated upon his throne receiving the petitions of his subjects, there came to him his mother seeking a favor for one of his people. No sooner did the king see her than he arose from his throne to meet her, bowed to her, and ordered a throne to be brought and placed beside him so that his mother might be shown the honor which was due to her from her son.

Now what a striking contrast might be drawn from this action of Solomon's, who was the wisest and most learned of sovereigns, compared with the conduct of many of our day who seem to forget that they are obliged by God Himself to love, honor, and obey their parents in all that is not sin.

In order then that we at least, my Christian friends,

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may be enabled to do all that is asked of us in this regard, we will this evening review the duties of children towards their parents. And first of all I would like to insist upon the fact that we are bound under pain of sin to honor and show signs of love and respect for them. This obligation is imposed upon us by the command of God Himself and by the law of nature which is found in the most savage breast.

Of the ten commandments that were given to Moses amid the thunders and lightnings of Mt. Sinai, the first three commandments treat of the duties man owes to God, viz: that there is but one God whom all must adore, that they must respect His name, not take it in vain, and they must keep holy the Sabbath day by resting from servile works, and by performing certain religious duties. The other seven treat of the duties that man owes to his fellow man, and the first of these—which is the fourth commandment—tells us to honor father and mother, that is to say: we must love them and respect and obey them in all things that are not sinful.

Hence we find in reading over the Holy Scripture that all the servants of God are most attentive to their parents in obedience to this commandment. Thus we may recall the case of Joseph who had been sold by his brothers. A famine comes upon the land; Joseph is taken by the king and made his chief servant to look after the wants of the needy, and when his poor father, not knowing him comes, like others, begging for his portion; no sooner does Joseph hear of it than he makes ready his chariot, we are told; and goes out to meet him, and seeing him falls upon his neck, embracing him and weeping for joy.

Again, we have the instance of King Solomon that we have just given you, but especially and above all we have the example of Jesus Christ Himself, when He deigned to come upon this earth and to be born of woman. We find Him honoring His Mother Mary and His foster-father Joseph. You remember how He was lost when only a

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boy twelve years old. We are told in the Gospel that after His Mother had sought Him for three days she finally found Him seated in the midst of the doctors teaching them and asking them questions, and when she beheld Him she rebuked Him as it were and said to Him: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing"; and we read that He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject and obedient to them. And mark it well: you may read the four Evangelists, and this is all that you will find told of the life of Christ from His twelfth year to His thirtieth. The only history we get of those years of His life is that He lived at Nazareth subject to the wishes of His parents. Can we not then well imagine the boy Jesus as a most dutiful son, anticipating the wishes of His parents. Can we not imagine Him performing all errands—and from what we know of His foster-father St. Joseph who was a carpenter—are we amiss when we picture Him in the workshop handling the hammer and the nails, working by the labor of His hands and earning with St. Joseph, by the sweat of His brow, His daily sustenance?

Again, when He appeared in public life we meet with Him at the marriage of Cana, and though the time had not yet come for Him to manifest His power, still at the request of His Mother His first miracle is performed; that of changing water into wine. Again, upon His death bed, which was the hard wood of the cross; when the last hour of His bitter agony was upon Him; when all the torture that brutal soldiers could inflict had been exhausted; when His eyes were closing upon the throng that stood about Him; He met for the last time the eyes of His sorrowful Mother and immediately His care and kindness for her manifested itself and He places her under the care of His beloved disciple St. John saying: "Son, behold thy Mother, Mother, behold thy Son." And Oh! were we permitted to withdraw the veil that hides us from the invisible world, would we not see Him still honoring that

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Mother? For does not our faith tell us of the mystery of the coronation, and would we not behold that Mother seated beside her Son even as was the mother of Solomon, putting up the petitions of so many of His unfaithful subjects of this world.

But even if we had never been commanded, even if we had never had the example of Jesus Christ Himself, nature would teach us that we should be grateful, and that therefore we should respect those who have been placed over us in this world as our guardians and protectors. If there be any subject worthy of hatred in this world it is the ungrateful man, the man who shows no gratitude for favors that he has received, the man who Judas-like can smile upon you when you are loading him with honors, but who can turn from you and betray you when there are a few pieces of silver to be gained. If there be an object worthy of gratitude in this world, it is that father and mother who have brought you into this life; for what have they not done for you? After God you owe them your life, and owing them your life, you owe them all things else.

How many years have they provided for you, supplied you with everything that was necessary for you, when you were lying a helpless babe in your cradle? With what tenderness did not your mother watch over you, nourishing you with the substance of her own body. When you grew up and began to be interesting, what anxiety lest something should befall you and God would take you to Himself! And when the time came for you to receive instruction, what sacrifices have they not made on your account? If your parents were wealthy, with no sparing hand did they give you of their wealth, in order that they might afford you an education that would place you before the world as worthy of respect. If they were poor and not blessed with too much of this world's goods, still greater were their sacrifices. You can see the mother stinting herself, depriving herself of many a little comfort,

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putting by the shilling and the dollar that is to be spent in order to make you happy, in order to give you an education that they on account of circumstances could not obtain. You can see the father toiling from early morning until late evening, working with an earnestness, and with a zeal that tells you he is living to make his children happy; to make them all that God would have them; working and toiling until the flesh upon his hands grows crusted, till his shoulders are stooped and bent, till he works himself into his grave. The only return he asks is gratitude, your love, respect and obedience; surely that heart must be callous and that mind must be indeed forgetful that will not show its gratitude for so many favors. And carry gratitude to its highest result can we ever repay that mother for her sufferings, for her watchings day and night; can we ever repay that father for his anxiety and for his labor, for the sacrifices and self-denials that he has made? Is it at all wonderful that we should read these words of Holy Scripture: "Honor thy Father and forget not the groanings of thy Mother. Remember that thou hadst not been born but through them, and make a return to them as they have done to you." And again: "Thou shalt honor thy Mother all the days of thy life, for thou must be mindful of what great perils she suffered for thee in her womb." There is no doubt then but that we must show proper honor and respect to our parents, no doubt that we are obliged to do so in virtue of God's expressed law, and in virtue of the law of nature.

But how are we to honor them? It consists of three things: love, respect, and obedience. These are the three duties that we owe them. In the first place we must love them. We know the law of charity: that we must love our neighbor as ourselves. Now if this law of nature obliges us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, is it not easy to conclude that this love must be entertained and carried to an eminent degree with regard to our parents, for beside the many motives which induce us to love our parents,

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have we not special motives obliging us to love them? Are they not the representatives of God for us? He is our Creator, preserver and ruler; and what is the parent? Is he not appointed by God to perfect his work by calling forth all the dormant faculties of the soul? Is he not appointed to be the preserver of the child by providing for it in its helplessness? Is he not appointed to be its ruler by so bringing it up that it may be the joy of its family, the hope of its country, and the glory of the Church.

Love for our parents must be a sincere and cordial love, an affection that is real.

The reality of our affection must manifest itself in our words and actions. By praying for them, by speaking kindly to them, doing them every service in our power, and studying to the utmost to make their life happy and agreeable; by dutiful affection and respectful behavior, especially by giving them all necessary assistance both for soul and body when poverty, old age or sickness comes upon them.

And here let me protest against a certain extravagance that young men and young women indulge in these days, when their parents are actually in distress. How many do we know, and how many a young man or woman falls under our observation who is heedless of the wants and necessities of their parents? How many of them have left their parents beyond the sea, quitted their homes, and perhaps took with them the last farthing that was in the house? To-day the father and mother cry out in vain for even a letter from their children. When starting from home tears coursed down their cheeks and promises were given, broken by sobs, that they would never forget father and mother, who were affording them the means of going where they might better their condition. When they said their last farewell, they knew they were never more to gaze on the sorrowful countenances that watched with tearful eyes the receding ship upon this side of the grave. But they felt their hearts bursting with love, and

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they would never forget their parents. What was the result? Thrown into a strange land; feeling all the loneliness of a person that walks in the midst of strangers; for a time they remain faithful to their promises and letters were exchanged filled with kind words of hope, with assurances that they would be soon able to give them assistance. But years go by, acquaintances are formed, they are no longer strangers in the city or in the town, they move with those who possess more of this world's goods than they do, and they feel that they must keep up with them in appearance and costly dress, in going to places of amusement, in appearing wealthy before the world; the consequence is that the old and infirm are forgotten, the words of hope that were exchanged in the beginning have ceased, and their parents are allowed to die in their old age without having even the consolation of knowing whether their children are dead or alive. And the fast young man during all this time is throwing his spare money into the till of the bar-room keeper, while the young woman is decking herself out in every tawdry fashion that society, as it is called, chooses to put on.

Is it at all wonderful that we should read in Holy Scripture of God Himself cursing such children? "He that afflicteth his father and chaseth away his mother is infamous and unhappy." And again: "He that steal-eth," that is that taketh away by not giving what is necessary: "He that stealeth anything from his father or from his mother and saith this is no sin, is the partner of a murderer," because he does not give the little that he might to support them in their old age.

The second duty that children owe their parents is that of respect, that is to say that in their hearts they must have an esteem and a reverential fear for their parents, never despising them no matter what may be their weaknesses. The faults of parents claim sympathy and compassion, but never justify contempt. We read in the book of Ecclesiastes these words: "Son, support the old age

of thy father, and grieve him not in his life. If his understanding fail, have patience with him and despise him not when thou art in thy strength." And again: "Hearken to the father that begot thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." And again: "Cursed be he that honoreth not his father and mother." We have then to respect our parents, to reverence them as our parents no matter what may be their imperfections. And yet, what are we to think of children who will break out in abusive language, call names, and even curse those who are appointed by God to look after them? What of children who mock their parents, speak of their defects in order that others may laugh at them? What above all of children who are ashamed of their parents, who will not be seen with them; and, mind you, not because their parents are addicted to the vice of drunkenness, but simply because they are not in their style of dress, in their appearance, in their manner, as presentable to society as others are. Children never acknowledge this to themselves, they do not like to think of it, they feel that it is an act of the greatest ingratitude, and they endeavor to conceal it; at times they imagine that it is noticed by the father and mother, but all the while their behavior is keenly cutting to the father and mother, who feel that their children are ashamed of them, and yet, with their kindness and love, would not charge them with it.

Oh, if we are addressing any of that class we exhort them to throw away that pride which would make you despise father and mother. Be manly, and face the world with an air of honesty and sincerity, and no matter what may be the defects of your parents, acknowledge them before men and the world itself.

The third and last duty is that of obedience; that is to say, that we must listen to the advice of our parents and act upon it. "Hear, my son, the instructions of thy father, and forget not the law of thy mother, that grace may be added to thy head and a chain of gold to thy

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neck." And again we read in St. Paul: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is just, honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise."

To carry out this duty in the first place our duty must be, as St. Paul says: "Entire in all things and in the Lord;" that is to say, we must obey our parents in all that is not sin. We must remember, too, that our parents are placed over us to represent God Himself; therefore when we obey them we obey God Himself, whose place they take. We must remember that whatever they wish us to do is all for our own good. It may seem strange at times, but when we go contrary to their wishes we are unhappy.

In the second place our obedience must be cheerful, ready, and pleasant, without excuse or without stubbornness or harsh words. We must remember the promise that Almighty God holds out to faithful children, which is: to grant a long and happy life in this world and everlasting happiness in the next. Surely this is a reward worth struggling for, a reward that lives within the grasp of every child. If we would obtain it, we should keep our eyes ever turned towards the lowly house of Nazareth where the obedience of the child Jesus was perfect. We must all, fathers and mothers, and children, keep that house in view, for that family is the model family of the world. Fathers and mothers should study therefore to make their homes like it by living in harmony and quiet with one another, making allowances for one another's defects, remembering that none of us are perfect and that all of us have our faults. Children should study its peace, its quiet, its harmony, and ask themselves how much the child Jesus contributed to the comfort and happiness of the domestic circle. They will see Him loving Mary His Mother and St. Joseph His foster Father, they will see Him respecting them, they will see Him obedient, and from this they will learn that Jesus, who is God, must

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have had instruction of children before His mind when He thus submitted to the creatures of His hand. They will learn from Him a lesson of humility that will make them faithful children and religious men and women.

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*“ What God therefore hath joined together
let no man put asunder.”*

MATH. XIX. 6.

THE words of St. Paul, “ This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and the Church,” give us an idea of the nature and dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony. From the fact that it is a sacrament, we would draw these deductions: that it is indissoluble, and that it must be contracted in the manner prescribed by the Church. Our Catechism tells us that Matrimony is a Sacrament which gives grace to the married couple to live happily together, and to bring up their children in the fear and love of God. It is an indissoluble union, contracted by and between one man and one woman, in a lawful manner, by which they are obliged to live together all the days of their lives, and to bring up their offspring in the fear and love of God; and in order that they may be able to do all this, Almighty God gives them a grace peculiar to this Sacrament when entering into marriage. As in treating of Baptism, Penance and the other Sacraments of the Church, we ask ourselves whether or not they possessed the essential characteristics of a Sacrament, so in like manner, in treating of Matrimony, we must also seek for those three essentials. In the first place we must ask, for

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the visible sign; in the second place we must seek for the promise of grace which is attached to every Sacrament; and in the third place we must determine the divine institution, and ask ourselves whether or not Marriage was instituted by Jesus Christ as a Sacrament.

Now none of us doubt for a moment of the outward and visible sign in this Sacrament, for it is the mutual consent of the parties expressed in words or other signs under the conditions which the laws of God and His Church require. Thus the parties ask each one in turn, whether they are ready and willing to enter into a life long contract one with the other; and the answer given is the visible sign by which they make known their intention. But with regard to the second characteristic, are we certain that Jesus Christ instituted this Sacrament? In the beginning of time we read that God created all things, and in the midst of that creation stood man alone; and we read in the book of Genesis that the Lord God said: "It is not good for man to be alone, let us make him a helpmate like unto himself;" and then we are told that the Lord cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when He was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and He built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam, and Adam in a voice of prophecy cried out: "This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be two in one flesh." More than this, we read that God blessed them saying: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over it, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." Certainly from this account given in the first book of the Sacred Text, it is evident that God is the author of the marriage state; for in this relation we see God forming the woman, presenting her to Adam, and blessing them both as the first of rational creatures upon the earth. This

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was the first marriage that was celebrated in the world, and this marriage had God for its author.

The world went on, and four thousand years had elapsed when our Blessed Lord came upon this earth, and strange to say, one of His first public acts as the God-man was to present Himself at a marriage feast. On the third day says the Evangelist, "there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus was invited;" He comes and assists at, and by His presence blesses, that marriage. God assisted at the first marriage, and here as soon as He comes upon this earth in human form we find Him assisting again at a marriage. God blessed the first, and here, clothed in His humanity and walking among men, we find Him blessing and confirming a second by His presence. Such has been the interpretation of the Fathers and Theologians of the Church upon this marriage feast at Cana. They say that it was then that our Blessed Lord elevated that matrimonial state of which He was the author—when our first parents were made—to the dignity of a Sacrament of the new law, and nothing is more natural. For take the other Sacraments, and you will find that they are administered in the different stages of life, and grace is given by them, through the merits of Christ according to the wants of the individual who receives them. Thus Baptism is given to the child; faith is infused into the soul before reason dawns, simply because it is a need of the child; for without faith it may never hope to see God. Again, when the child grows up, when reason asserts itself and might be exposed to the danger of doubt respecting matters of faith, Confirmation is administered, and a new grace is imparted by which the child is strengthened in his faith and holy religion. The child develops into the man, and he has to enter into the conflict of life and meet with temptations from without. The passions assail him from within, and time and again he yields and offends his Maker. Another want is experienced; he wishes to be reconciled to God, and to

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obtain strength, in order that he may be able to resist all evil inclinations in the future; and this want of the soul is supplied by the Sacrament of Penance through which the soul is again made pleasing to God. Then comes the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, in which Christ Himself is given so that the soul may enjoy the very strength of God's own might and power in repelling temptation. So too when death approaches, when our enemy redoubles his efforts to gain us; realizing that the last and decisive moment has arrived, and that he or Jesus Christ must gain us over in those few moments for an everlasting life of happiness, or of woe, in the next world, our Lord has been pleased to institute the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, through which grace is conveyed to give peace and quiet to the soul in order that we may die happily. And now, if our Blessed Lord has been pleased to provide for the wants of the soul in all these different periods of our life, certainly when we come to choose a state of life, a state that we enter into with the intention of remaining there till death shall come upon us, and moreover a state of life in which we are called upon to give up our wills, nay the very possession of ourselves we might say to another, called to it as men by the very inclination and desire of nature itself, surely He who has provided for all the wants of frail nature will not desert His creatures then, but institute for them a means through which grace will be given whereby they may be prepared to encounter and overcome all the difficulties of their undertaking; even as He has provided the Sacrament of Holy Orders, with its graces and helps for those who are called upon to imitate His life more closely in its purity and holiness. Even humanly speaking and even without recourse to the revealed word, nothing is more natural than that God should confirm and raise to the dignity of a Sacrament those pledges of undying love that were entered into before His very presence in the garden of Eden, and that were again

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contracted in His presence when He walked among men on this earth.

But where is the promise of grace, and is grace really given in this sacrament as in all others? Recall the words of St. Paul; that Apostle tells us that Matrimony is a great Sacrament in Christ and in the Church, and why does He assert that it is a great Sacrament? Is it because it is greater than any other, for we know that this word GREAT is not used when speaking of the other Sacraments. Is it more holy than the other Sacraments, more holy than baptism by which we are made children of God, or more holy than Holy Orders which gives the creature power over the body and blood of Christ. No, this is not the meaning of St. Paul; it is a great Sacrament because of what it represents. This is His meaning: it represents the close union of the undying love of Jesus Christ for His Church, and therefore a great Sacrament. If then you should have an idea of this channel of grace, consider the union and love which exists between Christ and His Church. Jesus Christ we are told descended from Heaven, came down upon the earth to be united with His Church through grace and love, and therefore it was that He left His heavenly home; so in like manner the husband must be united with his wife leaving father and mother and all things else for her sake. The Church sprang into existence when the side of Christ was opened on the cross, and so likewise the woman was taken from the side of man while sleeping in the garden. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, so too is the husband the head of the wife. Jesus Christ is the protector and guardian of the Church, laying down his life for it; but for what purpose? For the intention of sanctifying, of rendering it pure and spotless so that he might make it on the last day the possessor of eternal joys. So also should the husband be the protector, the guardian, the lover of the wife; but always with a view that he and she may share the joys of that kingdom in the hereafter.

Jesus Christ is so united to the Church that He loves it as if it were Himself. So also must "husbands love their wives even as Christ loves the Church, even as He loveth His own flesh; for no man ever hateth his own flesh, but cherisheth it as also Christ does the Church." It is in this manner that Jesus Christ has elevated the state of Marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament in the new law, and therefore instituted it as a channel of grace for all those who receive it with the proper dispositions. Jesus has made it the very image and sacred sign of His fixed and everlasting union with the Church, which is a union of grace and of love; therefore this Sacrament which symbolizes the love of Jesus Christ carries with it the grace necessary to perfect this union, and make it as like as possible to His union with His beloved spouse upon this earth, the Church of God.

Behold then Christian people your dignity; the husband represents in this state of life no less a person than Jesus Christ Himself, and the wife represents no less a spouse than the spouse of Christ,—the Church; your union is the figure of the union of Jesus Christ and His Church, and therefore it is that St. Paul says, "This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." If then you are to represent that intimate union of Christ with His spouse, be one in mind, be one in heart and in affection; above all be one in your faith, which is Catholic, and you will be the worthy ministers of Christ in representing His love to the world. You will be as it were co-creators with God, perpetuating society, perpetuating those who will be made His children by the waters of Baptism, perpetuating those who will be members of His spouse; you will be building up that Church for which He "delivered Himself in order that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle" or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

This leads us naturally to our first deduction: that mar-

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riage when once contracted can never be broken by any power upon this world save death. Death alone can separate husband and wife, for death alone takes either one out of this world. This is at strange variance with the doctrines and opinions of men in our day; nay it is at strange variance with the practice of governments, that admit a system of legalized divorce. To determine the indissolubility of marriage we have but to ask the Church, and her teaching is, and always has been, that parties who contract marriage can never be separated in such manner that while one is alive the other may be married to another; and this her teaching is the teaching of Jesus Christ, and His teaching is the teaching of God, it consequently must be received despite the practices and opinions of men. To show that such is the teaching of our Blessed Lord we might again repeat for you the words of St. Paul, where he asserts that Marriage should represent the union of Christ with His Church. We know that Christ is wedded to the Church; He has given His divine word which cannot be broken that He will not separate Himself from it. Now if Matrimony should symbolize this union as it must according to St. Paul, then must the husband and wife pledge themselves never to separate but to remain bound to each other till time for them will be no more. But beyond this we have Christ's own express words for it in the Gospel; that the Pharisees came to Him tempting Him and asking Him questions, and among others they put this plain straight-forward question to Him: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" Our Blessed Lord made answer and said to them: "Have you not read that He who made man in the beginning made them male and female, and have you not read that it was said: For this cause shall man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they too shall be two in one flesh, wherefore they are not two but one." Have you not read all this? Therefore it was the intention of their Maker that they should re-

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main forever united. "What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." But they were not satisfied with that answer, for they remembered that there were cases when Moses allowed men to put away their wives; and they said to Him: "Why then did Moses allow us to give a bill of divorce and put her away?" And now my friends mark the words of our Blessed Lord in reply, for certainly His answer now must be a very clear one since they have placed Him in this dilemma. He has told them very clearly that the intention of their Maker was that they should be no longer two, but one; but they recall the fact that Moses, who was the chosen leader of the people, allowed them to give a bill of divorce. Now mark his reply, "Moses," said he, "because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so; and therefore I say now to you whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another committeth adultery." But even this answer did not seem to satisfy all, and the disciples when at home with him, as on several occasions before, asked Him privately whether it is not lawful for a man to separate and his answer to them a second time is as related in the Gospel of St. Mark: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her, and if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another she committeth adultery." Could the laws of God be more explicit? Could it be stated in simpler words? Here is the reason that the Church has ever set herself against divorce; here is the simple reason why she has upheld, and to-day upholds, despite the civil laws to the contrary, the indissolubility of Marriage.

It is a law not of her making, but of Christ's own forming, and as she is in this world as the guardian of His word and of His law, therefore it is that she maintains this law despite all opposition. She maintains with St. Paul that Matrimony is a great Sacrament, and conse-

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quently as such it belongs to her, and to her alone, to say when this contract is valid or invalid, and how long men are to be bound by it. She does not recognize the teaching of men, or state, or government, upon the matter; she recognizes that the state has a power that should preserve the laws framed by Christ not as a power that can revoke or annul His laws at its own pleasure; she is the interpreter of His laws, and the state is its protector. The second deduction that follows from the fact that Matrimony is one of the seven Sacraments of the Church is: that being a Sacrament, it falls within the province of the Church to say in what manner, and before whom, it should be solemnized; and her teaching in this matter is: that it should be entered into before her ministers, and in the presence of witnesses. The proof that the Church has the power, from the very fact of Matrimony being one of the Sacraments of the new law is this: take any of the Sacraments which you have received and ask who it was that administered that Sacrament to you. When you were baptized, who made use of the words ordained by Christ and said: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, etc.?" When you were confirmed who was it that made use of the words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, I confirm you with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." When you wished to receive the Sacrament of Penance, who is it that says the words: I absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And so, too, when death approaches and steals you from this world, who is it that you expect to stand over you praying that the infirmities of your nature may be forgiven through the Sacrament of Extreme Unction? You will look to the Church's minister for the administration of all these Sacraments, and who therefore should be the one to say: I join you together in the bonds of marriage in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? There is no Catholic who will fail

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to see the consistency of this argument, and all must admit that they should contract these unions before the Church, and receive the Church's blessing upon them. We do not take our children to Baptism to a minister of a different religion, nor to any city squire or justice; why therefore if we be Catholics, nay more, how can we, if we be true Catholics disobey the Church's teaching in this matter. Is not Matrimony a Sacrament and should it not be received as any Sacrament of the Church? And yet, my friends, we only know too well, all of us, that there are individuals who are so regardless of the laws of the Church, that they actually seem to transgress them defiantly. Their motives cannot be well determined, for they know that if they are to be married, the Church can dispense and they may be married if there be valid reasons for it. And yet, knowing all this, people who should know their religion, who have been brought up in the shadow of the Church we might say, go off in defiance of the law. Hence it is, that to stop the abuse, to bring persons to a true sense of their duty, that such persons contracting marriage before a minister of any denomination except their own, are then and there excommunicated, and their case reserved to the Bishop. Their marriage is valid if there be no impediment that annuls it; but yet, he or she who contracts such marriage is then and there excommunicated. Now in the face of such a law it is to be hoped that such marriages, as far as we are concerned may cease. Realize that when you are called upon to enter this state of life, you are called upon to receive a Sacrament, and that in consequence of that you should receive it in your own Church, as you receive any other Sacrament; prepare yourself for its reception as you would for the reception of any Sacrament, by cleansing your souls from sin in the Sacrament of Penance, and by receiving the precious Body and Blood of Christ. Then you may expect to receive God's own blessing together with the graces of the Sacrament, and you can look for-

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ward to a hopeful future. True, clouds may rise and break over your heads; you may meet with many disappointments and trials in life; troubles may arise, but the grace that accompanies this Sacrament will render you able to bear the crosses that are strewn in your path through this land of exile and valley of tears.

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THE DUTIES OF PARENTS.

“ But if any man has not care of his own, and especially those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.”

TIM. v. 8.

IF we endeavored to point out some of the many causes of infidelity and of the unbelief that we witness in the world, we would find that the education offered us, the literature surrounding us, the pulpit which should be the guardian of faith and belief, seem in some manner to conspire against man in order to rob him of that precious heirloom the gift of faith.

Examine the results attending these causes. First of all, their offshoot is naturally the man of unbelief, the infidel: secondly, the non-practical Christian, the non-practical Catholic, that is to say; the man who professes that he is a Catholic, that he is a member of Christ's Church, while he practises but few, if any, of her six commandments. But from the words of St. Paul which we have just read to you, we may reasonably conclude that there is another very powerful cause at work giving us as its result the very poor Catholic. He tells us that any man who has not care of his own, and especially those of his house, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

We would have parents think over this saying of the Apostle St. Paul and ask themselves in all sincerity, have they a care of their own; do they care and provide for

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their children as they should, do they observe the duties imposed upon them by the natural and the divine law in bringing up their children, or have they denied faith and become worse than infidels?

Let us examine ourselves upon this particular point. Are you as parents preparing your children still inexperienced and young in years, for the mission that awaits them? Mission, you ask? Has the child a mission? Yes, and a vast one. He should be the joy and happiness of his family. He should be the true citizen, the hope of his country; he should be the faithful Christian, the true son, the glory of his Church and of his Religion. Behold the mission of every child that is born into the world, and ask yourselves: do you so instruct, and do you so provide for them that they may become the pride of their family, the hope of their country, the glory of their Church?

The child as it slumbers in its cradle awakens hopes and fears in the breast of every tender Mother. She watches it as it sleeps, she sorrows with it when it suffers, she rejoices with it when she beholds it occupied in its childish sports, and she often asks herself what will be the future of this child; and she no doubt often sketches in fancy how that child will be the maintenance of her old age. But oh, the stern reality of the lives of children which surround her who has grown up side by side with them: the sad fate reserved for them although they promised well in their infancy. The reality of all this occurs to her, and puts to flight the thoughts that occupy her mind. She shrinks from the thought that her child will turn out like them, shrinks from the thought that in her old age she will be left alone heart-sore and heart-broken; shrinks from the thought that that child as soon as it comes to the years of discretion will treat her thanklessly, nay, bring her disgrace and shame. She shrinks from the thought that would suggest him as irreligious, as the drunkard, as the man of no conscience and no belief; and in order that

she may prevent that dark future, for she knows full well that his character lies within her hands and may be moulded by her, "as the twig is bent the tree is inclined," she there resolves that she will bring him up in such a manner as to be the stay and happiness of her future.

Such is her resolve and such her wish; that her child may fulfill its mission in the family, to be its joy and its happiness. But, born into the world it is born into society, and there it likewise has its mission. It belongs to the great human family which is only circumscribed by the limit of the world; it is a member of the state, a useful citizen whose arms may be one day devoted to the defence of his country. If in the design of Providence he is to be numbered among the poor, the class who must labor for their daily sustenance by the sweat of their brow, then he is called upon to show himself the useful member of society by his industry; the conscientious man by his honesty, the patriotic man by his loyalty and respect for laws and authority.

On the other hand if destined to rank among the rich ones of the world, if it be his fortune to possess wealth and possess it in abundance, then too he must show himself the useful member of society by using his wealth to benefit others. Or again, if he be called to execute the powers of the state, to administer the laws of his country he must again show to the world his usefulness by his conscientious administration, his impartiality, his justice, by respecting the rights, whilst he enforces the duty of all.

A third mission is left for him, he is born into life, a life which does not end with the grave; a life which is to be everlasting. He comes bearing upon his immortal soul the image and the likeness of his God. By his Baptism he becomes a child of the Church, and he is called to be the glory of that Mother who has begotten him anew of water and of the spirit; he is one of the elect of heaven, he is a co-heir, a brother, a companion in arms with the saints

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and with the elect of God. He must take part in the trials and battles which his Lord and Master Jesus Christ has marked out for him, and like a true soldier he must listen and obey the voice of his commander. In virtue of his creation and redemption he is called upon to follow his divine Master, and his voice is His Church, for Christ has told us: "He who heareth you heareth Me, and he who despiseth you despiseth Me."

He is called upon then in a word to listen to and obey the Church, to show himself a real man of belief by obeying her precepts, and fulfilling all that she enjoins as his Mother. In what manner then, parents, ask yourselves, in what manner are you preparing your children for this three-fold mission which lies before them? How vast and how grand it is, how great is the dignity of every child that is born into this world of ours. Would you measure your own, would you know your own mission; study that of the child as we have now done, and then you have some idea of the dignity of the mission of every father and mother; for the father and mother are called upon to make their children fit for their station in the family, in society and in the Church. Where then are you to perform this work, and how are you to accomplish it? What are your duties with regard to your children? The great school-room where they are to receive their first instruction and their first lesson, is in the family. There, within the mother's arms, they should be first taught to lisp the name of God who created them, the name of Jesus Christ who redeemed them, and the name of His blessed Mother who is so powerful in interceding for them. Fathers and mothers, that little soul which you now bear about with you, that little soul has been bought at a great price. It was purchased by the blood of Christ, it is an angel as yet in His sight, the bright spirits which crowd around see reflected within its little bosom the image of their God and rejoice. Do you love it dearly? Love it as did the great Origen, the little Leonidas Origen. It

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is told of that great man, that great philosopher, that he would go to the little bed where his child slept, and baring its little bosom he would kiss it most respectfully, saying that as yet it was the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. Love it as Jesus Christ loves it. You may form some estimate of His love for it, from the manner in which he loved little children while on this world; He loved them for He saw in them the picture of His own innocence. We are told in the Gospel that on one occasion when mothers were bringing their children to Him to bless them, they came in such numbers that the Apostles rebuked those who brought them, and Jesus seeing it was much displeased, and said to them: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Amen. I say to you: whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it." And embracing them and laying His hand upon them He blessed them. And again from the Gospel we may learn how He loved them, from the terrible malediction which He pronounced against those who would scandalize them; who would lead them into sin. His Disciples came to Him asking: "Who thinkest thou is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus, beckoning to a little child to come to Him, set Him in their midst and said: "Amen. I say unto you, unless you become converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And he that shall receive one such little one in my name, receiveth me. But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones, that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged around his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Home then, within your own dwellings and while it is yet tender, the child must be instructed. Certainly if you but realize the dignity of that child, if you but realize the great love that God bears towards you, you will guard it with a jealous care and turn aside from its innocent soul all that would injure it.

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But the child gradually grows up, what then are your duties towards it? In the first place, you owe it a good Christian education, and in the second place you are bound to show it a good example. The great Lacordaire begins one of his conferences by stating this incontrovertible fact. Man, a being, is subject to instruction and when he would prove it to the audience which surrounds him, he said to them: "Why have I undertaken to address you in this place? If I look around me I perceive signs of all ages, hairs which have become white in the watchings of learning, features which bear traces of the fatigue of combats, others which are animated by the sweet memories of literary study, of young men also who have just plucked the third flower of life. Tell me, you who are assembled here, what do you ask of me, what do you desire from me? The truth? You have it not then within you. You seek it, you are come here to be taught." Do what we will while in this world, no matter what we are, or who we may be, we are always influenced, are always being instructed. And if this be the case with the old in every step of their lives how much more is it true with reference to children who are subject to the influences surrounding them. They must naturally subject themselves to instruction, they therefore look to parents, those who are set over them by God, as guardians of His trust for the education and instruction they are to receive.

He looks to you and society demands that you give your child a Christian education. Try and understand the full meaning of that word. It is an education that gives us a knowledge not only of the sciences, but above all includes the science of sciences the knowledge of God, and of our duties towards Him. An education that does not alone address itself to the mind, but cultivates the heart, that develops the entire moral being of the man. An education founded not upon the shifting notions and opinions of men but established upon the basis of faith. And in order that you may understand your calling in

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this regard, try to comprehend the greatness of your work. The child is born into the world helpless, God in His infinite wisdom has entrusted him to you, we might say imperfectly formed; he is without strength, feeble, it cannot make known to you its wants, it knows nothing of its surroundings, its faculties are undeveloped. You are then called upon to perform that which we might call a divine work; called upon to continue the work which God in His greatness and His power has not completed.

He might, had He wished, have sent that new born baby into this world possessed of all its powers, with its tongue loosened, with its mind active, with the power of its soul fully developed, but He has not done so. He entrusted that to you, as the one who will call forth into life and into action that mind which was made to know its creator, and will which was made to love Him and to bow down in obedience to His law and to His commandments.

You might be likened in your position to an enthusiastic amateur of Art, who had by chance hit upon a work of the old Masters, a work which had been hidden for centuries. In what manner would that young artist receive that piece, how delicately he would handle it, with what care would he remove the earth crusted upon it, he would try to conceive the idea of the genius which designed and if possible would reproduce it and set it before the world.

Now the parent is very like that artist, he receives the picture and the likeness of God upon the soul of the child, for He knows that it possesses a mind and a will, which distinguish it from the brute creation, and makes it like to God. The parent knows it to be a masterpiece of God's work, and He should therefore see that it be not marred, that it be not soiled by sin, but that it be led to know God and to love Him. And yet is it not a sad and strange fact, that there are Catholic parents who never seem to fully realize this truth, who never think of giving their child a Christian education. Within the past week, you

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might have read in one of our Catholic Journals of an incident that occurred in one of the New England States. In one of the high schools of the state, a teacher lately asked how many could repeat the ten commandments, but four hands went up, of whom one was an Episcopalian, the other three Catholics. This sounds very much like exaggeration, for we can hardly conceive how parents have so forgotten their duties as not to see that their children, after knowing that they were created by God, would become at least acquainted with His ten commandments. But no it is not a piece of exaggeration.

Another duty that the parent owes the child is that of good example; that is to say, if they wish their children to lead good lives, it is not sufficient to instruct them, and tell them what a good life is, but they themselves must first live up to the standard. If they are faithful to the commandments of God and the commandments of the Church, then their children will be likewise faithful. And let us thank God that there are many such families in our midst, the parents of which may say to their children as St. Paul said to the faithful of his time: "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Jesus Christ," families who seem to have begun their heaven upon earth. But on the other hand, how many parents may be condemned for the example that they are giving their children, parents who stay from Mass on a Sunday, and spend it riotously, parents who seldom or never go to their confession and communion. We condemn with the inspired writer, the pagan parents who immolated their children in honor of the demon. But is it not true that we have to lament the same fact in our own day? Here they are not sacrificed as they were by the pagans, they are not placed upon the burning pile and there consumed, but are their souls not sacrificed? How many are brought up in habits of idleness, spend their time foolishly, carelessly; how many whose mothers connive at their going to places dangerous for youth, mothers whose hands deck them for the sacri-

fic. Surely these are the Christian mothers to whom we might well address the words of St. Paul, and say that they have denied the faith and are worse than infidels. But what of those mothers who outrage the dignity of human nature by their oaths and blasphemies, and who make their children the daily witness of their irreligion and indifference. What of those fathers who come into their homes drunk and quarreling, spending the shilling and the dollar that should be given for bread within the family. What of those homes wherein there is nothing but dissension and discontent Sunday after Sunday. Oh unfortunate parents, your treatment carries with it its chastisement, you are now scattering the seed in the hearts of your children, and you may expect to reap the fruit even in this present life, you may expect to see them imitate you, even to surpass you in your irreligion and impiety. And far from being your consolation, your hope and your joy, you may expect to see them afflict you with sorrow and bring upon you shame and disgrace.

You have sacrificed them to the demon, he has whispered in tempting tone, that they may do as their parents, and they have faithfully copied your example and you may say with Jeremias, when he wept over the ruins of Jerusalem, "The joy of our heart is ceased. The crown is fallen from our head, woe to us because we have sinned." But more than all, Christian parents, how will you appear on the last day, when you will have to confront that child, when it will rise up in judgment against you. Let us turn from this sight to those who bring up their children in the love and fear of God, parents who have been the guardians of their children, who during life were blessed with happiness, who in death left after them in the world children who might pray for them and think of them, as they shed honor upon them, who in the life to come will meet their children as their recompense, their glory, their imperishable crown. Let me exhort you then in conclusion, you who are bringing up children, you like-

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wise who may be placed in some position over them, let me exhort you one and all to be faithful to your mission, to regard each child that is placed under you, as one called to the possession and the happiness of heaven. Love them as Christ loved them, and you must be true to them. And if there be any who have heretofore been remiss in the performance of these duties, let me exhort them to begin to undo the evil which they may have done, and resolve to be careful in the discharge of their duties in the future.

And if perchance there be some poor soul suffering whose child may have wandered astray, though the parents may have done all they could for their children, in the days of their youth, let me bid them pray for their conversion and be filled with hope. For if you have imparted good lessons to them in their youth, rest assured the world can never pluck them from the heart and from the conscience; and though they may now seem to be lost in the excitement and pleasure of the world, still the day will come, the hour of affliction when they will bear fruit and like another Monica you will have reason to rejoice and you may say in words of the father of the prodigal: "Let us rejoice and be glad for this my child was dead and is come to life again, he was lost and is found."

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“ I am forgotten as one dead from the heart.” “ And they that passed by me have not said: the blessing of the Lord be upon you.”

A LEARNED divine commenting on these words of the inspired Psalmist applies them to the departed dead. They may be remembered by their works, spoken of by their friends, praised even at times by their enemies, and perhaps their name may have found a place on the chiseled monument; nay even in the pages of history. All the grandeur and glory that earth in its power could shed about the grave has been bestowed, and still, sad spectacle, they are forgotten, dead from the heart; friends and relatives visit their cemeteries, walk about their graves, gaze at and admire the cold marble pointing heavenwards, a silent sentinel of hope, read the inscription, pass on through the low, seemingly neglected mounds, commenting on the poverty of their possessors, and so on out into the busy world again where all is life and action, without having once invoked a blessing or offered a prayer in the secret of their hearts for the repose of those poor souls who complainingly cry out: “ And they that passed by me have not said: the blessing of the Lord be upon you.”

Hence we wish to set before you the consoling dogma of Catholic faith that there is a place of purgation for souls who depart from this life stained by sins that are not mor-

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tal and consequently do not merit the pain of eternal loss. We shall then examine the nature of the punishment suffered therein and draw two very natural conclusions. The one of avoiding even all deliberate venial sin which would subject us to such punishment, and the other to do all in our power, or at least something to aid those who are at present suffering and sighing to be united to their God.

The belief in the existence of Purgatory is a dogma of Catholic faith grounded on Scripture and Tradition, and reasonable to every thinking mind. St. Paul writing to the Corinthians and treating of the dignity of the human soul, says: that it becomes the temple of God Himself in Baptism by the reception of faith. He tells the faithful to be careful in perfecting this great building for they are the co-operators, co-laborers with Christ in raising this structure whose foundation God Himself has laid. Let them see to it therefore that their works are in keeping with that faith which is given them, for if they be subversive of that faith, "destructive to that temple of God raised in their souls," then God will destroy them for His temple is holy. But if on the contrary their actions confirm, strengthen and increase the good work begun in them, they may look for a reward; for their work is lasting and merits everlasting happiness. But since there are others again who neither destroy nor perfect the good work begun in them, and rather imperfectly co-operate with the workings of grace in their hearts, these, says the same Apostle, shall suffer loss, "but they themselves shall be saved yet so as by fire." Could we wish for proofs more conclusive? Could words be more explicit? Here certainly we have the express mention of a place of reward or heaven, of a place of destruction or hell, of a place of purgation or purgatory.

Again we see from the express testimony of St. Matthew to confound those who would cast ridicule on this truth; we have the express testimony of Christ who, when speaking of the blasphemy of the Spirit, say: "And whosoever

shall speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him neither in this life nor in the next." Mark these last words: it shall not be forgiven him in this life nor in the life to come. Why speaks He of forgiveness in the next world if there be only heaven and hell? For in the one there is nothing sinful and consequently no need of forgiveness; while in the other there is no forgiveness, for out of hell there is no redemption.

Again Our Blessed Lord mentions a prison and place of punishment out of which souls shall be delivered, but not before the last farthing has been paid. "Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing;" and this place of punishment according to St. Jerome cannot be understood of any other than of purgatory from which the souls will not be liberated until cleansed from the slightest blemish. In the Old Testament we have another striking passage. It is related in the book of Machabees that Judas, "the brave commander, made a collection and sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead; thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. For if he had not hoped that they that were dead should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins." We are aware that this book is not received by those who differ from us, as scriptural; but they must grant that its authenticity as a book of history is as strongly established as any other of the Old Testament. They must therefore admit that it may be consulted as a book of reference, that we may learn from it the customs of the Jews. It proves therefore that at the time of the Machabees, the popular conviction was that when prayers were offered for the dead they were beneficial to them, and that it was a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead. We have then the belief and prac-

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tice of the Jewish Church in testimony of our doctrine. They were as we know the chosen people of God, and surely He would not have allowed them to fall into error in that respect without attempting to recall them through the aid of His prophets as He did on so many other occasions. Then again when Christ came upon the earth, when He came to fulfill the law as He said Himself we do not find Him at all inveighing against this doctrine. In no place in the New Testament is He found condemning it as He did so many other corruptions that had passed into their law through the Pharisees. Nay we have found Him confirming it by express testimony from the New Testament, and His Church throughout all ages has ever taught the same doctrine. Can we then suppose that our Blessed Lord would have allowed so grievous an error to have passed among His chosen people in the Old dispensation, and in the New dispensation, if it be true that Christ came upon this earth, instituted a Church as a means of salvation, told the ministers of the Church to go out in the broad world and teach all that He had commanded. If all this be true can we for a moment suppose that His designs were frustrated by men and that His Church has been a blundering institution from the very beginning? Where is the man that would dare to assert it?

But you object that such was not the teaching of the Church from her beginning. It was a matter that crept in after centuries. Well, then, let us appeal to tradition and ringing throughout every age and every part of the known world where Christianity has established its sovereignty, its voice speaks in trumpet tones through the Fathers and Doctors of the early Church, testifying to her teaching and the constant and unshaken belief of her unerring children. Thus Tertullian in the second century exhorts the wife who survives her husband: "to pray for his soul, solicit for him refreshment, and offer on the anniversary of his death;" "and again Tradition," says he, "asserts itself as the author, custom affirms, and faith

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observes the practice of making oblations for the dead." Here in the second century we have Tertullian appealing to a tradition and custom which must have been Apostolic and asserting the existence of a faith pre-eminently practical. The sainted Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, that great doctor of the Western Church in the fourth century, tells us that notwithstanding the objections of the Heretics (for remember in those days the Church as ever had her enemies) that the custom of praying for the dead was most ancient in the Church. And again when speaking of his own practice: "I pray for the dead that when they are in eternal glory they may not neglect praying for me." But there is a most striking incident narrated in the life of this saint which shows the belief of his time. You are all acquainted with his life, you have heard of the tears that were shed by his poor mother, in order that she might reclaim her wayward son. Heart-sick and foot-sore she followed that erring boy through all his wanderings and never ceased to pray for him; by her constant entreaties his conversion was obtained, and she was heard to say: "Son, there is nothing now in this life that affords me any delight. The only thing I desired to live for was that I might see you a Catholic and a child of heaven. God has done much more; in that I see you now despising all earthly felicity and entirely devoted to His service as a Priest of His Church." Yes, Augustine, the child of tearful prayers, had been converted and had consecrated the rest of his days to the service of God's altar. Some time after, Monica took sick, and one day being worse than ordinarily she swooned away and was for a little while insensible. Her two sons ran to her. When she came to herself, awakening as it were out of a profound sleep she said to them: "Here you shall bury your mother," and Navigius remarked that she should be laid by the side of her husband; but she checked him saying: "Lay this body anywhere; be not concerned about that, the only thing I ask of you both is that you make remembrance of

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me at the altar of the Lord wheresoever you are." And that sainted son, that learned bishop prays in his confession: "Let her therefore rest in peace, and do thou, O Lord, my God, inspire thy servants, my brethren, thy children, my masters, whom I serve with my voice and my heart, and my writings; that as many as shall read this may remember at thy altar thy handmaid, Monica, with Patricius, her husband."

And no less striking are the words of St. Ambrose in his funeral oration on the great Theodosius: "I loved him, therefore I follow him into the country of the living. Neither will I forsake him till by tears and prayers I shall bring the man whither his merits call him unto the holy mountain of the Lord." And again speaking of the emperors Valentinian and Gratian, "No duty shall pass you over in silence, no prayer of mine shall ever be closed without remembering you, no night shall pass you over without some vows of my supplication, you shall have a share in all my sacrifices; if I forget you let my own right hand be forgotten."

If the practice of praying for the dead were not common in those days would not such words have shocked an audience; would they not have asked whence comes this new doctrine, and especially would they not ask that question when they saw their emperor Constantine the Great buried in the porch of the Church of the Apostles that he might enjoy the communication of the Holy prayers, the mystical sacrifice and the divine ceremonies? Such then are a few of the many testimonies that the voice of tradition offers for the past.

Nor are we satisfied in asserting that only since the coming of Christ has the truth of a middle state been universally believed. But we will go further and assert that for ages before, this belief was common to the people of the earth; nay, that it appears to be coeval with the fall. For, if not, how are we to explain the passages of Pagan writers and Philosophers. Their ideas regarding such a state

were extravagant and foolish if you will; but still you must of necessity deduce one of two conclusions from their works. Either that natural instinct asserted the existence of such a place, or that these different peoples bore about without them the relics of a universal tradition.

With regard to the nature of the punishments suffered by those holy souls the Church has defined nothing. But still her holy Doctors eminent for their learning and the sanctity of their lives do not hesitate to maintain that their sufferings are beyond conception. The fire of purgatory is more severe than any punishment that can be felt or imagined in this world. St. Thomas teaches us that the same fire torments the damned in hell and the just in purgatory, and with a little reflection we can in some manner understand why God should so punish us. Consider the enormity of sin, it aims at destroying God Himself and consequently must be hateful in His sight; remember the punishment inflicted in this life on account of sin even after the guilt of the sin has been remitted. Behold the punishment of David, of Moses, and conjure up if you can the sad effects of that first sin in the garden of Eden.

Imagine the sufferings of earth, the slow wasting of famine, the reeling of a fevered brain, the untimely death struggle with its train of sorrows, the longings of a soul wishing to be separated from this valley of pains and ills, the anxious expectations of the martyrs abiding the time of their death, their innumerable modes of torture, and you have but a faint picture according to those lights of Holy Church, of the sensible agonies of those poor souls.

But what are all these compared with the separation from God, their last end. Made for His glory and to His likeness, they tend to Him by a necessity of their nature from the moment of their creation and are never happy until they see and enjoy Him in eternity. Like the arrow winged from the bow of the huntsman, and seeking its destination, or the stone cast in mid-air and descending to the earth in virtue of the physical law of attraction, or

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again like the many rivers seeking to be swallowed up in the ocean, so also do these poor souls freed from the trammels of the body fly in virtue of a natural law of necessity to the bosom of God, and seek to be engulfed in that ocean of Infinite Being. How deplorable then their exile, how pitiable their separation; they seek God, but He flies from them, they approach Him, but He withdraws from them; they petition, but He rejects them, "in the hardness of His heart He is against them," for thence they cannot go "until they have paid the last farthing."

To these sufferings, the pain of sense and the pain of loss, we may add still another. There is no man so miserable on the earth as not to be able in some manner to free himself from the punishments imposed on account of his crimes. He may flee from his country, retire to foreign parts and be none the less happy. If he does not wish to have recourse to these means he may have his friends to intercede for him, the individual chosen to condemn him may be bribed or he again may throw himself upon the clemency of his judge and thus obtain for himself a lesser penalty; at all events in one way or another by fair means or foul he will obtain entire pardon or at least a change of sentence. But not so before that great Judge of nations; there is no escaping His justice, there is no fleeing from His sight; "for whither," says the Psalmist, "shall I flee from thy face. If I ascend into the heavens thou art there, if I descend into hell thou art present."

There is no asking for respite, for the time for us will then have passed; no clemency to be expected, for the reign of eternal justice and it alone has begun. The time of mercy has passed. True our friends might intercede, might do much to obtain our release; but Oh! the forgetfulness of friends. If we were to pass through this congregation how many would we find who have not lost some dear one, a kind mother, a fond father who has wasted his years in looking after your interests, a gentle sister, an affectionate wife, a loving brother, a tender husband? And

now where is the memory of them? Like a play at which we were present we have seen these characters rise before us and pass away, and with their absence from our sight came the forgetfulness of our memory. But a few weeks or days after their death the tear would have started to the eye and the sob of grief would have choked our utterance only at the bare recital of their names. Well indeed might they reproach us with the words of Job: "My kinsmen have forgotten me, and they that knew me have forgotten me. They who now dwell in my house think of me as a stranger, and I have become an alien in their eyes. * * * They that were some time my counsellors have abhorred me, and he whom I loved most is turned against me. * * * Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." Like the ungrateful minister of King Pharaoh we are unmindful of those in prison, they call upon us to remember them while it is well with us, and to remind the king when we kneel before him that his children are in prison, but blinded by the false glitter of gold, the poor father and mother who ask us as a last request to remember them, are forgotten and banished from the mind; in fact we have not time, it would interfere with our worldly business to be taken up with them. If this be the practical conclusion of those we are to leave after us in this world, there is contained within it a lesson for us that should sink deeply in the mind and hearts of all; and pray God that it may ever remain there indelibly impressed. Reflect upon the pains of those confined spirits; learn therefore how to avoid those sorrows; let your time of purgation be while upon the earth; forestall by your own acts of voluntary penance the justice of God which shall surely come upon us when the time of mercy has passed. Conceive an abhorrence for sin in the future, and do penance for the past. To us all there comes during our life a time of sorrow, a time of sickness, a time of want. Ah! these are the golden moments, bear up with them and pray God in

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His mercy to receive them as so many acts of atonement for your past sins.

A second time, we would ask you to reflect upon those pains, and then learn to do something for those poor souls. Until now perhaps we have given them scarcely a thought; what then shall we do for them? Is there one present who will not offer a prayer for them? Nay more, is there one who will not make some effort to be present on the Feast of All Souls, at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, to join in prayer with the universal Church in sending up her suffrages for those poor souls? And remember, that this is a duty, remember that there may be souls there who are suffering on your account. When you pray then, penetrate in spirit their abode, and ask God to pity them, ask Him through the merits of His Divine Son, who suffered for them, to spare them; make use of the many indulgences which the Church holds out to you, daily indulgences attached to prayers and communions, and especially at the time of Holy Communion, when our Lord Himself is within you; pray earnestly, pray devoutly, for your relatives and friends, and then as a last means and the most powerful, we would recommend to you the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here upon our altars let the victim of Calvary be again raised and offered to His Heavenly Father. Here let His blood be again mystically shed, and without doubt drops of that precious blood will penetrate that dungeon, cleansing and purifying the soul; as of old, Christ, after His death on the Cross descended into and liberated from limbo the holy souls confined therein.

And now, in conclusion, we call forth your admiration for your Holy Mother Church in giving this holy truth, a truth well worthy of heaven and of a divine religion, and surely in harmony with the nature and the feelings of mankind. Nature abhors and reason recoils from a doctrine that tells us that the bond of affection which unites Christian souls is broken by death and swallowed up in the coldness and darkness of the grave. All Saints Day with joy-

ous song and decked in white garments the Church comes before us and asks us to rejoice with her happy children in heaven; while on All Souls Day the soft peals of her organ will be given to the deep solemn dirge, and her priest will enter upon the sacrifice with the sad *Requiem aeternum dona eis Domine!* Give them rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them! Is not this a picture worthy of our admiration and love, to see the Church Militant putting up her prayers to God for the Church suffering in Purgatory.

Is it not consoling to think that when we depart from this life we shall leave after us faithful children, faithful Christians, and a faithful Priesthood; who, on the recurrence of this feast as it comes round, will meet at God's altar to pray for our repose. Will he who mocks at our religion destroy this doctrine and rob us of this hope? No! for it is a truth that is enthroned in the heart, and in spite of perverted reason it is idolized by nature and often brings even the unbeliever to his knees at the side of his dying friend and wrests from him an unconscious prayer for mercy.

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THE SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

“ And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord.”

WE come to treat of the second article of the Apostles' creed, whereby we profess Jesus Christ to be the true and only Son of God, and our Lord and Saviour. When man disobeyed God and fell into sin, he was deprived of the graces and gifts that Almighty God had bestowed upon him. He was deprived of the gifts of knowledgè, his mind became clouded, and he could no longer understand things so clearly as he could before he was deprived of the great gift of integrity, whereby his passions were controlled by his reason. The inferior part of man's nature asserted itself, a war began; but too often the superior part of man's nature was to become the slave of his evil passions and desires, he was deprived of the gift of immortality; his body became subject to decay, and it was decreed that one day he must die. Man was thus deprived of sanctifying grace and the other great gifts of God, whereby he was most pleasing in the Creator's sight; he became a creature disfigured and malformed in the sight of God, worthy of His wrath and justice rather than of His mercy and His goodness. Such was the state of man after his fall; just the contrary of what he was when created.

What was to become of him? Was he to be lost with

the whole human family that was to be born from him? Was there no way of regaining God's friendship and the gifts which he had forfeited? Apparently there was no way left; for, of himself he could do nothing. You know full well that when an injury is done a person, we do not consider the offence as we do the person to whom it is offered; in other words, if we wish to estimate the gravity of an offence, we must consider against whom it was committed; what station in life does the person fill, is he a slave or is he a monarch, is he a worthless wretch, or is he a man that is worthy of respect and esteem from his fellow man? If he be of the latter class the offence offered is great; if he be a man in high standing then the offence is greater. Thus for example: if you were to strike an equal you create but little scandal and your offence would be considered but a slight one, but if you were to walk into a court and strike a justice upon his bench whilst expounding the law, your offence would be an unpardonable one, and your name would be known far and wide as a man that had no respect for law. In the one case you might sue for pardon, you might come before your equal and tell him that you were sorry for the injury you had done him, and if he saw fit he might promise you never to think of it more. Whereas, in the latter case, you could not go to the justice; you might have others to sue for you, those who would be on more of an equality with him, but even then you might not expect pardon or forgiveness; for, in his capacity of judge and so acting, he is the highest expression of law and order, and therefore he would be acting justly in not listening to your excuse and in punishing you for the offence committed.

Now, when we come to consider the fault of our first parents, we must apply the same principle. We shall find there two parties: God offended by man the offender; we will find a being who alone is great, a being existing from all eternity, endowed with all perfections, one without an equal, one perfectly happy in Himself and by Himself. We

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will find Him in His goodness and in His mercy calling man into existence, giving him a world for his dwelling, making him the master who is to rule over the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, endowing his soul with an intelligence and will; thus making him like to Himself, a little less than the angels, and greater than all other created things; filling his soul with a grace, to which if he remained faithful, he would have never known the horrors and ills that flesh is now heir to, would have never known death; he would never have been the slave of error and the child of passion. Scarcely has He given existence to that creature and loaded him with all these favors, when that creature turns upon his Master, the highest possible expression of law itself and disobeys Him: will not subject himself to Him, and proclaims his independence. How can man make the proper atonement? He has committed an offence against an infinite God, his offence is infinite. Can he not call upon some one else to make reparation, can he not call upon the angels? No! for they though greater than he, yet like himself are finite, are creatures, and in consequence cannot atone for him. Can he not call upon some one who is equal to God? No! for God alone has no equal. What therefore is he to expect; he has separated himself from God, he can never expect to bridge over the mighty chasm which parts him from his Creator. If he considers the angels, he will find a like offence punished by an eternal separation from God. What therefore can be expected but a like punishment, if justice must take its course.

But is there not a way in which justice and mercy may meet? Is there not a way wherein justice may be vindicated, whereby a proper atonement may be made to God, and whereby the descendants of Adam yet unborn may experience the great goodness and mercy of God even as Adam himself did; some way of giving his children an opportunity of saving their souls. Cannot some plan be conceived whereby God's justice may have a trial given

them even as their parents had? Yes the mind of God conceived the plan which would never dare enter into the mind of angel or of man; the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity would become man. In him justice and mercy would meet, would embrace, kiss each other and be reconciled. The human race descended from Adam were to carry their own souls in their own hands; they would have the opportunity given them of attaining the glory of heaven which Adam had lost for them by his sin of disobedience. No sooner had man fallen than sweet words of promise were given by God Himself, and hope springs up in the breast; chasing away the clouds of despair that must have settled down over the whole human race. A Redeemer was promised who would be at the same time God and man; he would be equal to God for he was God; he would be equal to man for he was man, he would sue for our pardon and his action would be the action of the God-man and would be infinite in value, thus it would appease the justice of God, whilst at the same time the mercy of God would shine forth in the great act of self-annihilation whereby he took upon himself our poor human nature.

Opening the book of Genesis we will read of the fall of our first parents. Scarcely had the sin been committed when the voice of God is heard in the garden of Eden saying to the serpent: "Because thou hast done this thing thou art cursed among all cattle and beasts of the earth."
* * * I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." As though he would have said: you have attacked the first woman and have vanquished her, but I will raise another who will be invincible, I will raise up another who will be your enemy and who will wage against you a continual war, and with what effect? She shall crush thy head; she shall crush and destroy the empire. You boast of having conquered mankind, of having closed Heaven and opened the abyss of hell, but you will be deceived, for through this woman there

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shall arise one who shall overcome you, who shall regain for man his innocence; one who will regain for him his lost rights to heaven. Such was the first promise offered by Almighty God, and man immediately began to avail himself of it. Hope sprang up; a religion was established upon the earth, man if he would be saved, must be saved through faith in a Redeemer that was to come. Cain and Abel began with their sacrifices; the one offering to God the produce of the field, the other offering to God the fatlings of his flock, thus proving to the world the truth of this text though it might be denied, viz: that it contained the promise of a future Messiah. For if not, why did they offer sacrifice? Was it not a religious act? And why would they perform this religious act unless they hoped in the mercy of God? And why should they hope unless Almighty God had promised to rescue them.

Time went on, men multiplied upon the earth, they forgot God, then came the deluge as a punishment, and the human family with the exception of a few persons were wiped out of existence. Noah and his family came from the ark to offer sacrifice to God. They have preserved the virtue of hope, for they are aware of the promise; the world is again peopled, men multiplied, and again they fall into error and idolatry; God resolves to choose a people of His own who will remain faithful to Him. He calls Abraham, the first patriarch and father of the Hebrew race, and He tells him that he is destined to be the father of a great race, that in him all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, a son is born to him, Isaac, and he is asked to sacrifice that son. He does not delay; he is on the point of offering up the victim, when He is told to lay not His hand upon the boy. "By my own self have I sworn saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore * * * and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." How

were they to be blessed? Blessed by having their great want supplied, blessed by having a Redeemer born to them through the race of Abraham. Abraham passed out of the world, his son Isaac remained, and the same word, the same promise that was made to Abraham was repeated. We read that a famine came upon the land, and the Lord appeared to Isaac and said: "Go not down into Egypt but stay in the land that I shall tell thee, and sojourn in it and I will be with thee * * * and I will multiply thy seed like the stars of heaven. * * * In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Isaac has two sons Jacob and Esau. From which of these two is that great blessing to come? From which of these is the Redeemer to be born? Listen and God again will tell us. The aged Isaac is dying, and he calls his son Jacob to him and blesses him; he tells him to journey to * * * and to take there a wife from the daughters of Laban his uncle, and he prays that Almighty God may bless him and give him the blessings promised to Abraham. * * * He sets out upon his journey, the day is declining, the sun is sinking in the west and he looks for rest, he takes a stone and places it under his head and is soon asleep. Behold while he sleeps he sees a ladder standing upon the earth with its top reaching into Heaven; and there, the angels ascending and descending from its summit, he hears a voice saying to him: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy Father, and the God of Isaac. The land wherein thou sleepest I will give to thee and to thy seed, and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the north, and to the south, and in thee and thy seed all tribes of the earth shall be blessed."

The time came for Jacob to pass out of this world; his twelve sons were brought to him, he blesses them separately, and when he came to Juda he says to him: "Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise, thy hand shall be on the necks of thy enemies, the sons of thy Father shall bow down to thee; the sceptre shall not be taken from Juda, nor a ruler

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from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent and He shall be the expectation of nations." Behold again the same promise. From Juda was to come the Redeemer, the expectation of nations. And the tribe of Juda would lose its supremacy as it did under the Romans. Then it was that the Jews lost their power in the world and were scattered abroad over the face of the earth, and then it was that the Saviour of the world appeared among men. But not only had God spoken to men and promised a Messiah but through his prophets He even kept the same truth before His chosen people. It would be too long a task to review the different prophecies; one or two of them we may take however to show how this truth was kept alive among the people, and the truth upon which their religion was founded. In the ninth chapter of Daniel we read that the prophet makes known to his people, the Jews, that a time has been determined upon for their destruction as a nation and people; he tells them that the time is seventy weeks of years which is four hundred and ninety years. After that period of time they were to be no more, and the saint of saints, that is the Messiah, would come. Then entering more into detail He tells them, that from the time in which Artaxerxes would command the temple to be rebuilt to the time of Christ, there would be a period of sixty-nine weeks of years or four hundred and eighty-three years; and that after a period of sixty-two weeks of years Christ would be slain and a people would come, evidently the Romans, who were to destroy the city and the sanctuary. Now need we say that all this has been fulfilled to the letter? Need we say that the Jews exist no longer as a nation; that the sceptre has passed from the tribe of Juda, that their city was laid desolate, and their sanctuary destroyed, that "abomination of desolation" was seen in their temple?

And if we can say all this, as we can from historical teaching, why may we not likewise say that the Messiah

has come; that the Saint of Saints, the Christ, has appeared in this world?

Again, opening the prophecies of Malachias, we find the Jews sorrowing and complaining after they had rebuilt their temple. They no longer beheld the magnificent temple of Solomon, with its gorgeous ornaments; they had a temple, but a poor one in comparison with the one raised by the wisest and greatest of rulers. But God sends these prophets to console them, and to tell them that this temple that they had built though far inferior in its architectural beauty and riches, still would be greater; for He who had been promised, the desired of nations should enter it. And so, were we to run over the other prophecies, we would find them testifying to the advent of a Messiah who was to be born of a virgin. Nay, they give the place of His birth: tell of His poverty, and His flight into Egypt; of the adoration of the kings; of His miracles in giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. They tell of His entry into Jerusalem, of the treason of His disciples, of His ignominious death and of His glorious resurrection; writing hundreds of years before the coming of Christ as though they had seen Him, dwelt with Him, and viewed His many miracles, His death and resurrection. Oh! how secure we should rest in our religion when we behold this grand spectacle, when we take up the books of the Old Testament, books that have been preserved for us and written for us by our enemies; when we take up these books and prove from them, that the promise made by God in the garden of Eden has been fulfilled, and that Christ our Lord the Messiah is really with us.

Where could we or how could we obtain a greater proof of the divinity of our religion. We find ourselves one in faith with our first parents, with the patriarchs and prophets who lived some thousands of years before the coming of Christ, linked in faith, for they had to believe, in order to be saved, in the Messiah that had been promised and was to come. We believe in that same Jesus Christ the Mes-

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sias who had come, and in whom all that had been foretold is fulfilled. Surely our feelings should be those of thankfulness and gratitude to God who has been pleased to bestow upon us this gift of faith. We should thank Him that we have not been left in the region of darkness and shadow of death; that He has been pleased to call us to a knowledge of the truth and at the same time we should pray that the light of faith may descend into other hearts who have not been pleased to receive it. It is not hidden but placed on high, steadily shining, in order that men may see it; it is a city placed upon a mountain that all may behold it, but yet men in their forgetfulness, and lost as they are in the cares and business of the world, will not take time to reflect upon it. Let us pray for those benighted souls and ask HIM who came to save the world to strike their minds with its brilliancy and its beauty.

In the second place, let us not only be thankful that we received that gift ourselves, and pray that others may receive it; but let us show ourselves to the world what we profess ourselves to be in the creed, real believers in Jesus Christ. To be real believers in Him we must not only believe in His existence and in His divinity, but we must believe in Him and in His doctrines. We cannot believe in Christ and disbelieve His truths; we must believe in Him as God, and as the teacher who came from Heaven to show us the way to eternal life. He is the truth, and therefore we must believe in His doctrines; otherwise we do not believe in Him. But how are we to find His truths. Among that people, and among the people who succeed the Jewish race in the possession of the Redeemer, viz: amongst the Christian Catholics. We have reviewed the many promises made by Almighty God that a Messiah was to come; we have heard the signs that were given of His coming by the prophets, and we have seen those signs fulfilled in Jesus Christ; and as we proceed further we shall see on next Sunday evening that He who came proved Himself to be the Messiah, the promised Saviour of the World.

We know that His chosen people, the Jews, have rejected Him, do not receive Him as the Messias, and even that was foretold by their prophets. We know that the Catholic world claimed Him, for it saw in Him the fulfillment of all the signs that God had been pleased to give mankind with regard to His coming. Therefore we are to believe what the Catholic world, which is the Catholic Church, teaches of Him, for she alone of all the professed religious creeds that we find in our day, she alone of them all, stood at His cradle, listened to His words, saw Him when He arose from the dead, and heard from His divine lips in the persons of His Apostles: "Go and teach all nations whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." I am with you not unnecessarily, I am speaking through you and by you to the world; not in contradictory language to-day declaring that you believe in this, and to-morrow that you believe in something else, but ever teaching the same truth and preserving you from error. Here is where we shall find the truths of Christ: in the Catholic Church, for she alone to-day is the only one who can bear witness; for she alone looked into His sweet eyes and heard the words of wisdom that fell from His divine lips. Act then upon her teachings and you will act upon the teachings of Christ Himself, and thus you will show to the world that you are what you profess yourselves to be, believers and followers of Jesus Christ, TRUE CHRISTIANS.

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*“ For of His own will He hath begotten
us by the word of truth.”*

JAMES I. 18.

THE most marvellous piece of work that passed from the hands of God when creating the universe, was Man. Gifted with a mind that could penetrate nature's mysteries, and with a will that no created power could subdue, which even God Himself respected, he passed into this world the King and Ruler of all that surrounded him; the model after which he was formed was no less than the God-head. Other beings had been created during the successive periods in which all things were made, but of none of them was it said that they were made after the image and likeness of God. That honor, that dignity, was preserved for man alone, and when he sprang into existence at the call of his Maker, he bore upon his soul the impress of Divinity. Creation presents us with nothing greater than man, but yet upon this world there is a work which surpasses man as created, a work that transcends creation. It is the man who is a Christian, the man who has been regenerated in the blood of Christ, the man who bears in his heart the beauty and graces of the Holy Spirit; the man whom Christ Himself hath begotten in the word of truth. This masterpiece of grace, the Christian man's dignity, is what we would speak of to-day, in order that

we may properly appreciate the mercy of God in calling us to be followers of His Divine Son, and at the same time rise to a true sense of our duty as Christians, living in the midst of a cold, indifferent and unbelieving world.

The admiration and the esteem of men may be won in many ways, but he who claims for himself illustrious birth, who proves beyond contradiction that he is a man of knowledge, and who shows in his daily actions, despite the charges that malice may bring against him, that he is a man of integrity and virtue; that man will always retain the respect and the veneration of mankind. Men illustrious by birth, by knowledge, and faithful in the practice of virtue, stand like mighty oaks in the dark deep forest; stand like pyramids in the desert, towering aloft, charming the eye of the spectator with their magnificence. True it is, that there are very few who can lay claim to the triple nobility of birth, genius and virtue. One alone, the true Christian, can appropriate them all. He alone is noble by birth, he alone possesses the highest knowledge, he alone is virtuous above all others. By birth he is a child of heaven, of God, and of the Church. He is, according to the expression of a great Saint, a "heavenly plant whose roots are fixed in heaven." The sweet name of Father, so full of affection and of tenderness, can only be given by God to the Christian. All other things which were created may praise and bless God by acting in conformity with the laws which govern them. The heavens may tell His glory, earth with its variety of creatures may proclaim His greatness, the ocean with its sullen roar and the variety of life which it bears within its mighty bosom may declare His majesty. All, even the savages who wander through the forest, may each in his own tongue, sing His praises, but His child by preference, the privileged child of His tenderness, the child who is the inheritor of His happiness and of His glory, is the Christian. He alone can raise his eyes toward heaven and call Him by the name of Father, for he alone is the child of God.

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Men, in this world, are seen pointing to their ancestry with legitimate pride; some there are who glory in being the descendants of a man who founded empires; some there are who boast of being descended from the liberator of a people; others there are who tell of the victories achieved by some hero of their family. Rising above the family, we find others who speak of the proud history of their nation, they tell us of men who sacrificed their lives for their country; they tell us of names which are destined to be immortal. They tell us of heroes made famous by their deeds of valor; but we might say to him who thus speaks of the historic greatness of his country; seek among your heroes for him who has shed the most glory upon you, seek amidst your royal families for the line which did most service to the people; seek among you for him who has made you famous in the field of letters, seek among your men of science for him who has benefitted the world at large; still can the Christian say to you: What are the titles you claim, what are the honors you expect, what is the reward you look for, when compared with the title and the dignity of a Child of God? What are they all compared to the man whom Christ hath begotten in the word of truth? Well indeed did the father of the unfortunate Louis XVI understand this truth when he ordered the baptismal registry of the Church to be brought to him. He called his children about him, and running over the names which were contained in the book, he said to them: "Behold we are all of the same condition before God. Here your names are inscribed and mixed with a host of others, all Christians as you are. Here all are equal, all are brothers; be ever mindful of it and remember that the title of Christian is the greatest you can possess."

Yes, we are all equal in the sight of God, all equally His children; children of one large family that covers the earth, hence it is that we should learn always to respect our fellow men. The poor ignorant beggar who stands with hand extended on our street corners, the innocent

faced child dressed in rags who passes through our busy thoroughfares unnoticed and uncared for, the poor cripple whom we pass with a look of disdain as a sight shocking to our refined feelings bears a title more noble than that given by the kings of earth; for he is baptized. He is admitted into the Christian army where he has Saints for brethren and God Himself for a Father. What a consoling thought to the unfortunate and the unhappy is the conviction that God is their Father; it should be sufficient to console them at once. To the sick and the infirm does not this thought come to remind them to be patient in suffering the ills which God has been pleased to send? He is a Father who is but chastening them for the reward of a life in glory which they are to live in the everlasting hereafter. Yes, to all who suffer, to all who complain, to you, dear Christians, who are fighting daily with the enemy of your souls, we would say with St. Cyprian: "When temptation surrounds you on every side, and when the flesh rises in rebellion against you, answer thus the tempting voice: 'I am the child of God and consequently cannot obey my corrupt inclinations.'" Again, when the world throws open her gates of pleasure and puts before your gaze riches and honors; tell that world that you are a child of God, and cannot barter the riches, pleasures, and joys of heaven for the riches, pleasures and joys of earth. Again, when the tempter seeks to seduce you, tell him in Christian language that you are a child of God and cannot become a slave of Satan!

The Christian man is likewise a child of the Church, he has for a Mother she who stood as the guardian of society for centuries; she who counts her children by millions; she who alone can answer his many doubts and tell of his birthright and of his destiny. With the Church as his Mother upon earth, he is introduced to the largest of families; he is introduced to an army of martyrs whose bodies are crimsoned with the blood that they shed for their faith; he is introduced to an array of Doctors who stand

like lights in the midst of a sea of errors, illuminating the way which ignorance would shroud in its Egyptian darkness. He is introduced to a host of Virgins, clothed with garments that betoken their purity, while their chaste hearts reflect the purity of Christ, their leader. He is introduced to a line of Confessors and Pontiffs who stand like a wall of brass about him, beating back the waves of infidelity which would engulf the world. Looking at his altars, whether they be erected in magnificent temple or poor dwelling, his mind can recall a line of Saints offering up for centuries the unspotted Lamb; gazing at the pulpit, his fancy may conjure up thousands who have stood in it giving the word of life to men of all classes and conditions. Such is the ancestry of a child of the Church, such the ancestry of a Christian man. Surrounded by this glorious cortege he passes through the world and journeys on sure of his footing, for he walks upon a path that has been beaten for centuries!

The Church, his Mother, venerable in her sanctity and venerable in her age, has seen generations come and go; she met them in their infancy with her blessing, sustained them through life, and gave them her parting benediction as they passed away. To-day she stands ready to perform the same kind office of parent for the individual soul which she met at the cradle. She will not part from it until she places it safe again in the hands of its Maker.

The Christian is noble by birth; we shall find that he is likewise endowed with a nobility of intelligence. Admitting revealed truths, he has no doubts; for him all is certain, possessing an historic account of the highest antiquity, in the relation given by Moses in the Book of Genesis, he is made acquainted with his origin and with his destiny. He is told of truths which modern science with all its progress has been unable to overthrow. In the book of Job and in the Epistles of St. Paul he receives a philosophy which is divine in its conception; while in the books of Proverbs and of Wisdom he finds a complete code of mor-

ality, and if he seeks for legislation, he will find laws transmitted by God to the creature; the Ten Commandments, upon which every legislator endeavors to build his system of laws. Take up the sciences of the world, the natural sciences as they are called; you will find that they are making many discoveries which benefit the human race; but, could not the intelligence of men be better engaged? True, we must admire the man who can measure the distance to the planets, who makes us acquainted with nature's laws, who discovers the properties of matter and opens the many mysteries of nature to us; but, must we not still more admire the man who explains the marvellous workings of the soul, who tells us what we ourselves are, whence we came, and whither we are going. These are the highest and most important questions which could be proposed to the human mind, and he who offers their solution possesses the highest knowledge. We ask Pagan antiquity for their solution, and Tertullian replies that the disciples of Plato believed that God took care of everything which was on the earth. In other words Plato admitted the Providence of God, but the followers of Epicurus maintained that God did not interest Himself in the affairs of men; in other words they did not admit the Providence of God. The Stoics were no more able to give an answer. He tells us moreover that the famous Diogenes was asked whether he knew what passed in heaven; he answered that it had not been shown him what appeared there; being questioned still further whether or not there were Gods there he replied: All that I know is that it would be very expedient if there were. No other answers could they offer to these important questions; doubt, uncertainty and contradiction ever obtained when they sought to answer questions of their origin, nature or destiny. In vain, too, will you seek for their solution from the wise men of modern times. If you enter the anti-Christian schools, they will tell you that we cannot pierce the veil that surrounds us. Theories are advanced to-day and abandoned to-mor-

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row, and so we find ourselves in a maze of contradiction. They tell us that we should resign ourselves to live in a state of doubt, for they with all their science cannot solve the mystery of the past and the future.

What the scientists acknowledge they are not able to do, and what the Pagan world with all its knowledge could not accomplish, the Christian child, who can barely spell out the words of its Catechism, can answer. The Christian, be he ever so illiterate, is wiser than the philosopher of Pagan times if he but know his faith! The young child with his Catechism is wiser by far than those who passed for men of genius in Greece and Rome; for that child possesses the knowledge of its origin, the knowledge of its duties towards God and its neighbor, the knowledge of its sublime faith; a knowledge that was unknown for centuries to the wisest children of the world. We are then truly the light of the world, as proved by the words of our Divine Saviour; for we carry about with us a knowledge of our destiny, a knowledge which explains the mysteries of the world, which makes us realize our true position, as pilgrims journeying to a distant home. Preserve then this precious inheritance which we have received from the ages of faith; preserve it to transmit it to our children; it is a duty which we owe to the past, and a duty for which future generations shall thank us.

This nobility of birth which we claim for ourselves as Christians, and our possession of the highest knowledge, would avail us but little if we were not virtuous. The man who is of illustrious parentage and who is versed in the sciences, is but small if his soul and his heart be not adorned with virtue. On the other hand a man may be of humble birth, and of little knowledge; still, if he be a virtuous man, the world must needs admire him. Now the Christian is the only virtuous man we can find upon the earth. We speak of the man who is a true Christian, for the mere profession of being a Christian does not make us virtuous, of a man who shows by the manner of his life,

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that he is a Child of God; that man is virtuous. Need we now wonder that this should be so; for, realizing that he is a child of Heaven he acts in a manner becoming that position; realizing that he is a child of the Church, the representative of God, he hears and obeys its voice. Full well he knows that her whole aim, her whole scope, her whole object in this world is to sanctify man and save his soul; to this end tend all her teachings, to this end tend all her Sacraments, to this end tends the labor of those who have consecrated themselves to carry out the mission of Christ upon the heart. Nor is there a power upon earth that can dispute with the Church her right to be alone styled holy. Surely Paganism with its vices and shameful customs, would not attempt it. The infidelity that is abroad would not dare, for virtue could never be the legitimate consequence of unbelief. Nor can the sects, so numerous, for they are branches lopped from the vine, and in consequence dying for want of nourishment. So to us alone who are Christians, who are followers of Jesus Christ, to us alone belongs the glory of being holy. We alone can show to the world Saints for every day in the year, we alone can boast of lives that ought to be imitated. Every age as it passed by saw Saints arise in the Church, saw souls turning aside from the world seeking to serve God in quiet and peace; saw souls who remained in the world and followed out the duties of their religion and were raised by the grace of God to the sanctity of Saints. Hence we may show them to the world, and need not fear to raise them upon pedestals in our churches and tell the faithful: "Behold the models of virtue that you must imitate."

Never will the world be able to reproach us as we may well reproach it. It can never say that we did not produce virtuous men, it cannot say that our religion was not the source of virtue. It can find no virtue that is not to be found in the Church. If it seeks for the virtue of Chastity, legions of holy souls present themselves following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. If it asks for humility,

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again legions arise who have trampled under foot the honors which the world would shower upon them. If it asks for the virtue of Charity, that sublime virtue which demands the love of God and the love of our neighbor; the missionary straying through foreign lands, seeking for the conversion of souls, the man who has left home and friends and closets himself in the sickly hospital ward, alleviating the sorrows of the distressed, come before us as pictures of that heaven-born virtue Charity. Nay more, if you would still seek for virtue we could tell you of Saints with whom you associate daily, Saints who when they have departed from this world, their names perhaps will never be known; but yet they are pious souls, Saints of God whose names though not registered on earth, yet live with us in the world, who at times are troubled with its cares, and who at times are surely tempted by its promises, but following out the grace of God endeavor to live up to the duties of their station. There are children blessed with such parents, and parents blessed with such children. And these holy families who might be said to be the wheat which is spoken of in the Gospel, spring up and flourish beside families who might be likened to the tares; families whose every hour is spent in dissension, and who can never meet together without strife.

Herein then lies the dignity of the Christian soul. It is a child of God and of the Church, it is a child of knowledge; it is a child of virtue. But how is it that when we look out upon the world among men who style themselves Christians and Catholics, who know full well the dignity of their position, and are aware that they possess a knowledge of their destiny; how is it that there are men who do not possess this third characteristic virtue. You will find that they are not all ignorant men, that there are men among them of professed ability, men cold and calculating in their disposition, men whose example if it were followed would prove the perversion of Christianity. The answer is a very simple one, they practically ignore Christ.

Theoretically, for them Christ and His Church present a beautiful reality, one in fact that the world could not do without; but for them Christ's teachings are to be heard, not to be followed. Examine them still closer and you will find that they may be reduced to two classes. The first is the indifferent class; they are men who perhaps pass through life without committing an injury against their neighbor, men who admit that they ought to do better, who are aware that they should hear Mass on Sundays. Men who know that they should be found frequenting the Sacraments of the Altar; but who on account of some strange fascination of the world allow themselves to be borne thoughtlessly away from doing what is positively right and proper as Christians. This is a very numerous class, and if they but examine the lives they lead they will find that if their example were followed it would prove the destruction of Christ's kingdom upon earth. To this might well be added a class who with justice bear the title of drunkard, whose Church on Sunday is the bar-room, and whose devotion is lavished on the cup. This class we may reject as unworthy of the name of Christian, for they are a disgrace both to themselves and to their Church.

There is a second class who are more thoughtful, an intelligent class who know that Christ established a Church in this world of which they are members. Yet this class of men, moving every day in the world, whose lives if they were what they should be, would be a power telling upon their neighbors; these men seem to forget that they have duties in common with Christians and Catholics. Now how are we to account for this? It is very simple; pride is at the bottom of it, and as pride led to the rejection of God in that proud spirit Lucifer, so does the pride of such men lead them practically to the rejection of Christ. They are men who profess to know of Christ, men who profess to know of His Church and to admit its right of making laws which they should follow; as it is Christ's representative on earth; but, singular to relate,

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when the precepts of the Church are made known they seem to assume the right to modify them, to make them square with their individual idea of what they should be. Thus for instance as in the Paschal Season, when the Church reminds them of her command that the faithful are obliged under pain of sin and separation from her, to confess their sins and to receive the Eucharist, they listen and heed it not, for their idea seems to be that they know their duty better, and will perform it at the proper time. These are the men whom the Church should fear, for they are often men of good standing in society, they profess to be within her bosom, but the example which they give their brethren is one which would reduce her teaching to mere words. If there be any who may count themselves in either of these classes, let them reflect upon their duties as Christians; for if their dignity and state be so great, surely the duties that attach to it must be all-important. Take then, Christian souls, children of God, brothers and co-heirs of Christ, take then the generous resolve of becoming Christians indeed. The resolve of becoming real Apostles of Christ, Apostles by your example, Apostles by your prayers, Apostles by the consolation which your charity will offer to the distressed, Apostles by passing through this world as did Christ; for remember that you are as St. Peter says: "A chosen generation, a royal family, a holy nation, a purchased people."

XXXV. SERMON.
THE LOVE OF GOD.

“ That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts ; that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height and depth ; to know also the charity of Christ which surpasses all knowledge that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

EPH. III. 17.

How simple yet how beautiful is this position of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians! At the time of writing it he was lying in prison on account of certain false accusations brought against him by the envious Jews. He wrote to console the Ephesians whom he had lately converted, to ask them to glory in his sufferings which redounded to the honor of Christ, and at the same time tells them that he prays to Christ for them that He may dwell in their hearts and thus make them comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of the love of God in procuring our Redemption.

To understand the love of God for us, and to return that love, is the lifelong duty of a Christian on this earth. “ Love God all thy life and call upon Him for thy salvation,” says Ecclesiastes, and in these few words, my friends, we have the epitome of the lives of all good men from the creation of the world to the present day. In them the great duty, the grand aim of life, is clearly defined and mapped out for all who have yet to tread this

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valley of trial and tribulation. No sooner had man sprung from the hand of his Creator than the world began to sing the praises of the Lord, and the passing breeze whispered as it went: "Love thy God all the days of thy life."

This is the end for which all mankind was made. St. Augustine says: "God made us, and our hearts will be always restless until they repose in Him who is the only amiable object that is able to satisfy our boundless desires and render us completely happy." And from these words of the Holy Doctor we may gather why it is that so many are miserable on this earth: they endeavor to attain their end in this world, which with its lawful enjoyments was given but as a means to an end. And how many do we find thus confounding the means with the end, and daily laboring after true happiness here below? Some never look beyond the narrow span of life, and lay up to themselves the pleasures of this life; whilst others, placing no restraint upon their passions and gratifying all their desires, dream away the few short years of this life, waking to find themselves repeating with the wise man: "Vanity of Vanities, and all is Vanity."

God is to be loved by all His creatures, and what is there more just, more conformable to the dictates of right reason, than this duty? We love an object on this earth on account of its perfection, and the greater the perfection we find in that object the greater does our love become for it. Now where shall we find perfection itself? Ah! If we but raise our minds to Heaven, and with the light of the Holy Spirit to guide our intelligence, pierce into eternity with the eyes of faith; we shall find a being there than whom there is none more holy, than whom there is none more just, than whom there is none more happy.

Self-existing and omnipotent, all wise and self-sufficient, he bears within himself an infinity of perfections. But why do we speak of the attributes of God, since no

mortal tongue can express, or mind conceive His perfections. All that man can imagine or language depict is infinitely below what He is. If we tell you that He is not only great and powerful, but that He is greatness and power itself; if we tell you that He is not only holy and wise, just and merciful, but that He is sanctity and wisdom, justice and mercy itself; if we tell you that He is eternal and that His knowledge is infinite, we speak but in the broken phraseology of a child, and I may well repeat with the Prophet that: "I do not know how to speak." "But if our minds cannot conceive nor our tongues tell the adorable perfections of God, our hearts can love them," says St. Augustine.

Represent to yourselves the grandeur of the world, picture to yourselves all that can charm the senses or ravish the soul of man with delight, and all this you will find in God. "I admire," says St. Augustine, "the brilliancy of the sun, the fecundity of the earth, the vast expanse of ocean, the charming beauty of creatures, the majesty and pomp of kings, the power of the mighty, the eloquence of the orator, the subtlety of the philosopher, but entering into myself I confess that none of these things is equal to God. He has infinitely more than can fill my heart or satiate my desires."

And you, what do you love, if you do not love God? Does the brilliancy of power attract you? Are you fascinated with the dignities of this earth? Who is greater than God? Is He not the King of kings and the dispenser of nations? A wish on His part, and the earth with all it can boast of disappears! Are you charmed by the beauty of His creatures? What beauty is there that can compare with Him who is the principle of beauty, of whom all the beauty of this world is but a ray. Is goodness the object of your affections? "There is no one good but God alone," says Holy Writ. All that is great, good or beautiful upon this earth is but a shadow of the goodness and greatness of the Creator. Who then can refuse

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to love Him? Day after day reveals to us the imperfections of our fellow-men; we see them enjoying the world's riches, but not possessing a spark of virtue. On others nature has been lavish of her beauty, but they are as whitened sepulchres; others again are men of intelligence, men of genius, but deceit and worldly cunning mark their every action. And yet it is upon such beings that we spend our affections, beings that are but as dust and ashes in the sight of God, while he who is worthy of all our love is forgotten, or treated with coldness or indifference. Why is it that we are so forgetful? It is because we have not put in practice that second question of our little Catechism which we learned in our youth! It is because we have not learned to know God, or because we do not wish to know Him.

Look about you and you will learn, as the Apostle says, from "the things that are visible the invisible perfections of God." What an elevated idea does this world give us of Him, of His power, wisdom, and goodness. He it was who made this earth, fashioned the heavens, set the stars in their firmament, bade the wild ocean to serve the uses of men; and all these call upon us to learn from them the perfections of their Maker that by knowing Him we may love Him. But we have been deaf to this voice of nature and a second voice calls upon us to love our God, and that is: the remembrance of all that He has done for us. This is the second motive of our love.

All of us were the objects of His eternal design. From all eternity He had thought of each and every one of us, and though an infinite distance separated Him from ourselves, still, by an act of pure goodness, He was pleased to send forth the decree: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness. Let him not be as the other animals, but like to us gifted with will and understanding: And let him rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." But, unhappy man, in his vanity he would become another

God, and thus fell; but still the love of infinite goodness was not exhausted. For our sake the eternally begotten Son of the Divine Father would assume humanity and raise us from our fallen state. For thirty-three years—mark it!—the eternal God walked foot-sore amid the creation of His hands. Could love do more? Yes! “Greater love than this hath no man than that he lay down his life for his fellow men.” Yes! He would manifest the greatness of love, He would lay down His life to save us. For three long hours of agony the dying Jesus bleeds upon the cross. Three long hours of agony, and fallen man is again redeemed. Nineteen hundred years have passed by, and still, down the sides of Calvary and on through those sacramental channels instituted by Christ flows the life blood of the Redeemer “unto the regeneration of souls and the sanctification of the spirit.” Nineteen hundred years and still that same sacrifice is offered to His Heavenly Father. Nineteen hundred years and still that victim of love remains with fallen man—“for His delight is to be with men”—a prisoner in the chains of love. He would remain with us, He would not leave us orphans, that same love which brought Him from heaven bound Him to the tabernacles of men.

If such then, be the love God bears towards us, what return of love are we to make? Love as you know should be mutual. Our love then should be conformable to that of God for us, and in that God has loved us more than all the creations of His hands, so we on our part are to love Him more than all created beings. “Would you like to hear from me,” says St. Bernard, “why God is to be loved, and how He is to be loved? If so, I would tell you that He is to be loved because He is God, and the measure of loving Him is to love Him without measure.” “Would you know how to acquire this love,” says St. Theresa, “I would answer: by working and suffering patiently for God’s sake whenever the occasion offers.” “The love of God,” says St. Gregory, “is never idle. If it refuse to

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be active it is not love." And the reason is very plain: "for Love," our Lord says, is another fire. "I have come to cast fire upon the earth and what would I but that it be enkindled." As fire surmounts every obstacle and feeds upon whatever opposes it so also your love must withstand and surmount the trials and tribulations of life and grow strong in the conflict.

Consider the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Though thrown into prison, bound with chains and threatened with death, he could still exclaim: "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." And again: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations, or distress, or famine, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? For I am sure, that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord?"

This is the declaration of the Apostle Paul. What are we to think? Is he drawing an exaggerated picture of the love which we should entertain for God? By no means! He is simply stating the common duty of every Christian soul. Can we say with him: "What shall separate us from the love of God?"

If to-morrow persecution were to cover our fair land, and you were called upon to deny your faith or forego your wealth, how many of you would be prepared to say: "Away with worldly riches, they cannot separate me from the love of Christ." If some dear friend were condemned to death and it lay within your power to save him by transgressing the laws of justice and of conscience, how many would exclaim: "I shall allow him to suffer, the transgressions of my conscience shall not separate me from the love of Christ." If you were called upon to forsake the altars of your Holy Religion, how many would prefer the lingering death of the martyr sooner than be sep-

arated from the love of God? And if we cannot answer with St. Paul that none of these things shall separate us from the love of Christ, we have not yet learned to love God with that love which He demands. For the all-wise God, speaking to the Doctor who tempted him says, nay even gives the command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Behold, after all the favors, after all the blessings bestowed on us by so good a God, still we are to be commanded to love Him.

"What am I," says the great Augustine, "that thou shouldst command me to love thee." How delightful is the command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." Ah, Christian soul; understand from this that your heart, your affection, is worth more than you thought, since God Himself pursues you for your love. Bid farewell to those deluding phantoms which have engaged your attention and give Him your whole mind, strength, and heart. He claims an undivided, a distinctive love, and He will reject our love unless it be such as marks the pre-eminence of His claims. It must be a love by preference, a love that will forego all honors, all treasures, aye, even father and mother for his sake. "And every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be my Disciple." And again: "He that loveth Father and Mother more than me is not worthy of me."

To love him with our whole soul, that is with all our faculties and powers, is the most sublime use to which we can put those heavenly gifts. We may exercise them in Faith and in Hope, but these are without form, without life, unless we have Charity.

To love him with our whole strength, that is, to begin on earth that employment which is to constitute our bliss for eternity: to do our utmost to advance towards the perfection of that divine nature. However great our progress we must still press onward, the infinite lies be-

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fore us. Think, meditate, and ponder upon the divine perfections, and endeavor accordingly to the advice of St. Peter, "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord." Imitate St. Augustine who, says a writer of the day, often interrupted his studies or other occupations to lift his heart to God, and by some short and fervent ejaculation, to beseech the Holy Ghost to enlighten his understanding that his heart might be inflamed with love. "Oh, grant me grace to know thee," did he frequently cry out in transports of devotion. "Grant me, dearest Lord, the grace to love thee, let me know thee, my Lord, and I will love thee, for the knowledge of thy perfections must necessarily call forth all the energy of my soul to adore, love and serve thee."

But what more beautiful example than at the foot of the Cross. There love spoke by action, it was unable to manifest itself in words because of its greatness.

On that day which forms the pivot of the world's history, on that day when earth rocked, groaned, and showed signs of sorrow for its Creator, whose was that last lingering figure at the Cross? Her eyes fixed upon the dead cold face of her God, speak a love that language cannot utter. With sobs and sighs she follows the precious body to the tomb, then turns almost heart broken back to the city. But how often, think you, did she visit in thought that sacred precinct of the dead? Sunday comes, and before the neighboring hills are tinted with the sun's first rays, that same lone form steals along in silence to the sepulchre of the dead. Weeping she stoops, and looks into the tomb. "And she saw two Angels in white sitting one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had laid." They say to her. "Woman why weepest thou?" And she said, "Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." When she had said these words she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her: "Woman why weepest thou, whom seekest

thou?" She thinking that it was the gardener said to him: "Sir if thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him and I will take him away." Here was love, anxious active love, a love that could not, would not rest without the possession of its object. Well indeed, Mary, didst thou deserve to hear: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," "many sins are forgiven her because she loved much." Would we perform like actions and receive like rewards? Why do we not visit Him in the sepulchre of His love? Day by day we coldly pass by His habitation. Why do we not enter and make some little offering, give Him our hearts, ask Him to bless the actions we are about to perform, and to receive them as so many small tokens of our love: offer Him the thoughts that go crowding through our brain and wish with the saints that we had the power to endow every leaf, every blade of grass, every grain of sand with a seraphic intelligence, in order that they might send forth continually their fervent acts of love.

And for us, in conclusion, comes an important question. We have seen what the love of God is. It is a love of preference dictated by nature and reason and commanded by God Himself. We understand the motives that should govern us in this regard and hence for us arises this solemn question:

Do we love God after the manner He commands? How shall we solve this question? How shall each one of us be certain that he loves God above all things and for His own sake? God Himself has left us a solution of the problem, listen to His all-wise reply: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

XXXVI. SERMON.

THE TWO MASTERS.

“ No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other, you cannot serve God and Mammon.

MATH. VI. 24.

THIS short text of scripture contains a truth well worthy of our consideration. We are told of two spirits which exercise authority over us in this world; the one, God who has made man to love Him, and to serve Him, in this world, and to be happy with Him in that kingdom which He has promised to His true and faithful servant. The man who obeys his master is the devoted servant, the true Christian.

The other master who exercises authority over us is the one which man himself has made, an idol set up by his own hands; an idol which procures for his worshippers all that this world can offer, but brings upon him certain ruin and destruction in the next. This idol is money, and its servant is the idolater.

In these two spirits we recognize the two masters, God and Mammon, who are spoken of in to-day's Gospel, and in their worshippers we recognize the Christian and the Idolater. The question which puts itself to us to-day is: are we Christians or are we Idolaters? Do we love and serve God, or do we cling to the mammon of this earth as though we lived for no other end than to hoard up money and worship the riches and wealth of the world. Are we Christians, are we followers of Christ? Do we imi-

tate His life and seek to practise His virtues and mould ourselves after that sublime model who came from heaven to teach us by word and example and to make us co-heirs in His kingdom.

This our first question is all-important, for if we cannot answer it in the affirmative we are Idolaters, worshipping at some other shrine, and we need to be startled into a true sense of our duty ere the shades of life's evening fall upon us. To answer our question we have but to place our model before us, to study His life and His maxims, with regard to the world, to place Him before us as a mirror in which we must see ourselves as we are; for no matter who we are or what we may be, before God we are what we are, no more. The world may have a very high opinion of us, may lavish its flattery in running comments: for that we are not a bit better in the sight of God: remember we are asking what we are in His sight. Are we Christians? Taking the life of Christ and studying its maxims we find them directed against the life which the world would have us lead and the maxims it would have us follow; His very first act was a rebuke to the opinion of the world, which would have us be great, would prompt us to be without a rival; yet when the second person of the Blessed Trinity sought to redeem man He did not come into this world as God alone, than whom there could be no greater; but by an act of sublime humility He lowered Himself to man's estate, and the divinity of the Godhead stood before mortal eyes clothed with human flesh, His life while upon this world was a life of direct opposition to its maxims. The world would have us rich, esteemed of men; our ancestry, with family honors and family escutcheon must be known for centuries, else we count for nothing in the great mass of humanity. But our Blessed Lord entering this world was to be born in such poverty that He could say of the thirty-three years He lived upon this world; "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not

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whereon to lay his head." Men knew Him not. Hidden away as He was in the little town of Nazareth; His Mother was unknown to the world, she was a matter of interest only to celestial choirs; while His foster-father St. Joseph labored and made his living by the sweat of his brow, the most ordinary of mechanics. So that men asked contemptuously when our Blessed Lord began His public life, Is not this the carpenter's son? Again, the world would have us enjoy its pleasures, its ease and its life, for to-morrow we die. How far different the life of our Blessed Lord! His first cry in the grotto of Bethlehem was a cry of suffering that found its last echo amid the rocks of Calvary. As a child He is driven from city to city by the impious Herod; even through the years of maturity, throughout His public and private life, He knows nothing but suffering; He the God who provided for the birds of the air and clothed the fields with grass, even He often suffered from hunger and thirst. Especially do we see His bitter suffering in that terrible and bloody drama of the Cross. The world might have been redeemed at a lesser price than the blood of Christ, but yet He chose to suffer; from the crown of His head to the sole of His foot, there is no sound spot, the flesh torn by the scourges hangs in shreds, the head crowned with thorns is covered with blood, His hands, His feet, His gaping side alike pour out their saving torrent and He dies, crowning His life of sorrow with an intense agony of three long hours. Well indeed, might our consciences summon us to the foot of the cross and cry to us: Behold His life; His life of poverty, His life of suffering. Are you Christians, are you His followers? Have we not given way to pride? Have we not despised poverty? Have we not longed after the pleasures of life immoderately? Have we His spirit of humility, of poverty and of suffering; for if we have not we are not His, for the Apostle said; "Those who have not the spirit of Christ are not His, are not Christians, are not followers of Jesus."

Not only by His life did Christ show His hatred for the worldly; for if we examine the New Testament we shall find that it abounds in texts censuring the lovers of the world. St. Paul asks: "For what participation hath justice with injustice, or what fellowship hath light with darkness?" As though He would say: why will you endeavor to serve the two Masters, you cannot compromise matters between them, they are opposed even as light is to darkness. And again the same Apostle says: "Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from our present wicked world according to the will of God and our Father." As though he should say to you, did not Christ die in order that He might separate you from the world and make you like to Himself in such manner that you might say, though "I am in the world still I am not of it?" St. John in his epistle tells the Christian of his day most emphatically: "Love not the world nor these things which are in the world, if any man love the world the charity of the Father is not in him."

Christ Himself in most expressive words declares that He and his disciples are not of this world. "I have given them my Word, and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world as I also am not of the world." Nay more, if we would form an idea of Christ's hatred of the world we have but to examine the prayer that He offered to His Heavenly Father for His Apostles whom He was about to leave. The time of His passion was drawing nigh, His last discourse had been given to His disciples, and before parting with them He offered a prayer that they might be saved and preserved from the contamination of the world. He reminds His Heavenly Father that His mission is finished, that He has manifested the Father to those whom He had given Him, and that He therefore expects to be glorified by His Father. "I pray not for the world but for them whom thou hast given me because they are mine," and again without mentioning that He prays for the world, "And not for these

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only do I pray but for those also who through their word shall believe in me.”

Does not this give us an idea of Christ's hatred of the world? It would seem as though it were excommunicated, cut off from all participation in His prayer. “I pray not for the world;” that is to say foreseeing in His infinite wisdom, the many who would hear of Him and would not believe in Him, seeing the number who would in countless ways abuse the precious blood, foreseeing those who would take sides with the world because its slaves and servants, though He had exhausted divine bounty itself in endeavoring to save them, foreseeing all this, He prays for His Disciples; prays for those who believe in Him and lead lives in accordance with their belief; prays for them who have corresponded to the graces received; prays for them but not for the world. Now, are we of this number, do we endeavor to compromise matters between Christ and the world; to be Catholics in profession and not Catholics in practice; to obey some of the laws of God while we are in the habit of breaking others; to obey some of the precepts of the Church whilst we are continually infringing others? Here is the ground upon which we have to examine ourselves. In Baptism we renounced the world, and we took sides with Christ; but where are we to-day? Let him who spends his Sunday idly, caring little whether or no he assists at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, though he is bound to do so under pain of mortal sin; let that one ask himself if he is not trying to establish the concord which St. Paul speaks of between Christ and Belial. Let him who deals unjustly with his fellow man, taking all advantage of him in matters of business or otherwise; let him ask what his position is. Let the man who has contracted debts, debts whose payment he has deferred for years and years, though he has abundant means for cancelling them; let that man ask himself in all sincerity: Am I practising the duties imposed upon me by my religion? Am I a

Christian showing forth the justice of Christ? Let us one and all examine ourselves and we shall find that we are more or less tainted by the world, wandering from the profession of being Christians, of being Christ's faithful upon this earth.

And now, coming to our second question: Are we idolaters? Most of us may not practise the perfection of the law, none of us is perfect, we are but poor Christians at the best; but may there not be some of us who are serving Mammon? This word Mammon, we are told, is used of riches, so expressing it in the language of to-day we might say that we could not serve God and the riches of the world. You cannot serve God and the mighty dollar. Now does this mean that we are to despise wealth, are we not to seek for an honorable living? Yes, but we must do it with due regard to our fellow men. The rich alone do not kneel and worship at the shrine of Mammon; the poor also may become the servants and slaves of wealth. We become servants of Mammon when we seek immoderately after the riches of the world. The poor man may escape this bondage, for he is poor in effect, poor by his condition; still, the poor man may fall a victim to temptation; he may not be content with his condition, he may be struggling for money as though it were the only thing to be sought after in this world, prepared to make use of any means lawful or unlawful to get possession of it. That man, though poor, in reality worships Mammon, and is entirely separated from God. But the rich more particularly fall an easy prey to this forgetfulness of God. Hence it is that we read such terrible condemnations of the rich throughout the Gospel.

We read there that Jesus Christ Himself pronounced woes upon the rich: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation." Again we read of the rich young man who comes to our Blessed Lord asking: "Good Master what shall I do that I may receive life everlasting?" And Jesus answering, said to him: "Thou

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knowest the commandments; do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, bear not false witness, do no fraud, honor thy father and thy mother." But he answering, said to Him: "Master, all these things have I observed from my youth." Jesus looking on him loved him, and said to him: "One thing is wanting unto thee, go sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, then come, follow me. But he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions, and Jesus looking round about said to His Disciples: How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God." We read that the Disciples were astonished at His words, they could not understand them; we do not understand them. They looked for an explanation. If this young man is to be lost who is to be saved? Our Blessed Lord gives the explanation saying: "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." Not because they are rich will they be condemned, not because they enjoy great possessions, but because they trust in their riches, when they should trust in God. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for such as these to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Again we have another warning in the parable of the rich glutton. We are told in the Gospel of St. Luke of a certain rich man who was clothed in purple; a certain beggar by the name of Lazarus lay at his gate full of sores which the dogs came and licked, asking to receive the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and we read that no one gave him assistance. It came to pass that the poor beggar died and was carried by angels into heaven. The rich man also died and was buried in hell; lifting up his eyes when he was in torments he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried out: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." And Abraham said to him: "Son, remember

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that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." Is not this a terrible warning for those who possess the riches of this life? Riches are dangerous since they bring so heavy a penalty upon their possessor when they are misused.

How then are the rich to use their wealth? In the first place they must recognize the truth of the Psalmist's saying when he tells us: "If riches abound set not your hearts upon them." Realize in the first place that no matter what your wealth may be it cannot save you from the grave, the grave will close over you; you must begone from this world and another life awaits you, one of happiness or one of misery; consequently while here your first work is to save your soul, and to save your soul you must realize that whatever you have in this world is given you as a means whereby you may save it. God never blessed you with your wealth in order that it might be a drawback to your salvation, but He gave it to you, that you might use it for the benefit of your fellow man as well as for your own. You are His steward chosen and selected by Him to benefit those who are poorer than yourselves. You are to realize that riches were made for you, not you for riches; that like a dangerous weapon they are to be used skillfully else they may wound unto death.

In the second place: those who possess the wealth of the world in abundance must be poor in affection, that is they must not set their hearts on worldly wealth, but must be ready to recognize at any moment God's supreme dominion over them and their riches; they must remember that He may despoil them at any moment and they should be willing to abide by that decision and cry out with Job: "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be His name forever." Recognize in the poor the members of Jesus Christ, and thus you will show by your alms-giving that your heart is not centred entirely upon the goods of earth. Give cheerfully and abun-

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dantly; if you have but little, give at least a little, but give without ostentation and with a pure intention. Do not give in such a manner that the world may know what you give, for then you have your reward. Christ Himself says: "When thou doest an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets that they may be honored by men. Amen, I say to you that they have received their reward. And again, when thou doest an almsdeed let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." And again, "let thy alms be in secret and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee."

Give with a pure intention, for God's sake alone, if you would be rewarded. Do not be of those who give through mere compassion; the infidel is capable of compassion and may give an alms through compassion; neither be ye of those who give to be seen by men to obtain praise for what they do, for to give with that intention would be to give through personal vanity and pride. Above all do not be numbered among those who give through motives of false pride, who give because they are solicited by certain persons to give. Let your alms be real offerings of Charity, offerings given for the love of God, for St. Paul says: "If I should give my body to be burned and my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Let us examine ourselves upon this point; are we idolaters, do we worship Mammon? Let those who are blessed with wealth ask themselves whether they have ever appreciated it at its proper value, as a thing they possess to-day and may be deprived of to-morrow, as a thing that may endanger the salvation of their souls or aid them in obtaining the happiness of heaven. Let them ask themselves whether they have given in proportion to their means, and with what motive they gave? If like the widow who cast her mite into the treasury, you have given what you could afford, and with a pure motive, rest assured that your work

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though not seen by men will be registered in heaven and you will have laid up a treasure for yourselves, not on earth "where the rust and the moth consume and where thieves break through and steal," but you will lay them up in heaven where "neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

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NO COMPROMISE WITH THE WORLD.

“ He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who gathereth not with Me scattereth.”

MATH. XII. 30.

WHEN Christ walked about on this earth He told the people of His time one thing which it was impossible for them to do. He told them that they could not serve God and Mammon; that they could not follow Him and serve the world; but, strange to say, though Christ proclaimed that truth and showed by His life that He was entirely and wholly at enmity with the world and its ways; though His Church which He has founded has ever maintained the same truth and condemned the contrary practise by its actions; still, there are individuals who think differently from Christ's teaching and example, and disagree with the Church's doctrine and practice. Individuals who would perform the impossible, and assert by their lives that you may serve God and the world, that it is possible to compromise matters between God and Mammon.

To-day then let us examine whether it be possible to reconcile the differences between Christ and the world, whether or not we may act in such a manner as to be pleasing to our Blessed Lord, and at the same time not offend the world; whether or not we may bring the Church which has been founded by Him and teaches in His name to terms with the spirit of worldliness that is

abroad, and finally to examine whether there be not individuals in our midst who are endeavoring to serve these two masters, to reconcile in their lives these extremes of enmity.

Christ is born into this world, grows up and appears among men as a teacher, as one sent into the world to make known the truth; and what does He find? A world in revolt and rebellion against its Creator, following out and repeating the "non serviam:" I will not serve, uttered by our first parents, in the garden of Paradise. He takes up that challenge and would conquer it, would bring men back to enjoy the happiness they had given up. This He would do by love. He would not force them back unwillingly, but He would lead them willing captives. He brings them truth, He brings them knowledge, He tells them of the heaven they have lost, of the place of happiness they are losing by their folly. He shows them how they are separated from it by their sin, and how they must ever remain so unless they can purchase it by atoning for their past faults, He even shows them their inability to do so; but at the same time consoles them by making known that He will assume their debt, that He will cancel their sins on the condition however that they shall take up their cross and follow Him.

These men heard Him, listened to His words, though at times they shook their heads, and said: these are hard sayings. They witnessed His works, they saw Him give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb and life even to the dead. They saw these wonders, these miracles, they marveled at the man, and they were led to listen to His words. He told them He was God, and it was of this fact that He would especially convince them, for if they once recognized the fact that He was God, whatever He said would be followed no matter how hard or how difficult it might be to flesh and blood. This then was the whole end and object of His life, to establish that truth among them. But the enemy of man's salvation

came, he immediately saw the effect of that doctrine and he understood that if it were adopted, if they really believed that Christ was God they must need sever partnership with Him and with the world. Hence he stirred up the spirit of jealousy in the hearts of the rulers of the people against Christ. We read of the rulers and priests of the people asking among themselves: what shall we do with this man? For many people are following Him, and He will soon deprive us of our power. Can we not accuse Him of some crime, and is He not guilty of sedition and of blasphemy by making Himself equal to God? Yes, this would be their charge, He was guilty of blasphemy but how would they apprehend Him? Strange to say in that small school of twelve they find a traitor in the person of Judas.

You know how He was taken prisoner and led off to the hall of the Roman Governor; in that hall Christ was first called upon by one of the rulers to compromise His dignity, to assert that He was not God. The rulers of the world knew full well that if they could draw that confession from Him, the people would regard Him as only an extraordinary man, a great teacher, a man with a sublime philosophy, a man with beautiful ideas of what people should be, but could scarcely hope to become. Hence they would obtain that concession; then the world would go on as before, and their position of teachers of the people and of legislators would not be usurped. "Come then," said the High Priest: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God." Jesus said to him: "Thou hast said it. Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of Heaven." Horrified at His words the High Priest starts from his seat and cries out: "He hath blasphemed, what need have we of witnesses, you have all heard the blasphemy, what think you of it?" And the cry went up: "He is guilty of death." Not another word escapes our Lord,

He sees their apparent surprise, hears the sentence and makes no concession; He is led off and scourged, yet no word escapes Him. He is crucified, and there, agonizing for three bitter hours upon the cross, and though He hears the bitter taunts of the soldiery: "If thou be the son of God come down from the cross," still no concession, no retraction, no word uttered, and He dies for the assertion that He is the Son of God.

Well, as the world treated Christ, so also did it treat and does it treat His representative, the Church. Trace it through every age and you will find century after century calling upon that divine institution to give way, to conform itself to the world's ideas and the world's ways. But in vain, for century after century its protest like that of its Divine Master goes up; that it cannot, that it will not. The accusation remains unchanged, it is the same which the Jews brought against Christ; they accused Him of being seditious, for in asserting that He was God, He asserted Himself a teacher of the world and consequently a usurper of what the world considered its rights. For ages the charge has been, and still is; that the Church is seditious, that she is a usurper because she proclaims her divine mission. She claims the right of teaching and of legislating for the world; hence she too is called upon to conform herself to the world, or meet with resistance from it. You know the history of the struggle. The chosen twelve had been sent out to preach Christ the son of God to the nations; well warned were they of the difficulties which were likely to attend their mission. They were told to arm themselves with the arms of constancy and resolution, not to regard the scoffs, reproaches, miseries and sufferings which might befall them; not to fear those who could kill the body, but to make a free bold confession of Christ's divinity before the world, and if necessary to take up their cross and die for that saving truth as He did.

The advice was followed, the precept was obeyed to

the letter, and for three hundred long years the Church shed blood from every member sooner than give up her leader and deny her faith. One day the victim appears in the person of a maiden tender in years, and of little experience in the ways of the world. Agnes the virgin professes herself a Christian, protests that she will not deny Christ, and dies a martyr; henceforth to be known as St. Agnes the Virgin and Martyr. The next day it will be in the person of a mother, Perpetua, who standing in the midst of the amphitheatre will be called upon to give up the God of the Christians, to sacrifice to Idols. In vain will her aged father with streaming eyes call upon her to have pity on his white hairs, to have pity on her father. In vain will he say to her that he has brought her up with tender care, that he has cherished her more than any other of his children and that she should not therefore cover his old age with reproach; in vain will he tell her to consider the mother who nourished her, and the tender infant which cannot live without her; her mind is fixed, she remains unmoved, and dies professing with her last breath the God of the Christians. An Epipodius will be led forth and asked in flattering phrase not to expose himself to the danger of perishing through obstinacy. He will be advised no longer to adore a crucified man whom he cannot please without renouncing all pleasures; to deny Christ and enjoy the good things of this life which especially belong to the young. Strengthened with the grace of God that young man will be bold enough to reply in the face of danger: "Your false compassion does not affect me, you know not that Jesus Christ after being crucified arose and being at the same time by a wonderful mystery God and man, He opened to His faithful servants the portals of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The pleasures to which you yield flatter indeed the senses, but kill the soul; we make war against the body to enfranchise the soul, and to preserve the sway of the spiritual over the material." Or the world will demand that denial from the

aged Bishop Polycarp. The unbelieving crowd in Smyrna will cry out; bring forth the Bishop Polycarp. The venerable old man will appear, will be hurried off to the place of execution and there the Pro-consul, touched with pity, will beseech him to remember his old age, to swear by the genius of the Emperor and forswear the God of the Christians. "Curse Christ and I will release you." That old man will answer with the firmness of his younger years: "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good, how then can I curse Him my Lord and Saviour." And for that answer, for the sake of that profession he dies. And so throughout all those ages of persecution, no compromise, no concession by the faithful of Christ's Church.

Persecution, cold steel and the seething caldron could not make the Church give up her claims. Then Heresy in its hundred shapes endeavored to obtain what threats and death could not wring from the Church. You know how Heresy struck at the very fundamental truths of the Church; still, through all those years, although at times it enlisted on its side the strong arm of the world's power, we are struck with the uncompromising spirit of the Church, who, though she saw that if she did not give way to the changes that were asked of her she would lose individuals, gifted minds, and whole nations, yet like her Divine Master proclaimed the truth and cared not for the consequences. We might tell you of her loss in the East, because she would not give up her doctrine of the Trinity; but to come nearer to our own times we have but to remind you of how she lost England. There, some centuries ago, reigned a King who was at one time a child of the Church; nay more, he gained for himself the title of the Defender of the Faith, for he had ably defended her doctrines against the first Reformers. A time came when he sought to violate the sacred contract of marriage which he had entered into. For eighteen years he had lived with a faithful wife, after that he sought to be released from

her, in order that he might obtain the hand of one of her maids of honor. He sends to Rome and asks the Church to declare his marriage with Catherine his wife null and void. Centuries before that Church had learned, that what God had put together no man should separate. When then she heard the voice of Henry, one of the world's kings, claiming exemption from that law, she recognized as in years before that she was called upon by a representative of the world to conform her heavenly law to the whims and fancies of man; she recognized that she was called upon to compromise her teaching, and back went the answer from Rome's Pontiff to England's King; that no exception would be made in his favor; that he too though King and Master of England was bound by the Divine Law which the Church had promulgated. Henry therefore resolved to cut loose from the Church, and proclaim himself, as the historian Macaulay tells us, Pope of his kingdom. The Vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic unity, the channel of sacramental graces; he arrogated to himself the right of deciding dogmatically what was Orthodox Doctrine and what Heresy; of drawing up and imposing confessions of faith. Bishops were henceforth to be appointed by him and were to exercise their functions as his deputies during his pleasure. The King was to be the spiritual as well as the temporal chief of the nation; he it was who should appoint divines of various ranks to preach the Gospel, and to name and make Priests irrespective of Ordination. The Church witnessed all this, saw that the nation would desert her pale, would set aside in time her Doctrines and Sacraments; but still she remained unmoved, she did not consent that the Precept of God should be violated even by those who had power to lead her saintly children to the scaffold.

Again we might tell you of a name that was a terror to the powers of Europe but a few years since; giant like he arose and the monarchs of the continent shook before him. One power alone when called upon to league with

him in his injustices dared to arise in the person of an aged Pontiff and bid defiance to the Emperor Napoleon. Full well were the costs of that denial estimated, full well did that holy old man Pius VII. know that like his predecessor he would be thrown into prison, that he would be separated from his flock and not allowed to communicate with them. But the cost was little, when placed in the scale with a compromise with the world, and thus it was that the saintly Pope dared to say to the world: "this Emperor may cut us in pieces, but he will never obtain this renunciation from us." And if in our own day we would study the world's opposition to the Church we need but to glance at the state of Europe. True, we will not find the sword of persecution raised to strike, we will not hear each individual called upon to renounce his faith, but there is a more destructive persecution being waged against us; not destruction of our bodies but destruction of our souls. For, is there not an attempt being made to prevent the infallible Teacher of the World from issuing his condemnations and censures against the doctrines of Rationalism and Infidelity that are abroad. Against him the old accusation is being brought and the princes of the earth are again making the old charge: that the Church is seditious because she will not move on with the world, will not accept the world's doctrine; will not conform herself to the master minds of the age. Though bowed down with age, and without a single visible helping hand in the world, her august Head reiterates the "Non possumus," we cannot compromise with you.

What a glorious history for the Catholic mind to contemplate! Christ the divine founder of their Church would not give way, would not fashion His teaching and His practice to the world's. The Church, His spouse for nineteen centuries took the same beaten track and will not be swayed from its course. But how sadly is that recital marred, when we consider the compromising spirit of many of her children. Christ did not give way,

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the Church did not give way, her children during the ages of faith, would not consent to conform their lives to the ways of the world; to-day looking out on the world may we not assert that the age of unbelief has been ushered in, when we see the children, the chosen children of Christ who are within His Church, finally giving way to the long continued pressure which has been brought to bear against them. Seek for it in the youthful portion of any Catholic flock, seek for it within that class in this very parish and answer the question how it is with our young children; how it is that at times they blush for their Religion. Watch the reluctance with which they turn to religious duties, to saying their prayers, to study their Catechism, to go to Mass on Sundays; then judge and answer. Observe them as they fall under the influence which the fear of the ridicule of their companions has in deterring them from even speaking of religion or seeming to be religious. How is this? Ah, do we not fear when we think of the responsibilities of a parent before God. Were these children not entrusted to them with bright, pure innocent souls, was not the charge given to them that their children should not be brought up ignorant of their faith or in a place where it might be placed in jeopardy.

And now what is the spirit of the parents; they have turned in with the world and they will tell you that their children are being educated, that religion is but a secondary thing that they themselves will teach their children religion; that now their minds are to be trained and drilled for a place in the world, for a place of business. In fact, that the time for the Christian Brother as a tutor and for the Sister of Charity as an instructress has passed away, that they do not come up to the requirements of the times, and thus their children grow up under a public system of instruction with minds cultivated but with their hearts and the better instincts of their nature undeveloped; we meet them afterwards on the highway of life

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as compromisers of their religion, who stray into the Church on some grand occasion, but never visit the tribunal of penance, or pay a visit to the Sacrament of the Altar.

If again you would seek for that spirit of indifference and compromise with the world, we would but ask you to consider the young Catholic man of the day, and to that young man put a few questions with regard to his manner of living. Ask him if he be a Catholic, and he will tell you that he is a firm believer. Ask him if he approaches the Sacraments and he is speechless; what is the reason of all this? What spell has come over this young man who gave such years of promise at his home. He has been in the world trying to serve the two Masters, trying to believe in Christ and His Church and trying to fall in with the worldling in his conduct and practice. His is a divided allegiance; with regard to his faith he follows Christ, with regard to his actions, he follows the world, and if you go further to seek the reason of all this you will find that he has been associating with persons of little or no religion, so he could find young men who come up to his idea among the members of his own community; or again, perhaps you will find that he has been guilty of a greater fault. He may have been charmed with the workings of some organization. Now if there be anything that is known to Catholics young and old, it is the fact that the Church has been always opposed to secret organizations whatever their object. It is known, and they too know that She always considered her children as excommunicated, as cut off from her if they once enter such a society.

To join such societies, whatever their object, whatever their aim, is certainly compromising with the world, is certainly endeavoring to serve the two Masters, God and Mammon. You are certainly not with God, for His Church does not acknowledge you as its child, and conse-

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quently you are against Him. You certainly do not gather with Him and therefore you scatter.

But worse than these is another form of compromise that is going on in the world, and strange to say in this our young Catholic women are playing a prominent part. We have all learned from our Catechism that there are Seven Sacraments in the Church of God, and among the number we find the Sacrament of Matrimony mentioned. We all of us know how dearly bought were these Seven Sacraments, these channels of grace. They cost our Lord His life-blood and to-day flowing through these seven streams which have their source in Calvary, grace is conveyed into our souls. We know moreover that the Church is the custodian and the guardian of all the Sacraments, that they are to be conferred by her Ministers or at least in their presence; and yet what do many of our young people do? They go off and acknowledge by their practice that the state, the petty justice of the peace, before whom are tried only the smallest cases, is equal to the Church, and they enter into that holy contract which St. Paul calls a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church in a manner most condemnable. Is this not compromising on a large scale? Is it not saying to our Blessed Lord; I acknowledge that you established a Church and that you placed in that Church the Sacraments purchased by your blood, at the same time I admit that they should be received from the hands or in presence of your Ordained Minister; but for the present I choose to marry as I see others marry who are not within the pale of the Church. So the compromise goes on and at other times it will assume another form, one I might say as dangerous; which is the practice of leading to our Altars in your company one who is not of the same faith, one who in point of fact practises no religion. What blessing can you expect from such engagements? Do you expect the blessing of God while you are violating His command and precept. Ah, the spirit of compromise is going on daily, hence the weak-

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ness of our faith, hence the inconsistency we witness on the part of our young people who should be looked upon as the future hope of the Church. Is it not true that there is a strange and peculiar persecution going on against the Church; in our day it goes on unobserved, but when our attention is called to it we find that we are drifting slowly and silently into the current and tide of the Godless times. Be on your guard then, and now during the season of Lent, that season which reminds us most vividly of our position in the world as Christians and as followers of a crucified God. Let us take such resolutions as may secure us from falling off in our allegiance to God, and obtain for us the promised reward hereafter.

XXXVIII. SERMON.
TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS.

“ Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

MATH. VII. 15.

WHEN we stand on the shore and watch a huge vessel loose its moorings and start out over the waters as if eager to make its journey we are delighted for the moment, for there starts up before us the hopes and joys of those on board as they move on apace to the other world. But a second thought and our joys become fears; for looking out upon the vast ocean imagination sees mountains of dark clouds arise, hears the low rumbling of threatening thunder, sees the forked lightning fly from east to west, sees the sea lashed into fury, sees that great steamer tossed like a feather upon the waters, now disappearing as though submerged and lost and now rising but to be cast again down by the storm; then it is that we ask for the sure, steady and tried helmsman. Such is the picture that forces itself upon the mind, when we consider our Blessed Lord establishing and founding His Church upon the world. It was to be the Ship of Salvation, carrying souls back to their Maker from whom they had been living in exile. It was to sail on amid storms and sunshine, now almost lost to view, and now rising but to show the power of the hand that guided it safely through the tempest. About it, too, clouds thick and heavy were to gather, so

thick that is could scarcely be perceived; and about it, too, thunders were to roll, and roll so loudly that the voice of its helmsman could scarcely be heard. But still it was to ride on safely, securely, for a divine promise had been passed that not only the power of the world or the power of man should not confound it, nay more, the very gates of hell should never prevail against it. The Church, founded and established by Christ, wherever it may be, is the only true prophet and true teacher upon this world. It will be our duty then this morning, to show by very simple proofs, where that true Light of the World is, to point out some of the false prophets with whom the world is filled, and in conclusion ask ourselves the very practical, and at the same time the only necessary question in this world: are we followers of the true or false prophets of whose existence our Blessed Lord apprises us in this day's Gospel.

Every man who believes in Christ, no matter what may be the other articles of his faith, admits that the mission of that Divine Person upon the world was a mission of conquest. He came to conquer the world, to win it over to Himself. Being God, there were no means which He could not command for attaining His object. The imperial Cæsars reigned in Rome, and by a word He might have established them on His side, and so by the force of arms oblige people to follow and embrace His doctrines. There were men of learning, men of culture, thoughtful, intelligent men; generations rich in worldly power and display; men of great influence, well calculated from all appearances to be successful heralds of the doctrines Christ wished to impose; yet these He discarded and passed by. Walking one day upon the borders of a lake He sees two poor fishermen washing their nets. He says to them: "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." With these He began His public life, choosing twelve such men; men who toiled from morning until night for their humble living; men who walked not in soft garments but

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who bore upon their foreheads the sweat of labor, and upon their hands the hardened flesh of continual toil. Men who were not gifted with brightness of intellect, not refined, but ignorant men, dull in their powers of comprehension, continually asking our Blessed Lord questions, and at times receiving from Him chidings for their stupidity. Strange indeed was the selection of such an army, destined to obtain a victory over the entire world. If Alexander had heard of this choice, and known the obstacles, he would have considered it madness. No, God chose the weak to confound the strong; He chose those who seemed the least likely to be successful in order that the divinity of the work might be manifested to the world. When that choice was made He gave the command to go and teach all nations; to go, caring not for the difficulties of tongues; to go, without seeking the permission of any temporal ruler be he king or despot, emperor or tyrant. Go, nor need you stop at the breadth of ocean or at the height of mountain; go, despite the obstructions which nature and man may throw in your way, and preach whatsoever I have commanded you.

But they were to be separated, those twelve; different parts of the earth would lay claim to them as their Apostles; was there to be no way of knitting them together? That had been provided for. Peter had been entrusted with the care of the whole flock; "feed my lambs and feed my sheep," it had been said to him alone; "Thou art Peter, thou art the rock upon which I shall build my Church," and he stood forth, a man vested with the authority of Christ Himself. To him alone was the charge given to provide for both pastors and people; he alone was to be the corner-stone of Christ's Church upon earth; he alone was to be Christ's vicar. Here then have we the touchstone whereby we may infallibly find the Church of God, the true prophet, the true teacher of the world. Peter was to be the head. The Apostles did no separate acts apart from him, they taught the same doctrine, they laid

no other foundation; the keys which they possessed were first entrusted to Peter personally. They heard our Blessed Lord addressing Peter as the rock upon which the Church was to be built, and no voice was raised against him; they recognized him as their head. Has he ever ceased to act in that capacity? Has he ever relinquished his position? If so, let history tell us the year, the day, the hour; but if history be silent, as it is, then we ask who stands at present in Peter's place? Has he a successor? If of old we had asked for his successor the world would have pointed to Linus, to Leo, to Gregory, and we to-day, following in their footsteps many point to Pius X. In the early days, history attests the fact that there was but one Church on earth. There was no second, no third, none the head of that Church was the Bishop of Rome. If then Rome was the centre of the true Church, we again ask: like it, none beside it; and beyond dispute it attests that where is now the centre of the true Church? Has Rome given up her claims? If so we again inquire for the year, the day, and the hour. And if history is again silent on this vital question, as it is, then we ask where is the Church that alone claims Rome as her centre, and Rome's Episcopal ruler as her head. Need we tell you that the world confesses that it is none but the Catholic Church, which is spread throughout the world. And if you would hear the proof, the living voice of the world's confession, it would tell you that never before had it beheld such a concourse of rich and poor flocking from all countries to that central city to visit the Pontiff, to assure him of their devotion in his hour of trial. There you will find princes of royal lineage, ambassadors from crowned heads, and peasants from poor country places, all with the same motive seeking the halls of the Vatican palace; to venerate the dignity, the office, and the virtues of Pius X, and to protest against the false prophets of the world.

The Catholic Church then, with Peter as its head, is the great prophet-teacher that takes the place of Christ,

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the king of prophets and teachers upon this world. Let us turn and consider for a moment the many false prophets which have arisen as Christ Himself foretold they would do, and you will find that before the Apostles went forth from that upper chamber where the power of the Holy Ghost descended upon them, knitting them together by the Charity diffused in their breasts from the presence of that one Holy Spirit, that the false prophets were anticipating their advent in the world and had already taken counsel as to how they would lay hold of them and destroy them as they did the very founder. So has the world ever since, diabolically inspired, sought, as it even now seeks, to shake the central figure of God's Church, the key-stone of that Christian temple, whose arch spans the entire world from east to west.

Christ our Blessed Lord laid down His life for the doctrine He taught. St. Peter his first Vicar followed in his footsteps, and so for three hundred years, few indeed were the Popes who escaped the strong arm of the State. This was the persecution of the sword, and you may therefore think it strange how we can consider those who raised it against the Church, as wolves in the clothing of sheep. But so it was; and as a proof of it we need but cite you one particular case drawn from those pages of persecution. It is that of St. Felicitas and her seven sons. Felicitas was a woman who by her saintly example led many idolaters to forego their worship of idols and attach themselves to the religion of the Christians. The Emperor Antoninus heard that this pious lady and her family practised her religion with a boldness which won the admiration of the Pagans themselves, and that the Gods of the Empire were on that account offended, and must therefore be appeased by her death. The Saint was sent for by Publius, the Prefect of Rome who took her aside from her children and made use of the strongest inducements to bring her to sacrifice to the Gods. But she answered: "Do not think to frighten me by threats, or to win me by fair speeches;

the spirit of God within me will not suffer me to be overcome by Satan, and will make me victorious over all your assaults." She remained unmoved, and the next day the Prefect, seated in state in the square of Mars, before the temple of that god, again brought Felicitas and her sons before him and said to her: "Take pity on your children Felicitas, they are in the bloom of youth and may aspire to the greatest honors," and the good mother replies: "Your pity is impiety, and the compassion to which you exhort me would make me the most cruel of mothers." Then turning towards her children, she said to them: "My sons, look up to Heaven where Jesus Christ with His Saints expect you. Be faithful in His love and fight courageously for your souls." Here was shown the wolfish cunning of these first false prophets, the persecutors of the Church. They would fain win the Christian soul by flattery, by holding out to them the favor of the Emperor, the joys of a long life, the honors and preferments their children might expect. But the Christian heard within his heart the words which Christ had spoken to them: "Beware of those who come to you in the clothing of sheep but inwardly are ravening wolves;" beware of those who would trick you out of eternal life, by holding out to you the possibilities of a happy life upon this earth; beware of them, and if they threaten you, hear them not; "fear not him who can kill the body only, but rather fear him who can kill both the body and the soul." These were the words which sustained the Christian martyrs during the agonies of the most cruel tortures which could be inflicted.

The age of violence passed by, the sword of persecution was sheathed, the Church came out triumphant; then broke out the voice of the false prophets in another form. The age of heresy was ushered in; again they appeared in sheep's clothing; feigning to be solicitous for the true faith, they began to teach the most dreadful heresy. The voice of Arius was heard and the divinity of Christ was denied.

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The voice of Macedonius was heard and the divinity of the Holy Spirit was impugned. Emperors defended the heresiarchs, the power of the state was enlisted on their side; apparently fair promises were made, they sought to rob the Christian of his faith; they were ravenous in wishing to destroy his belief, but again he stood firm. Here we can again illustrate the age of heresy by a particular case. It is that of the great St. Basil, the Bishop of Cæsarea. The Emperor Valens had sided with the Arian party and called upon the Bishops to communicate with the Arians. Journeying through the East and waiting upon the Bishops separately, his Prefect Modestus heard of Basil and summoned him into his presence. He set before Basil the arguments which had been successful with others; that it was foolish to resist the times and to trouble the Church about inconsiderable questions, and then promised to obtain for him the prince's favor if he complied. Failing however by soft language, he adopted a threatening tone; but in Basil he met his match. Rising hastily from his chair the Prefect asked Basil if he did not fear his power, and its consequences; the many pains which a prefect could inflict. "Let me know them," said Basil. Modestus replied: "Confiscation, exile, torture, death." "Think of some other threat," said Basil, "these have no influence upon me. He runs no risk of confiscation who has nothing to lose except those mean garments, and a few books; nor does he care for exile who does not make a home of the spot he dwells in, but a home wherever he is cast, or rather every where God's home is, whose pilgrim he is. Nor can tortures harm a frame so frail as to break under the first blow: you can but strike once and death would but send me the sooner to Him for whom I live and labor, for whom I am dead rather than alive, to whom I have long been journeying." Modestus said: "No one ever yet spoke to Modestus with such freedom." "Peradventure," replied Basil, "Modestus never yet fell in with a Bishop, or sure in a like trial you would have heard like language. O

Prefect in other things we are gentle and more humble than other men living, for such is the commandment, but when God's honor is at stake we think of nothing else, looking simply to Him. Fire and sword, beasts of prey, irons to rend the flesh, are an indulgence rather than a terror to a Christian; therefore insult, threaten, do your worst, make the most of your power. Let the Emperor be informed of my purpose. Me you gain not, you persuade not to an impious creed by menaces even more frightful."

From that field of heresy came the Church likewise victorious. No jot of the faith entrusted to her keeping was lost. But since then different heresies have sprung up; especially since the time of the Reformation have the false prophets, against whom we are cautioned by our Divine Lord, appeared. They have ushered in what we now call the age of reason, the age of intelligence, thus doing away with all faith. This effect was not foreseen, but was nevertheless the natural outgrowth of the first article of the reformer's belief. And hence the authority of the divine teacher was overthrown, and men began to grope about for themselves by the faint light of their own intelligences; hence it is that to-day we find as many creeds as persons, each one his own authority, each one practising his own belief. Others, lookers on, beholding this variety of creeds, though all profess to believe in Christ, draw the conclusion that all are good; that a person may be saved in this or that Church, that it matters little to which he belongs. Thus they become indifferent, while others more logical and more penetrating, reason with themselves after this manner: they will not study the past, for to them it is a dead letter, they take the present as they find it, and say that there is no truth with regard to God in the world; for all these different religions propose to teach the truth of God, and yet all disagree. Since there is no truth, therefore there is no God; in these men we have the infidel.

Here then are those who in our day come in sheep's

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clothing. In how many ways do they appear? What means do they leave untried to turn us from the safe path of truth? Take that most powerful of means for good or bad in this world: We mean the press. That power which if properly used would be the finest creation of the human mind, that power destined by Almighty God to be the vehicle of truth, but converted by man into its destroyer. That power, which should raise up society and give to it its proper tone, you will find it in the hands of men who pander to the passions and prejudices of individuals. The young man takes up the daily morning paper, there he sees religion, if not absolutely, at least in some of its forms scoffed at; it is precisely there that the lurking poison lies, for, seeing his Holy religion ridiculed, and its representatives he cannot stand the pressure of sarcasm, and so falls a victim to human opinion. They do not stop here. From the ponderous jaws of the press come books denying facts of history misrepresenting religion, ascribing effects to causes that never existed; these books are thrust into the hands of our young in the school-room, they are read and taken up by them as truth telling-books, and so in their first years, minds, created for the glory and the ornament of religion and science, are estranged from their religion and from God, and meet us in after life in the person of the gentlemanly lawless citizen.

Again, knowing the power of organization they come before us in the name of societies, benevolent societies; but at the same time societies which seek, and succeed in a manner, to break up the universality of Christian Charity and destroy the right of the individual making him a slave to their purposes, destroying the virtue of Charity inculcated by our Blessed Lord, and substituting in its stead a limited Philanthropy, a virtue of man's creation. Into these secret organizations are our young men cajoled, under the pretext that it will be the best means of succeeding in life, the best possible way of becoming rich; while at the same time, by moving in those societies with men

of different religious professions or perhaps, which is still worse, men of no belief or religion, they are finally tainted by the surrounding atmosphere and become very indifferent or bad Catholics,—Catholics who stay away from Mass, who stay away from the Sacraments, who in fact are scarcely known to be Catholics until the hour of death, when a priest is sent for to administer the last rites of religion to a man who ignored them when in sound health. Here then are two powerful weapons which these false teachers make use of in our day, and these two weapons we must guard against. Some of us perhaps may have been drifting unconsciously. To that question which we were to put to ourselves in conclusion, whether or not we are following the true or false prophets, we may have to confess that we have suffered ourselves to be misled, and if, my friends, you would know whether or not you are, you have but to ask yourselves a few simple questions; to ask yourselves whether you are a true child of your Mother the Catholic Church, whether you endeavor to hear Her voice and to follow Her commands; whether in your lives you give an example to those about you in going to the Sacraments when She bids you go, or whether you be not scandalizing those whom you should edify. If you cannot answer these questions sincerely to yourself, you may rest assured that you are following some false light. It may be that you are not affected through either of the agencies that we have mentioned, but be sure there is something at work that needs removal, and that something must be removed if you would consider yourself a follower of the true light, the only teacher of this world: **THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

XXXIX. SERMON.

DEATH.

“ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken ; for dust thou art and into dust shalt thou return.”

GEN. III. 19.

WE shall speak to you on a subject as old as the world itself. Scarcely had man been made when the sentence of Death was pronounced upon him ; God was heard to say in his anger : “ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Since then, the Sermon on Death has been preached time and again. The unbeliever tells us of its certainty, but leaves to us no hope nor consolation ; he tells us of the grave which will swallow up all, without promising us a future life of reward for the many good actions we may have performed here. To his mind, death is to man what it is to the animal ; complete annihilation. But thanks to Heaven, such is not our belief. Viewing this world in the light of Revelation, we see indeed the certainty of death, but we have hopes to be realized hereafter ; we regard this world as but a state of transition ; we regard it as a place of trial, a battle-ground upon which we are to appear as conquerors or victims. To the Christian, death comes as a liberator, as one who frees us from troubles and trials which but too often make our

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hearts grow sick and faint. Such are the two classes of preachers who have spoken upon death from the beginning; this morning, we would speak to you of its certainty, and of its circumstances, and my plea for so doing, will be the season of Lent.

On its first day, Ash Wednesday, The Church in every corner of the habitable globe will call her children about the Altar, she will put on the garments of penance, and she will ask her faithful sons and daughters to do penance for their sins; she will remind them of the Doctrine of The Church on this point; she will tell them that though their sins may have been pardoned in the tribunal of penance, still there is a temporal punishment to be attached to them, which must be undergone either in this life, or in the world to come. She will ask them to come and kneel before her ministers, and receive upon their foreheads at the same time the sign of mortality, and the sign of immortality; the ashes symbolizing the corruption of the flesh, and the cross designating the immortality of the spirit. She will remind them again of that old lesson which she has repeated for centuries: "Remember man that thou art dust and unto dust shalt thou return." She would have us ask ourselves, as I would ask you this morning, a few questions such as these: Shall I die? When will I die? Where will I die? How will I die? And she would have you gather from the answers which each one of you gives to these questions, resolutions which will always keep you from falling into sin.

Shall we die? The question appears ridiculous, for where is the man or child who does not know that just so surely as he is born into this world, so surely shall he leave it by the passage of death. It is a truth that we are continually hearing. If we walk out for pleasure, the hearse and nodding plumes we pass by in the streets tell us of its certainty; the sign of mourning swinging from a neighbor's door: the long dark garments worn by some friend; these are continually sounding it in our ears. We ride

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from city to city, and on our way we are whirled past the graves of the dead; we look from our window and see the solemn funeral train passing by; we walk through our principal squares and, hemmed in between the stores of fashion, and as though death were mocking at us, we see the undertaker's sign in the shape of a coffin. Clusters gather about the show windows on either side admire the display of goods presented, but about one window there is no loiterer, no idle gazer; it is the show window of Death. It is the silent preacher in the streets, who tells us in truth of the littleness of man's pride. We pick up the morning paper and regularly, for no day goes by without it, our eye rests on the obituary column; the morning mail comes round and as we receive our letters how often do they bear the sad news that some near relative has died. We hear the news boy's voice in the streets; and what is he crying but a message of death: he tells of some dreadful accident whereby lives have been lost; tells of some murder, tells of war where thousands are being cut down hourly; tells of famine where thousands are perishing of hunger; tells of some epidemic just broken out which is hurrying off hundreds to the grave. Wherever we go the preacher's voice is heard, and his text is always the same: "It is decreed for all men once to die." We go out for an evening's pleasure, we go to a place where we expect to hear nothing upon this subject, it may be to the theatre; the scenes shift, the actors appear, the very play that we came to gaze upon for amusement's sake tells the same sad story of death; it is a tragedy in which the hero dies; death is again its lesson. We go to the pleasure party; halls are lighted, the festive board is prepared, the voice of mirth goes round and hours go by; but soon the lights grow dim, the halls are cleared again, and when we return, we find the long spacious hall deserted; a vast grave in its silence. We pick up a novel to while away time, we become acquainted with its ideal characters, we enter into their very lives; we grieve with them when sad,

we rejoice with them when happy; we finish the story, we close the book; and as in real life we find those ideals dissolved by the novelist through the avenue of death.

So it is that we become convinced and say to ourselves: of all future events death is the most certain; from it there is no refuge; young and old, sick and healthy, are here on a level and equally without escape; nay more, for its certainty we have the infallibility of God's own words: "It is decreed for all men once to die." It is not something that may happen; it has been decreed by God himself, and as God cannot err, so death will not fail. Examine the past and ask; where are the many generations that have peopled the earth for six thousand years? Where the Patriarchs, the Prophets of God's chosen people? Where the kings and mighty ones of earth? Where those countless armies that once met on this earth in the shock of deadly conflict? All have passed away, all have lain down to the sleep of ages: the world has been converted into one huge sepulchre; for "all that tread the globe to-day are but as a handful to the tribes which slumber in its bosom." One of our poets has beautifully written on this theme. He tells us:

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set; but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!"

Death then is certain; there is no escaping him. A day will come when our names will be whispered about, and men will say that we are dead. A day will come when preparations will be made for our funerals. A day will come when our friends will gather about our homes to bear us thence to our last resting place. A day will come when we shall be borne into this church, laid in this aisle, and the words of the last absolution pronounced over our remains. A day will come when our friends will stand

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in tears above our open graves, and hear the cold earth rattle upon our coffin. All this is sure to come, and you may tell me that you know it; you may tell me that you know that none are exempt from it, that you know that the Saints died, that the Blessed Virgin, sinless as she was, died: that Jesus Christ, though God, was not an exception to the law, and that therefore you do not expect to escape it. You may ask why therefore do we speak to you of what is so unpleasant to you? We ask in return; Are you prepared to die? This is why we speak to you of death's certainty; this is why we speak of that certain journey that we are sure to take at some future time. Are we prepared? Have we everything set in order? You know how many things you would have to prepare, if you were thinking of leaving home for a time, how many things you would have to say to those from whom you would be separating. You would be very sure to forget nothing; now when you are sure to leave home and family once for all, have you nothing to prepare? Are you ready to meet your God? Have you nothing to say? Have you not to confess that you have been a sinner, that you have been unjust, that you have been a scandal perhaps to your own family or to your neighbors? It is for this reason, that we speak to you; that you may prepare yourselves. By preparing yourselves we mean that you should lead lives that would be a daily preparation for death. To live each day as though it were your last upon earth.

But when shall we die? This is the second question. We would have each of you ask yourselves: When shall I die? And to that question, unlike the first, you will receive no answer. Our position is that of a criminal about to be executed, he is brought into court, his offence is examined, and he is found guilty; the judge rises, passes sentence, proclaims that on such a day and on such an hour he will be taken from the prison to the gallows, and there hanged by the neck until dead. Our position

is something similar to that; the criminal has one advantage over us; he knows the time of his death: our case has been tried, and sentence has been passed. "As all men sinned in Adam, so also all men must die;" but, when shall I die? When will the sentence be executed? Will I live for years? You may plead youth; say that you are young and full of life and strength; yet how many like you have gone down to the grave. Youth is a dangerous time; it is the time when the passions seek to rule; a time when they generally become dominant; when habits of vice begin to govern and if not checked bring down hundreds to the grave long before their time. You may say that you are not of that class, that your lives are not lives of dissipation and carousal; that you live regular lives and are of good habits; but even then, what security have you that the appointed time has not arrived, when you must die? Visit our cemeteries and behold how many, like you of regular lives and regular habits, have died at your age. And then, even granting that you have time to live, ask yourselves: How many years can I live at most? Taking the time most favorable to one of your years, how long will you live? Were we to ask this question of you individually, some would say about five or ten years; others might say twenty or thirty; whereas not one of you could say that I shall live fifty or sixty. Shall you die this year? Shall you die this week? This day? This hour? We know not. But does not the revealed word of God shed some light upon the questions we are now asking ourselves? The inspired volume tells us that "death will come stealthily, like a thief in the night, when we least expect it;" we are to be taken by surprise. There is to be no guarantee; youth and the full flush of manhood is no guarantee. Old age with its whitened locks will not be respected. The child but a day old is to be carried off as unexpectedly as the man who has spent his life in sin. What is the reason of this? Why are we to be taken off so unexpectedly?

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It is because Almighty God would have us learn another lesson from this dreadful uncertainty of the time of our death.

In answer to our first question, we became assured that we shall all one day die. And our conclusion was that we should therefore prepare. We cannot answer our second question, we cannot tell the moment nor time of our death, and this uncertainty is to teach us that we must not only prepare ourselves for death, but that we must be always prepared; always in a state of friendship and grace with God, since we know not the day nor the hour. Our lives then and every moment of our life, must be a preparation for death. We must not live one single moment in deadly sin. This is the inevitable conclusion we must come to. You may say perhaps, that if you have not the certainty of a longer life, you have at least a fair hope that you will live longer. There are many greater sinners than you who are leading scandalous lives, and they live to a good old age, and you have hopes that you may share in their good fortune; but no, do not draw such a conclusion, remember that it is a question of the salvation of your immortal soul. We are not speaking of riches, these you might risk and recover; we are not speaking of a worldly reputation, this too, you might sacrifice and afterwards regain; but we are speaking of the soul, of yourself, of your destiny, and of your fate in the next world. Will you hazard the salvation of the immortal soul with which you are endowed? Once lost, it cannot be reclaimed, once gone, it can never be regained. Will you not then agree with me, that you are not wise when you live in a state of sin and, will you not especially agree with me that those who have been living for years in that state are unwise? Will not those who have grown old in the service of the world, those who may have spent their lives in amassing wealth, forgetful of God and of his justice; will they not agree with me that their lives have been lost. You who may have ever been the slaves

of intemperance and of sin, you who may have been charmed with the pleasures of the world and who cannot spare one half hour in the week to the service of God by hearing Mass; will you not all agree that you are foolish in not preparing, and in not being prepared for that uncertain moment?

In the third place, where will we die? This may be a thought that has never occurred to us, we may have never asked ourselves the question; it is something that men are not generally troubled about; they expect death to come upon them for the most part in the bosom of their families; but alas! how many are deceived. Shall we die in our own house surrounded by friends and acquaintances? Will relatives stand by us at that last hour to comfort and bid us hope? Or shall we die far from home in the midst of strangers, with no one about us whom we know, with no one to comfort us? Will our death be natural? Shall we be stricken down by a long and lingering illness, or shall we die a violent death? Shall we die by our own hand or by the hand of an assassin? Will it be upon the roadside suddenly, or will it be upon the ocean? Will it be in the midst of enjoyment and innocent pleasure, or will it be while we are in the very act of offending Almighty God? All this is hidden from us for the self same reason; that we may be always prepared wherever we may be, or whatever we may be doing; for we know not the time nor the place, the day nor the hour. We might develop this point, indefinitely but still we would have to come to the same conclusion: we know not where we shall die.

Provided we answer our fourth question satisfactorily, it matters little what answers we give to the questions when we shall die, and where we shall die. The great question is and ought to be for us: How shall we die? This is the all-important question, for if we die well, we need not care how soon we may be called upon to give up our life: we need not care whether it be this year or next;

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this day or next; provided we die well, we care not when. So too, provided we die well, we care not where we die: whether it be in our house surrounded by friends, or whether it be in a distant land surrounded by strangers. The great question is; how will each one of us die. Death will come, and our death-bed will be that of the just or that of the wicked. To-day we can conjecture from our past life, what it will be; for as we live, so shall we die. If we live a life of forgetfulness of God and of His Holy Religion, we must expect to be deserted by Him in death. But if on the contrary, our lives be well ordered, well regulated, according to the laws and the commandments of God, we may expect to die in His friendship. Apply then this principle, and say how will it fare with you?

How many forget God, how few really serve him; how many spend the day carelessly, never to think of Him during the coming week. How then shall we die? To-day we have it in our power to answer that question; we may to-day determine whether we shall die the death of the just or the death of the wicked. Go to the death-bed, and stand by that of the wicked. Three things particularly torment such a soul. His past life rushes in upon his memory; he sees it all misspent, his sins come back upon him; all the forbidden pleasures he enjoyed, all the crimes he committed rise up to condemn him; there is not in his past life a solitary action that he can recall with pleasure, and if there be, he beholds how sadly it is outweighed by his offences. He remembers the many good works he might have performed, the poor he might have assisted, the Communion he might have received, the masses he might have assisted at; the Confessions he might have made, the occasions of sin he might have avoided; all the memory of wrong that he has done, and the memory of good that he has left undone, all come back in that last moment to torture the poor soul. But not only does the memory of the past grieve him, but the present likewise afflicts him. Who can express his sorrow at that

moment? His pain is intensified; he is about to give up friends and relations who surround him. He sees riches that he has labored for during his whole life about to slip from his hands, to be squandered perhaps, by an unworthy heir; or if he be not wealthy, he sees himself leaving a destitute family upon the world; a family perhaps which he has not brought up in the true religion; a family destined to curse his memory in the future. But the tortures of the past and of the present are nothing to the agony he feels when he contemplates the future; his short life has been spent, but a future, everlasting in duration, begins. Imagination conjures up the just judge who is about to consider his every thought, his every action, and his every word; he goes further; and thinks of the abode of the damned and their sufferings; he thinks of souls suffering there who have not committed one-half of the offences for which he is now about to be judged; he sees heaven, that place of reward and delight, which he might have enjoyed at the price of a little self-sacrifice; he sees the innumerable bright spirits who crowd it, and he feels within himself: I am lost, I cannot hope in a moment to become as one of those; and so dies in a state of despair.

Go then to the death-bed of the just and behold how calmly they depart this life. To them the past comes back, but with no terrors. True, there have been sins there, dark spots upon their lives which they would erase were it not too late; but the thought of having done Penance, satisfies them. Their many good actions, their many sacrifices in God's services are there; the Sundays so well spent, the days offered and consecrated to God in morning prayer; the masses assisted at so devoutly; the good Confessions made, the Communions received every week or month; the many little sacrifices, such as not going to certain places of pleasure, or not exposing themselves to sin, all these come back to those souls, and fill them with ineffable joy. The present too but adds to it; they do not desire to live if it be God's will to take them

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from the world; all they desire is to receive the Sacraments, the channels of grace, in that last hour; the ambassador of heaven stands beside them, pronouncing for the last time the sacramental words of Absolution, gives them their God, and tells those christian souls, to depart from that body fearlessly, and to enter into the joys of the Blessed. Those souls without fear look into that everlasting future, look with anxious expectation for the hour, the moment, which will unite them to those Blessed Spirits; the moment which will be the first of everlasting life, in heaven, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be no more, for the former things are passed away."

Ah, where is the person who would not like to die the death of the just; you would all wish it, and as you all wish it so may you all depart from this world in that manner? The Psalmist tells me, "my soul is in my own hands." To-day I can make up my mind to lose or to save my soul. If I go on as I have been doing in the present, there is a likelihood of my losing that soul. What I am to do then, is to stop just here, and determine to save that soul, to save it by and through all the means left us by our Blessed Lord. The Church is about to enter upon a time of Penance, I will enter upon it with her, and I will do penance for my past life, and endeavor to do better for the future. The first week of Lent will find me at peace with my God; I will put it off no longer; this Lent will be spent as a time of real penance. If I am able to keep all the regulations of my church, regarding fast or abstinence, I will do so; and if I cannot, I will at least do something; I will hear Mass daily, or I will attend Devotions every evening. I will go around those stations in spirit that my Lord did in His sufferings, and I will there learn His love for me, and promise to love Him more faithfully.

If we could thus be induced to make peace with our

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God during this season, and perform some work of penance for the past, would not Easter Day be indeed a day of Resurrection for us, and might we not hope that it would only be a type of our resurrection on the last day, when we shall rise to enjoy the happiness which can be never taken from us.

XL. SERMON.
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

“ *Who art thou ?* ” JOHN I. 22

TO-DAY, the Gospel carries us in spirit to the banks of the Jordan to hear the first Christian orator, the great precursor John telling the people of his time to do penance or inevitably perish. Such words were startling. True, they expected the Messiah, and they knew full well that the weeks of David had almost expired; but their ideas of the great prophet of the Messiah was, that He would come with power and with majesty. Their carnal and ease-loving minds could not entertain the thought that they were to be called upon to perform acts of penance and to deny themselves the pleasures of the world, and hence it was that when they saw this man clad in skins, and living on locusts and wild honey, and making the desert his home; when they heard this bold preacher they were amazed, and a boldness until then unheard of, and calling upon them “to bring forth fruits worthy of penance,” to make straight the rough ways, to fill up the valleys of weakmindedness and sloth, and to level the hills of pride and ambition; when they heard this bold preacher they were amazed, and went out to demand of him who he was? Was he a prophet? Was he the Messiah? What right had he to preach the baptism of penance? They had not been accustomed to such language, and they would therefore question the right of this man to tell them such things. Nay more,

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John went farther, for we find him daring to come before Herod the Tetrarch and say to him that it was not lawful for him to live with his brother's wife. This was boldness that could not be explained, and therefore they demanded: Who art thou? Whence do you come? Where is your mission? And John answered: "I am but a voice crying in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord;" if you expect the Messias, prepared for His coming, do penance for your sins.

Do you see the parallel? Have you discovered in this scene a like one that you daily witness? Have you not heard of a power that also came before a people pagan in ideas, idolatrous in worship and lewd in its morals? Have you not heard of that power asserting in the face of such a society, that there must be a complete change in ideas, in religion, and in morals. Did you not witness a conflict going on for centuries, and did you not see the advocate of the new order persecuted and hunted down, apparently crushed to earth, but only fulfilling the saying: "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." During this time was not the question always asked: whence comes this power? What is its mission? The cry was that of Paganism demanding from Christianity the reason of its assertion! Still more, did we not see that power going as did John before the Tetrarch Herod, going before the crowned heads of the world, and making known to the people their duties when they seemed to forget them. Do we not see Theodosius the Emperor met at the Cathedral doors by Ambrose the Bishop of Milan, and refused admission until he had wiped out with tears of penance the bloody deeds that had been done by his command in the city of Thessalonica.

You remember the incident. That city had revolted against its governor, the indignation of the Emperor was immediately aroused, and he ordered a massacre of all the inhabitants of the city without regard to age, sex, or condition. Seven thousand souls fell victims to that severe

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command. St. Ambrose the Bishop of Milan wrote to the Emperor who was in that city and represented to him the crime he had committed in condemning the innocent with the guilty. He exhorted him to repentance, and warned him not to assist at the divine service until he had expiated his grave offence. The Emperor was deaf to this prohibition, and at the usual hour proceeded to the Church. Ambrose heard of his coming and went to meet him at the doors, and there he said to him: "Go no further, prince; thou dost not yet feel the enormity of thy crime; reflect a moment. With what eyes dost thou look upon the Holy Temple? Dost thou dare enter into the sanctuary of an angry God, thy hands still stained with innocent blood? Canst thou, a murderer, presume to receive the Body of the Lord? Go, go from these sacred precincts and add not the crime of sacrilege to that of murder." Back went the Emperor obedient to the voice of his Bishop from the temple of his God, from that temple which was open to the least of his subjects, though closed to him, the ruler of the land.

Again did we not see Lothair take back the wife he had rejected. As John to the Tetrarch, so there came a power to him when he repudiated his fair and virtuous consort. A power that taught him, that though he was an Emperor, there were the laws of God to be respected; a power that obliged him to come before his people and to repudiate the concubine he had taken to his unlawful embraces, to take back his own lawful queen, and to pledge to her again before all the people that he never would love another, and that he would be faithful to her as a Christian until the hour of death. Such deeds were unheard of in Ancient history; and now the cry goes up; what is this power? Whence came this power that dares to rise up against the ideas and teachings of the universal world; that constitutes itself a teacher aye, and with a pretension hitherto unknown, an infallible guide? Whence comes this strange power that even now presumes to preach penance

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when human ingenuity scouts the very idea in its modern inventions ? But a short week shall pass and you will be led in spirit to the birthplace of that power, for it is none other than the power of Christ. You will be led to consider one more mortified than John. He too is in a desert, for the cold world will have shut Him out ; He came unto His own and they received Him not. There, lying in a manger, a poor babe unattended and unknown, breathes the God of creation. And for His coming it is that we are invited to prepare the way ? John asked the people of his day to prepare for His first coming. The Christian preacher of to-day calls upon you to prepare for His second and terrible coming on the last day, the day of general Judgment. And it seems to me that we could not better prepare ourselves than by asking ourselves who we are, and what we have to say of ourselves. Answering this question we shall have a knowledge of our littleness, and must of necessity acknowledge the greatness of God and be led to form the resolution of never more sinning, and of doing penance for our many and past offences.

It is a strange phenomenon that man is peculiarly a creature of investigation, his life is spent in questioning from the day he is ushered into this world until he leaves it. Thus the child day after day acquires the names of objects that surround it. Men of talent are always inquiring into the phenomena that surrounds them. The Geologist questions the earth's surface and demands its origin and the time of its birth. The Astronomer views the heavenly bodies and demands an explanation of their evolutions, whilst the Mathematician inquires after their distances. The Philosopher catches the emotions, and stays the tumult of thoughts that crowd through our minds, and wants to know of their beginning ; whilst the Theologian goes even farther and asks who is God, what of His nature, and what of His power and attributes. One question alone in that universal examination is omitted : "*et tu quis es tu.*" And thou, who art thou. Pardon me, if the answer to this ques-

tion must be one that will show your own insignificance. We shall demand the answer from the testimony and reason of mankind and from the revealed word of God.

Summon we then before us the great ones of earth, those who have gone before us, those who may have excelled so far as to have charmed the world by their deeds, and ask the question : who are you ? A being of but a few hours in comparison with the age of the world, the being of a moment in the eyes of God. Stand before their monuments and rich mausoleums and ask : who are you ? And they confess, and will not deny how little they are ; seven feet of earth is now sufficient for those whose desires were not limited by the Universe. To Hanibal, the great general, you may say with Juvenal : "Death alone confesses the littleness of man." You may with Serverus the Emperor take in hand the urn in which the ashes of the Romans were preserved and say : "Thou art able to contain a man whom the world could not circumscribe." Then go and stand before the monument of Alexander, that mighty hero who wept, after he made the earth desolate, for other worlds to conquer, and you will hear the Philosophers pass by and thus moralize. You will hear one say : "Yesterday and the world itself was not sufficient ; to-day five or six feet are plenty." Another addresses the dead monarch after this manner : "Yesterday thou couldst liberate thousands from death ; to-day thou canst not exercise that power in thy own behalf." A third will pass and tell the dead : "Yesterday you made the earth groan with the armies that you marched over its surface, to-day it lies heavy on your own form." Again ; listen to the cry of anguish that escapes from Anthony, the bosom friend of Cæsar, that great Roman general, when he saw him cold in death before him. "O Mighty Cæsar ! And dost thou lie so low ! Are all thy conquests, glories, spoils, shrunk into this little measure. But yesterday, and the word of Cæsar might have stood against the world ; now lies he there and none so poor to do him reverence."

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But what need of questioning the past, let us confine ourselves to the present. Let us ask from the man of wealth, the merchant who burdens the seas with his merchandise : who art thou ? Who art thou that men should covet thy possessions, that men should seek thy friendship ? With all thy wealth thou canst not purchase one moment of ease from pain in sickness, one moment of joy in sorrow, nor one moment of pleasure when anxiety weighs thee down ; I see disease of some kind seize you, you writhe in agony as others ; in vain do you ask for a reprieve from death, it is not granted, and you die. I see the hearse before your door, I see your casket taken from the house and borne to the cemetery, and I hear the earth as it falls with heavy thud upon the coffin lid. I turn and ask one of the lookers on : who is this ? What was he ? I may hear, in reply, of his great riches ; of the many great offices that he filled, of the public works that he may have aided in constructing. But if I ask the dead one : who art thou ; he will confess and he will not deny : “ *Non Sum,*” I am not.

Fifty years ago the name of Napoleon was sufficient to alarm the powers of Europe. You have heard of his triumphs, you have read of his victories, you have been told of his receptions in the gay capital when returning from victory. The populace went out to meet him and with cheers cried out : Long live the Emperor ! Bells voiced the same sentiment and guns thundered the tale of victory. Yet, Napoleon ! who art thou ? Listen high monarch to the manner in which a poetess sang of your remains when they were borne to France for burial.

“ A little urn, a little dust inside,
Which once outbalanced the large earth. Albeit,
To-day a four year old child might carry it.”

Take the man of genius and of talent, the man of learning, the privileged man, he who cultivates his mind,

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the highest quality of the soul. He who goes about conscious of his intellectual superiority, admired as a prodigy and spoken of as a man powerful enough to revolutionize the world : ask that man : Man of letters, man of knowledge, who art thou ? A creature, a poor being sprung from nothing, glancing for a day about the universe and then disappearing, soon to be entirely forgotten. Your learning, what is it ? what does it amount to ? Enjoy if you will the whole of human knowledge, and what is it ? Have you explained the mysteries that surround you ? Do you even understand the workings of your own mind ? Can you explain the feelings and operations of your own soul ? Yet you think yourself learned, while your own being is a mystery from the beginning of life to its end. You are no wiser as regards yourself than the most ignorant. Call up the gay young maiden who has been taught to please, who is the admiration of those about, who arrests the gaze of every passer by, the very life and soul of every pleasure party : whose absence is mourned in the ball-room and whose style and fashion is a subject of conversation for the town. Adorn her with every accomplishment, decorate her with all the tawdry of fashion and let her beauty surpass expression ; then ask her : And thou, admired one, who art thou ? Canst thou command this beauty ? Will it remain ? Those graces and charms, are they at your pleasure ? If some disease were to break out in the city you would be alarmed, you would feel that your last visit had been made in the fashionable circle, and you would fear that they might henceforth speak of your disfigured appearance. But grant even that you escape, can you stay the fingers of old age from drawing furrows in that comely brow ? Can you stay the chill of old age from robbing that eye of its lustre, and that cheek of its bloom ; can you bid the snows of winter fall without whitening those locks or the years to fall lightly on those shoulders without bending that shapely and erect form ? You confess your inability. What then are you ?

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Reason and Humanity have told us of the littleness of man. What answer shall we derive from Revelation, from the inspired men of God ? We seek a reply from the great king David and he tells us of himself : “ I am a stranger and a sojourner as all my Fathers were.” He was but a wanderer, journeying from a distant home ; he had heard of generations that lived before him that had passed away. He recognized that he too was passing as a shadow, that others would come after him. Have you ever thought of this ? Have you ever thought that you can never rest ; that whether standing or walking, running or sleeping, you are still hurrying onward to the grave. When you enter a crowded thoroughfare one thing can be predicted of all ; they are hurrying on to their graves. The gay equipage that rolls by is hurrying there. The little child, the grown up young man, the feeble old woman, all, all are hurrying home from this place of sojourn and exile. Well indeed might King Solomon, that wisest of men, well might he answer to that question : “ I am but the guest of one day.” For man is like a guest who arrives to-day and goes away on the morrow. No sooner is he born into the world than he is met at his baptism by the minister who presents him with a lighted taper, telling him to be prepared to meet the bridegroom when he chooses to come. You are then but a guest, since you have no sooner arrived than you are warned that you must be ready to set out again when called for. If then we be but guests, if we be but wanderers on this earth, why do we act as though we possessed a fixed habitation here ? Why stop on the way to gather riches, to obtain honors, to seek for the fashions and the follies of earth ? What would you say of a man who, in coming home from some distant country, would dally on the wayside ; gazing idly on riches and jewels that he might receive for his home, and yet return penniless. Such, is the manner in which many of us are hastening on to eternity. We stop by the wayside of the world, taken up with its passing shadows, with its wealth, with its pleasures, and with

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its honors. We are warned time and again by the minister of God that we are traveling towards eternity, but we heed not the advice. We are told that there are riches to be acquired here which will be of benefit to us hereafter; we are told of the Sacraments, those fountains of wealth for souls that would be happy; we are told of actions that we might perform for which we might receive a reward in eternity: but, on we go, jogging leisurely, half listening to the maxims of the world, half listening to the voice of God, until our journey is ended, and at the very entrance into the next world we waken as it were to hear that question put to us by an angry judge; Who art thou? What hast thou to say of thyself? Give an account of thy exile and of thy time of trial? We have heard the testimony of King Solomon, that wisest of men has answered our question. He has told us in sublime words that: "Human life passes away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on; and like a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the water; or as a bird that flieth through the air; of the passage of which no mark can be found" or as "an arrow when it is shot at a mark, the divided air cometh together again so that the passage is not known."

The prophet Isaias and Holy Job have an answer to give to our question. Isaias tells us that: "All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field." Now what is there more tender than the grass or more delicate than the flower? The northern blast, cold and chilly, robs the flower of its beauty and the grass of its verdure. The sun consumes the freshness of the meadow, and kills the varied colors of the garden. But yet man is weaker than they; a simple breath will not fade the lily, yet a pestilential odor is sufficient for man.

Ask of some of the dead what killed them, and you will be surprised at the accident that was the cause. What killed Cassius the great orator? Cicero answers that on

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a certain day after he had made one of his great speeches he took a chill and died. What killed Lucia the sister of Marcus Aurelius the Emperor? Aurelius himself tells us, that while she was nursing her child and playing with it, the babe by accident ran a needle into her breast and she died. What killed Fabius the great Roman Prætor who at times maintained that he was equal to God, but a hair swallowed in his cup of milk. If then our lives hang by so slender a thread, if we are liable to be summoned at any moment, why is it that we remain in our sins? Why is it that we do not rise from that sleep of death. Why do we not present ourselves at the tribunal of penance in order that we may hold ourselves in readiness.

Who art thou? "A leaf that is carried away by the wind," replies Holy Job. As though he would say; oh! the uncertainty of life! For as the leaf hangs trembling in every passing breeze, and as some are torn from the branch before others, so also with our lives. We are ever bordering on the moment of dissolution, and hence it was that Ecclesiasticus said: "Man knoweth not his own end: but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time when it shall suddenly come upon them."

These are words surely that must strike the mind of the sinner if we but consider them seriously. They are words of inspiration written under the influence of the Holy Spirit, written for our use and benefit; words of truth, since they are revealed. Take them therefore with you, you who are in a state of sin, and reflect upon them: "So men are taken in the evil time,"—in their sins—"when it"—death—"shall suddenly come upon them." Take them then with you for your serious consideration and show me the man that will remain in his sin. If there be one, he is a man who dares to defy God himself.

Human testimony and Revelation have shown us the littleness of man, that littleness of which we seldom think. And here is the reason why the Precursor of Christ had a

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right to go out into the world demanding Penance of that small creature for the offences he had offered to his God. Here also is the reason why the church of God resists so strongly the world to-day. She sees a selfish creature so called elated by progress and success wishing to set aside God, wishing to get on without Him. Hence it is that she must be faithful to her mission, call upon man to reflect upon himself, and to do Penance and prepare for the coming of his Lord.

During the season of Advent we are called upon to prepare for His last coming, for His mission of Justice. Our Lord has a three fold mission ; a mission of Mercy—His coming into the world and dying for us ; a mission of Justice, His coming on the last dreadful day to judge mankind ; but there is another which unites in some way these two ; a mission which procures for us the fruits of His first mission, and disposes us for His second coming. That mission is His mission of Grace to the poor soul. It is the communing of God with the sinners in love, and it is for this mission that I would have you immediately prepare as the holy time of Christmas approaches. Prepare yourselves then, pious souls, you who live always in the presence of God, for to you He hastenes with His gifts and His greatest blessings. And do you who have lived far from God, hidden as it were from His sight, do not lose courage but prepare, for remember this is the time of His mission of love. Give place to that Divine Infant in your hearts, and do not shut Him out on the eve of that festival as did the Jews when His poor Mother walked from door to door seeking admission for the night. Give place to Him and His blessings, and His peace will fall upon your homes.

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Gospel for the Last Sunday of Pentecost.

ST. MATTHEW, describing the Passion of our Blessed Lord, tells us that the Roman Governor Pilate wished to release Jesus, and that it was on this account that he said to the Jews when they were clamoring for the life of our Saviour before his door: which shall I release to you Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ? We know full well the choice they made, and we know how Pilate remonstrated with them; but all to no purpose. There they stood, an infuriated mob crying out: "Crucify him, crucify him. Be you innocent if you will of the blood of this man, we care not. Let His blood be upon us and upon our children."

It is a remarkable fact that, whenever our Lord wished to preach a new doctrine to his followers, he would confirm it by a miracle. Thus prior to the Last Supper where He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, we find Him multiplying the five loaves and two fishes, and feeding with them five thousand people. Again, when He would establish the truth that man could forgive sins, we find Him addressing the Scribes who had gathered about the man sick of the palsy, and who accused Him of blaspheming when He told the man who was sick to be of good heart that his sins were forgiven him; we find Him

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confounding them by working a miracle in their very sight. "But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the man sick of palsy: "Rise, take up thy bed and go into thy house." And he rose up and went into his house. So again He would impart some knowledge to His Disciples and followers with regard to the great day of reckoning, the day of the last and final judgment; and in order to assure them He prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. We have only then to ask ourselves, has His prophecy with regard to the Jewish race been fulfilled? If so, just so surely, will the events predicted in this day's Gospel come to pass before the destruction of this world. If the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem was literally accomplished, we may likewise expect to see the prophecy respecting the day of Judgment fulfilled to the letter. Bearing this in mind, we need not fear that we can overdraw its terrors or that the conception of the most learned mind will ever equal the dreadful sublimity of the scene which is described in the Gospel of to-day by our Lord Himself.

The tribulation of the Jews was to be such as had not been from the beginning of the world, nor was there to be anything like it for any people in the future. We have read of popular disturbances and of national grievances; we have heard of wars and of the devastation of cities; we have seen thrones crumble and people disappear from the earth; but none of those equalled the destruction of that Jewish city. Then it was, as we read in history that all hearts were turned from humanity and compassion. Titus, the Roman, drew up his legions about the fated city. Thousands had assembled within its walls to celebrate the Jewish religious solemnities; and there, shut up in that vast prison, murder and famine became the order of the day. Hour after hour added to the dying and the dead; the living walked about among them like so many skeletons. Houses became graves, and streets were strewn like

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the battle field with dead and dying. The bodies of the killed were so numerous, we are told, that the public ways were blocked up with them. For forty years men did not cease to see strange things in the Temple. Every day brought new wonders, so that a famous Rabbi cried out one day: "O Temple! O Temple! What causeth thy commotion and why art thou terrified for thyself?" What could be more dreadful than the voice which was heard on the day of Pentecost or more fearful than that which resounded all through the sacred place, "Depart hence! Depart hence!" was heard from every quarter of the building. The Holy Angels who were its protectors and guardians announced to the people that they were deserting that holy edifice because it had been condemned by God. Four years before the war in which Jerusalem was destroyed the Jews received another terrible warning which appeared before the eyes of all the people.

It is related by Josephus the Jewish historian, that a certain man went up from the country to Jerusalem to assist at the feast of the Tabernacles. Suddenly he began to cry out, and apparently without reason: "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against the temple and against Jerusalem; a voice against all the people." From that time he cried out day and night: "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem!" and on festival days he redoubled that cry. No other words fell from his lips; those who pitied him, those who rebuked, even those who gave him the necessaries of life could never obtain anything from him but this terrible sentence; "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem!" He was arrested, led before the magistrates and condemned to be scourged. At every question and at every lash he constantly cried out: "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem!" No tear escaped him, no cry of agony save that one. They then dismissed him considering him as a madman, and he began to run about the whole country ever repeating the same prediction. During the siege he shut himself up in the city and was seen daily running

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about the walls crying out with all his might: "Woe! woe! to the city. Woe to the Temple; Woe to Jerusalem!" until at last he added: "Woe to myself," and was immediately struck down by a stone shot by the Romans, thus having been at the same time a prophet, a witness, and a visible proof of the Divine vengeance resting upon that nation.

The few survivors warred with each other for a few ounces of food, parents were seen snatching a bite of meat from the hands of their children, and the people were seen searching the sewerage of the city for something to eat. Nay, more, we are told of a still sadder sight which gives us some idea of the destruction which famine was causing in their midst. A woman, overcome by hunger and reduced to despair, took her child, still at the breast, and looking at it with frenzied eyes exclaimed: "Unhappy wretch, for what do I reserve thee? To die of hunger or to become a slave of the Romans?" And that mother cut the throat of her child, roasted it, ate a part, and hid the rest. The rioters searching for food about the place were attracted by the odor of flesh cooking; they entered the house, and threatened to kill the woman if she did not show them what she had concealed. She laid before them what remained of her child, and seeing them transfixed with horror, said: "You can certainly eat of it, if I have done so; it is my child. It is I who have killed it. You are neither more delicate than a woman, nor more tender hearted than a mother." And those soldiers accustomed as they were to sights of cruelty ran from the house trembling with fear. In the recital of such deeds who would not recognize the fulfillment of the prediction made by Christ, and the just punishment of a deicidal people. His blood came indeed upon them and upon their children, for in all history we can find no people like them.

We have seen nations destroyed and so destroyed as to leave no vestige, but the Jews still wander over the earth testifying in spite of themselves to the truth of the predic-

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tion pronounced upon them by Jesus Christ our Lord ; shall we dare question then the truth of the destruction of the world at the last day ? A day will come when each one of us shall be called upon to say farewell to this earth ; a day shall come whose morning shall find us in the enjoyment of health, but whose evening shall veil our eyes in the darkness of death ; or a night will come whose shades we shall behold slowly gathering, but whose darkness we shall never see dispelled. That day of transit from life to death and from death to life again will surely come, and so surely will it come that no man has as yet had the hardihood and the boldness to deny the truth " that we must one day die." But the great question is : how are we prepared for that day, how are we prepared for the judgment that must follow it ? A day will come, says the Holy Scripture, when those who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; when the bodies that have gone to decay, whose elements may perhaps have been carried about by the winds of Heaven, will again assume shape and form and stand before their God to give an account of every act whether good or bad, and receive from him a reward or punishment. The signs which are to precede the last judgment are varied and many. Christ himself narrates them and tells us : " That there will be such tribulations as were not from the beginning of the creation." Could we but picture to ourselves the many tribulations that have befallen the different people of this earth since its creation, and the many and dire afflictions with which they have been visited, we would not have even then a faint representation of what must be when that last great day of reckoning shall approach.

War, with its troop of attendant horrors, will then sweep over the universe ; nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Brother shall stand against brother and betray him ; father against son ; and children, forgetful of the many kind offices of their parents, will not hesitate to stain their hands with the blood of those

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who gave them life. False prophets will arise and tell you: "Lo, here is Christ;" but remember that you stand steadfast for "behold I have told you all things." Nor will this be the end; the very earth will groan and shake, mountains heretofore resting upon a fixed and immovable basis will then begin to totter and threaten destruction; the bellowing of beasts and wails of men will pierce the very Heavens; the sun stripped of his effulgence will shed but a faint light upon the surrounding horrors, and the moon despoiled of her beauty will roll through the heavens a blackened mass foreboding the destruction of time. Then man shall look for light in vain; for the stars in the Heavens will be hurled through the immensity of space as if propelled by an evil spirit bent upon the destruction of the universe. Lightnings blinding the eye will rend the skies, and thunder deafening the ear will roll with terrific majesty above their heads. Then indeed will the time have come when they shall say, in the words of Holy Writ: "to the mountains, fall upon us; and the hills, cover us." "And they shall go," says that same inspired word, "into the holes of the rock and into the caves of the earth, from the face and the fear of the Lord, and from the glory of His majesty when He shall rise up to strike the earth."

But terror of terrors! The sign of the Son of Man appears in the Heavens, the sign of hope and of consolation, the sign of salvation to the just. Will there then O Lord, be time for mercy? Has not the reign of mercy yet expired? Alas, it is too late; my mercy has too often addressed you, how often has it called upon you and you would not? How long has it awaited you and you would not? Fall now into the hands of my justice. "How terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God." "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with great power and majesty." No longer the babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, but The Judge surrounded by the majesty of a God, no longer the criminal hooted by the rabble but a Judge praised by the celestial

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choirs; no longer the merciful Jesus dying for us upon the Cross, but the Just Judge dealing out His punishments to an ungrateful people. "For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge, and when He shall examine what shall I answer Him?" At the command of the Angel of the Lord: "Arise ye dead and come to judgment," armies of mortals range themselves in sight, the graves open and throw forth their tenants; millions who have slept the sleep of ages. The sea with sullen roar dashes forth its dead, who for centuries were in its mighty depths. Aye, even hell gives up its dead and clamors to have them back again.

Contemplate that multitude, contemplate the stars that stud the Heavens, the sand on the seashore, and you may have some conception of that vast throng. There meet again the mighty armies that once met in the shock of deadly conflict, there the children of all time and of all nations, of all tribes and of all people are collected; there stands our common Father; the patriarchs and sages of old, the prophets and heroes of God's chosen people; the Fathers and Doctors of the Early Church; in a word there stand all who ever trod the face of the earth. All, without exception, all go to make up that numberless multitude. And O, what dread will seize upon them, the dread of that Judge who is about to weigh the least of their failings. His very appearance will strike them with fear, for they will recognize in Him qualities not to be found in the judges of earth. His infinite knowledge, His inexorable justice, His inexpressible might; these will strike fear into every breast. All will behold in Him a knowledge which will expose their greatest crimes, and their most secret thoughts; a knowledge that cannot be deceived, and that can scrutinize the most hidden recesses of the heart. "For there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed, nor secret that shall not be known." He it is, says St. Gregory; "to whom whatever has been shut is laid open, to whom whatever has been hidden is revealed, to whom silence itself

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confesses, and the mind speaks without a voice," they will behold in Him a justice that is to be avenged upon them, a justice that shall equally expose before the gaze of all the crimes the thoughts and the hearts of each." "Thy justice is justice forever and thy law is the truth."

They will behold in Him a power that is infinite, which can know no resistance; a power that can punish them above all others, and one which is able immediately to execute the sentence. O ye hypocrites, throw off that veil with which your actions have been so long covered; acknowledge your crimes, O sinners, for the time will come when your sins will cry out against you. Do you, impure man, stand forth in all your wicked immodesty, for you can now no longer deceive yourself and think that your crimes are unknown. Parents, behold the sins of your children! Is this the manner in which you cared for those souls that were given to you in the fullness of innocence? Your bad example has caused them to rise up now in judgment against you, your indulgence forces them to condemn you in the presence of your God. And you, drunkard; you who promised again and again to abstain from that cup of sin and shame, you who indulged to the last moment of your life your passion for drink; how shalt it be with you when you shalt thirst in the flames of hell. Then from that ungrateful multitude the cry of despair will go up: Yes Lord, woe unto us, we have all sinned, we have all offended thy divine majesty. But that confession comes too late, the time of mercy has expired, the reign of eternal justice has begun. There was a time when, if you had cast yourselves before your Lord in the Tabernacle and accused yourselves in this manner from the bottom of your heart, He would have taken you to His bosom as a tender Father, He would have told you to be of good cheer, He would have said: "My child, be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee, go now and sin no more." But alas, you have allowed that time to pass, it has gone never to return. In the twinkling of an eye, will your sins appear before

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you in all their malice, and Oh! what a terrible reckoning will be yours, what a terrible account you will have to give; think of it, you who remain a lifetime in the state of sin, think of it you who do nothing for Heaven; what will you say to that Judge who sees all and knows all. What excuse will you offer for the crimes imputed to you on that day when the Judge arises and turning to those on His right tells them in words of unutterable sweetness: "Come possess the kingdom prepared for you." Come you blessed, come you, my friends, come you who have taken up my cross and followed me through life despite the temptations that assailed you, despite the raileries of a cold deceiving world; come enter the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Come you Holy Apostles and confessors, come you crowned martyrs, and spotless virgins, come you poor and meek of earth, come and enjoy the recompense of your virtues. Then turning to those on His left with a look of indignation, and a voice of thunder he will say to them: "Depart you cursed;" you have despised my authority, you have known my commandments and you have trampled them under foot, my graces were offered to you and you abused them; in vain did I come upon earth to show you the way of Salvation; in vain did I bleed for you upon the cross; in vain did I establish my Church; in vain did I offer you my sacraments; in vain did my ministers endeavor to recall you from your life of sin; in vain did I give you all possible helps for your salvation. You have despised all, ignored me and my commands, obeyed your passions and evil desires, become slaves of Satan: "Depart therefore ye cursed into everlasting fire."

Need we go on to describe the cries of despair, the separation of friends, the leavetakings of children from their parents and of parents from their children, and of husbands from their wives, and wives from their husbands. Need we tell you of the joys of the blessed, of the sublime chorus welling up, never to be hushed as long as God re-

mains God. Behold then, my dear friends, something of that last day. These are the events which will accompany that final moment, a moment of happiness for the blessed, but a moment of despair for the wicked.

But when, when shall that day be upon us? "But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not even the Angels of Heaven; but when you shall see these things know that it is nigh, even at the door." The day is unknown to human wisdom, but certain it is that it will come. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my Word shall not pass away." Look about the world to-day and see the falling off from the faith, consider the disorders and the scandals which we witness daily, hear the low rumblings of war that are abroad. Seeing the world cutting loose from Christ and from his Vicar, despising the Church which He set up for their salvation; seeing the entire world on the eve of a revolution which would seem to threaten it with destruction; seeing all this, considering all this, are we going too far in asserting that we fear that the reign of Antichrist has already begun, and that the beginning of the end appears to show upon the horizon.

Practically it matters little when that Great Day will come, but there is one day for which we should be prepared, if on that day we would stand upon the right of our Blessed Lord; that day is the day of our death. For remember that there, upon your bed, while your friends are still about you, while they are preparing your body for burial, judgment will have been passed upon you and your fate for eternity will have been settled. Where then will your conscience place you; this is the practical question. To make it the more so, we ask you; if you were called upon to-day at this very moment to render an account of your stewardship, where would that conscience of yours place you? Would it be to the right or to the left? Would the sentence be: "come you blessed," or: "depart you cursed." Ah, if on that last day you would be found upon the right, prepare for the day of your death, and to

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prepare for your death think seriously and think often of the general judgment, and tremble at the thought. Greater than you have done so. St. Chrysostom was moved to tears at the thought of it, and St. Jerome tells us that he always heard that dreadful trumpet sounding in his ears. Ah, if these thoughts could be kept in view, if we would not allow them to be put aside by the cares and the foolish money-getting of the world, there is not a man in this congregation who might not look forward and assure himself, in so far as we can be certain of our future, that on that day he will be found upon the right of our Blessed Lord, hearing the consoling words: "Come you blessed enjoy the kingdom of my Father prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

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SIN.

“*The wages of sin is death.*” ROM. VI. 23.

WE intend to say a few words to you upon sin, its nature and its enormity. We think this necessary because if you form your conscience it is necessary that you should know what sin is so that you may avoid it. We think it necessary because there are many persons who come to Confession and accuse themselves of things that are not sins in their particular case, and remain silent about those which are really sins. In order then that you may have a true conscience, that is, in order that you may be able to form a true judgment and be able to say whether or not you have committed a sin in this or that particular case; let us first inquire into the nature of sin, and its different kinds. In order that we may have an abhorrence and an aversion for sin, let us consider the enormity of sin. What then is sin?

This is the question the Catechism puts to us in our youth, and the answer is that sin is any wilful thought, word, or deed against, or omission of the law of God. Consequently whenever we go to Confession there are four things that we have to examine ourselves upon particularly. First of all: what are our thoughts, are they impure, uncharitable or revengeful, do we harbor feelings of anger, of hatred and revenge? Are we wishing that

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we had the opportunities of this or that particular sin; for we must remember that Jesus Christ Himself has told us that such a one hath already committed sin in his heart. What are our words, to what use do we put our tongues? In how many ways do we abuse the beautiful faculty of language which God has given us? Are our words blasphemous, do they shock the ear of the modest and pure of heart? Are they like the edged sword cutting and hurting the tender feelings of others, are they sowing discord and dissension among friends and neighbors? Our deeds and omissions what are they, what are our actions with regard to God? Are we endeavoring to do all that He expects of us, and with regard to our neighbors are we doing all that God requires of us? Do we omit doing that we should do in virtue of our state of life; and let me remind you my friends that persons scarcely ever think of examining themselves upon the omission of their different duties. Parents for instance scarcely ever think of asking themselves whether they are sure their children learn their prayers, whether or not their children go to Mass and Sunday School. So much then for the subject matter of your examination when you come to Confession. Our thoughts, our words, our deeds and omissions, all must be examined into.

But there is one very important word that we must not forget to explain in the definition which is given of sin, and that is the word wilful, our thoughts, our words, and deeds must be wilful violations of God's law otherwise they are not sins, now please bear in mind that you never commit a sin in thought, word or deed unless that thought, word or deed be a wilful violation of God's law. If we bear this in mind we will not be confusing and confounding temptations with sin. None of us is above and beyond temptation, even Christ allowed Himself to be tempted. One will have one sort of temptation, another person will have another sort of temptation, but temptation is not sin, it is only giving way wilfully to the temptation that makes

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sin. Hence in examining our thoughts we must see if they were wilful violations of all of God's laws, we must see whether or not we may have placed ourselves wilfully in the way of sin, or whether we attempted to rid ourselves of the temptation by prayers or diverting our mind, if not, very likely we have sinned, for we have at least exposed ourselves to the danger of falling. So too in examining our words, we must see if they were wilfully uttered, and here we must guard against a mistake into which people who are in the habit of using sinful language, or of cursing or swearing might be led. For instance a young man who has been in the habit of swearing for months or years, certainly does not think of what he is saying, very often when he makes use at times of some terrible oath. And the reason he does not advert to it is because he has become so accustomed to it that oaths and curses slip from him before he is aware of it. Now such a one might say to himself when I curse or swear I do not mean it, I do not do it wilfully and therefore I do not sin, but no, such is not the case, that person sins, he has formed a habit of swearing and he knows that he has acquired a habit of swearing and yet he does not endeavor to break himself of it. That person is guilty for he is bound and obliged to overcome the bad habit that he has fallen into.

So when we examine ourselves upon our actions we must likewise ask ourselves if they are wilful violations of the law. Now upon this matter it is very strange into what mistakes people sometimes fall, for instance they may accuse themselves in confession that they have missed Mass some three or four times since they last went to confession, and on inquiry sickness is often the cause. Now surely staying away from Mass when sick is not wilful and therefore not a sin and need not be mentioned in confession. Or again; a mother has a sick child which she cannot leave. In cases of this kind the precept of Charity binds the mother to care for her child. There are two precepts, the precept of Charity, binding the Mother to care for her in-

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fant; and the precept of the Church, binding her to hear Mass; and she cannot do both; she asks herself which is the higher law, the law of God or the law of the Church? and immediately her conscience will tell her the law of God, the law of Charity which obliges us to minister to the wants of others when in need. If both precepts be the law of God, then your conscience will determine for you from the circumstances which you should follow, but always remember that God does not require impossibilities from you and that consequently whenever you have two duties to perform such as I have mentioned, God does not require you to do both, which would be impossible and consequently you do not sin when you omit one of them.

Sin then is any wilful violation of God's law. But how many kinds of sin are there? There are two kinds of sin, Original sin and Actual sin. Original Sin is the sin in which we are born, the sin which is taken away in Baptism when we are made Christians and Children of God. Actual Sin is divided into mortal and venial sin. Now in confession we are obliged under pain of making a bad confession to tell all mortal sins, but not so with venial sin. It is always better to tell even all venial sins in confession, though if we conceal a venial sin in confession yet our confession would not be bad if we had the other dispositions. The enormity of mortal sin and the offence which is offered to God by one who commits it is something that the mind of man will never be able to conceive, for to understand that, we would have to comprehend the Infinite attributes of God, we would have to comprehend God Himself. Sin is an act of treason, it is a defiance that is hurled by the creature at the Creator, it is man in his littleness striving to usurp the greatness of God. It is man's will substituted for God's will, it is man denying his dependency on God; say what we will, we cannot measure its enormity, we cannot find words to express it, we have to seek some other means to arrive at the knowledge of the enormity of Mortal sin. If we would ascertain the gravity of an offence

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committed against the state, we would ask what punishment it inflicted upon the culprit, if we were told that he received for a punishment but the short term of ten or twelve days in a prison we would think his offence a trifling one, whereas if we were told that he received as a punishment, to be condemned to a dark dungeon for life we would say that his crime must be a grievous one, supposing as we do that the state acted justly in inflicting the punishment. Now in the same manner if we would have an idea of the enormity of mortal sin let us likewise ask in what way does God punish the crime of mortal sin, and as God is just, so we can form some idea of the gravity of that offence from the manner in which He has punished this sin even in this world.

Why is it that to-day we see so much misery in the world, so that no matter what men do, no matter how they seek to relieve the distressed, still men groan under ills and misfortunes, since first the world began? The philanthropist boasts that his theory will afford happiness to mankind. The Economist in his studies has found out a way of equalizing the supply and the demands of individuals so that men will be happy. The Socialists in our day trumpet forth an era of prosperity for the world, and tell us that there will be no more wars, no more human butcheries, that the difference of people will be settled by arbitration, all this we are told so confidentially that the originators of such views grow angry with us if we dare to contradict them. They are men well versed in the sciences, they are intelligent, the leaders of thought and should be respected for their good intentions, but in theorizing they forget one thing, they omit one fact; they forget that the curse of God is upon the world in consequence of the first sin; they forget that God has said to all mankind in the person of Adam, "because thou hast harkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life: thorns

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and thistles shall it bring forth to thee and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken." Sin is upon the world and with sin the curse, and the curse is punishment, so that men, do what they will, cannot banish misery from the world, the ills of life will ever remain and as in the past so in the future, generations yet unborn shall endure famine, war, pestilence and death, even as every age has done since first the flight of time began. Here then at a mere glance we have a wonderful idea of the gravity of mortal sin for we see that the misery and the sufferings of this life are all the consequences of that one sin committed by our first parents.

But if we take up particular instances of punishment that are given us in the Scriptures we will be able to realize to some extent the hatred which God bears it on account of its enormity. What was it that brought on the terrible deluge that we read of when the whole world was buried under the angry waters of the heavens. None but one single family escaped that terrible scourge, the infant just opening its eyes upon the world, the young child upon whom reason was just beginning to dawn, the aged and the infirm, the sick and those in the possession of buoyancy of life, all were swept from the face of the earth, because as the Scripture tells us God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth and that all the thoughts of the heart were bent upon evil and therefore it repented Him that He had made man, and being inwardly touched with sorrow of heart He said, I will destroy man whom I have made from the face of the earth. Again when the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was multiplied and became exceedingly grievous the Lord we are told could no longer bear with it, and He cried to heaven for vengeance, and the Lord rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone: and He destroyed those cities and all the country about, all the inhabitants of the cities and all things that spring from the earth. Again we read that

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when Core and his companions rose up against Moses and Aaron who had been appointed by God Himself over the people, and when they sought to usurp the priesthood, we are told that the earth broke asunder, and her mouth opened and devoured them with all their substances and they went down alive into hell. From these and many like examples that the Scripture gives us can we ever imagine or portray the guilt of mortal sin in the sight of God.

There is one other punishment with which the punishment of this life cannot be compared, the punishment which was visited upon Core and his companions viz: that they went down alive into hell. Hell is a prison that sin has made for those who die without being in the state of grace, and of its punishments, imagination in its highest flights can never give us an idea. We know that once in that dreadful abode the soul is ever deprived of the sight of God, and that it is tormented by fire; we know moreover that it is everlasting in its duration that it will remain as long as God remains God, so long as heaven remains with its joys with the bright souls who have won for themselves its glory by struggling upon this world for a few short years, so long will hell endure with its wails, with its blighted souls who forfeited the everlasting joys of Heaven for the few pleasures of earth. Say what we will we cannot exaggerate its torments no more than we can exaggerate the joys of Heaven and we are certain that we cannot exaggerate the joys of Heaven, for St. Paul tells us "that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." And so in like manner might we say, "that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the punishments prepared for the reprobate." But even with all this we have not the highest idea that we can form of the enormity of mortal sin, to study it we must ascend the heights of Calvary and gaze upon the cross of Christ.

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Once the human race had fallen in the person of Adam, God in His justice might have left us, as He left the fallen angels to their unhappy doom, but God the Son the Second Person of the blessed Trinity in His love and His mercy would become man still remaining God, and He would pay for us the debt demanded for our forgiveness, and what was the debt? Why that He should become a victim, a holocaust to be offered up for the sins of the world; in this way He would purchase for us means whereby we might obtain our salvation if we would not fail to use those means. Count the sum that was paid for our redemption and you will find that you were ransomed not "with corruptible gold or silver," but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.

Count then His sorrows and His suffering and reflect upon the fact that they are the sorrows and sufferings of a God-man, and you can estimate more closely the malice and heinousness of the sin. He comes into this world and comes as a beggar, "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." He is driven from the habitations of men and born in a cold stable, and as He comes into the world in the form of a beggar so too does he depart from the world, for the grave in which He is buried is not His own; take up His hidden life of thirty years and consider Him laboring for His daily sustenance even as the poorest upon earth, struggling day after day with His foster father to keep starvation from the door. Again His years of public life what were they? His was a life of labor, He was going about doing good, curing the sick and the infirm, healing the lame and the blind, going to the grave and commanding the dead to quit their winding sheets, and for all this no thanks, but insults and blasphemies, surrounded by men who sought to ensnare Him in His speech or maintain that He did these wonders through the power of the devil. To-day we find Him preaching to crowds on the mountain side, calling them to repentance, and on the morrow we

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find Him fatigued and worn out reclining on the deck of a little vessel snatching a few hours of sleep. He was doing the will of His father, He was saving souls and this was His food and rest, but yet these sacrifices were not sufficient; He must enter upon His passion, He must die ere the debt be paid for man's redemption. Count them, one by one, His dreadful torments from His agony in the garden till He expires upon the cross, behold him buffeted, blind-folded, spit upon; see Him scourged at the pillar, tormented with a crown of thorns, and nailed to a disgraceful cross and yet despite all this consider the humility, the meekness, the patience and above all the infinite love for our souls, with which He bears these sufferings. Behold to what an extent His love for us goes, when He bows down His head and expires upon the cross for our salvation, and then ask, why this terrible tragedy of suffering and blood? The answer comes, for sin, for your sins, and for mine.

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CONDITION FOR THE WORTHY RECEPTION OF HOLY
COMMUNION.

“ But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

1 COR. XI. 28, 29.

THERE is an old lesson that you have often heard in your youth, an old lesson that you have often glanced at in your Catechisms. We are asked there with what dispositions we should receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist and we are told that the dispositions are two fold; certain dispositions of the body and certain dispositions of the soul. Now the dispositions of the body are familiar to us all; we know what they are, and hence we will barely mention them. In the first place we must be fasting from midnight, we must neither eat nor drink anything whatever from midnight, till we have communicated; then, and then only, are we allowed to break our fast; hence, if by accident and through forgetfulness we should have taken any food or drink, no matter how small the quantity may be, if we have swallowed it we should abstain from going to Holy Communion on that day under pain of committing mortal sin. Now it is strange what questions are asked the priests many times upon this point; you will be told for instance sometimes by a person that they accidentally held a pin in their mouth for a few

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moments and the question comes, "Can I go to Communion?" or another will say "I washed my mouth, can I go to Holy Communion?" Now these are questions that are asked frequently and let the answer be known once and for all that you do not break your fast unless you swallowed some food or drank some liquid; and consequently, you may and can communicate, whenever you do not eat or drink. But if we swallow any food, or drink any liquid as we said before, no matter how small the quantity may be, we break our fast and must not communicate that morning. There is but one single exception to this rule and this is when a person is sick and in danger of death, then, and then only, Holy Communion may be administered to the sick person without fasting; but only to those who are sick and in danger of death. This is another point with which people would seem to be familiar; but yet, a priest may go on a sick call this evening, and he may tell the people of that house that he is coming in the morning with the Blessed Sacrament, that the person need not fast, and yet he may not get there before noon of the following day and he will still find the person fasting; hence, the best thing to do in such cases is to ask the priest before leaving, whether or not the person is to fast till he comes the following day. And now while speaking of this we may tell you that there is a great show of negligence on the part of people who come to us to visit their sick. They come to the house and leave the message that the person is very sick; dangerously ill; they are told that the priest will go there immediately; that he will bring the Blessed Sacrament with him, and that he will anoint the person. In a few hours after, the priest calls and there is not a single thing prepared for him; in fact, there are people who do not seem to know that he requires anything; if they were told that some grand personage were going to pay them a visit, or some charitable lady, they would be all anxiety in preparing the house, in having it look neat and tidy for the coming of such a one;

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but when they are told that the Blessed Sacrament, and the Holy Oils are going to be brought there, when they are told that Jesus Christ Himself is coming to visit them, there is not a single thing prepared. The priest has to stand there, and get them to spread a clean cloth upon the table; he has to ask for Holy Water, and there is a chase to a neighbor's house for it; he asks for a candle and that too has to be borrowed, he asks for a few drops of fresh water to give the sick person after Holy Communion to enable him to swallow the consecrated particle, and that too has to be sent after. This is no exaggerated picture, it is the experience of any priest who has gone but on a few sick calls; and it is too bad that it should be so. You may excuse it, and say that the sickness was sudden; that it was for want of thought and so on; but, what excuse will you offer for the house in which you can not find a drop of Holy Water? What excuse for not having a single Blessed Candle in the house? These are things that cannot be excused. A Blessed Candle may do you for years and Holy Water can be procured at any time; hence, there is no excuse for such negligence.

But if we have to condemn the negligence of some, we have at the same time to commend the thoughtfulness of others, of people who are filled with love for our Blessed Lord. You will enter their homes and it is a pleasure to bring them the Blessed Sacrament for you will find the little oratory erected, with not a candle but with candles; you will find it adorned with flowers, and the neatness of the linens that are placed upon the table compare with the neatness of the church tabernacle. These are people who know the teachings of the church, people with the strong faith of the Apostles and of the early Christians; people whose faith expresses the love that is within their hearts for the Blessed Sacrament.

In the second place, what are the dispositions of the soul? With what sentiments should we approach Holy Communion, in order that it may be profitable and that

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we may experience its effects? We have but to come to Our Blessed Lord as He comes to us in this mystery of His love; He comes to us, in all His infinite perfections; He comes in His infinite wisdom, comes in His infinite purity, comes in His infinite greatness, comes in His infinite goodness. Now what do these infinite perfections of God demand of us? Consider His wisdom and His knowledge. He knows all things; the past that for us is gone, never to return; the present which is but a passing moment; the future with its train of possible revelations; all this is actually present before the mind of God. It is not limited, the most minute actions of individual men, the hidden thoughts of the heart, the thoughts of Angel, Archangel and Seraphim, all are before Him, nothing escapes His all-seeing eye; nothing is beyond His infinite comprehension; He is wisdom itself. How then are we to honor this perfection of God in the Blessed Sacrament?

We may reason from analogy and we shall find that we must honor it by faith. If we were shown a man who had explored the whole field of learning; who had made a thorough study of history; whose mind remembered every date and incident that occurred since the days of Herodotus; a man who had studied and so sounded the depths of every system of philosophy, conflicting as they are; a man who had read the sciences with a critical judgment, carefully discriminating between truth and speculation; if we were shown such a man, in what greater way could we acknowledge his wisdom than by receiving with all due deference and without contradiction whatever he might have to say upon these different subjects. So in like manner when we wish to honor the wisdom, the knowledge of Christ, we have to bow our heads in submission, saying: "I believe; God help thou my unbelief," and therefore since thou who knowest all things, dost say to me: "This is my body, this is my blood," without question or contradiction, I receive it as the truth,

because it proceeds from one who cannot deceive. My faith, my belief, must honor the infinite wisdom concealed beneath the sacramental species; I must let pass before my mind's eye that grandest of scenes, in the life of Our Blessed Lord, when seated for the last time He took bread into His venerable hands and breaking it said: "This is my body; take ye and eat;" and taking the chalice filled with wine, he said: "this is my blood which shall be shed for you, and for many unto the remission of sins; take ye and drink." I must let that scene pass before me, and I must study the firm faith of the Apostles who took the species of bread and ate; who took the species of wine and drank; not doubting the words of Christ; not questioning his assertion and like them too I must receive Holy Communion: firmly believing as they believed, that I am receiving the second person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus Christ true God and true Man; the same Christ who was born in a stable, the same Christ who lived thirty-three years upon earth, the same Christ who died the ignominious death of the cross amid the rocks of Calvary. This must be my faith and my conviction every time that I kneel before the altar to receive the Blessed Sacrament. And before that lively faith that bids me see my God beneath the Sacramental species, all coldness and indifference will disappear and I will long to be united to my God.

But not only does our Blessed Lord come in His wisdom; He likewise comes in His infinite Purity. And to honor that perfection we must approach Him cleansed from all defilement; we must approach Him in a pure and holy manner. In the old law we read that when God gave the commandments to Moses upon Sinai He ordered Moses to tell the people to purify their souls and bodies: and during two days to wash their garments and arrange them in order, for on the third day He would come on the mountain. And again, we read that when the prophet Isaiah was sent to announce the word of God it was nec-

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essary for an Angel to purify his lips with a burning coal. Now if such were the purity and the sanctity required of the Israelites when they stood upon the mountain on which the law was given; and if the tongue of Isaiah was to be sanctified by an Angel before he should announce the word of God, what should be the sanctity of the Christian who receives upon his tongue and into his heart the very living God Himself. If the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God had to be born free from the stain of original sin, if her soul had to be adorned with all the graces that filled the souls of Angels, Archangels, and Cherubim in heaven: if she had to be sanctified in order that she might bear our Blessed Lord in her virginal womb; what should be the sanctity and holiness of the soul who receives Him not once, or twice, but monthly and weekly? What graces should adorn that soul? What purity should shine forth from it. Should not that soul reflect the very beauty and purity of heaven since it becomes the abode, the dwelling place of God Himself? Think of this, you who endeavor to approach Holy Communion frequently, and yet have the habit of defiling your souls with sins of impurity whether of thought or of action; think of this, you who may be going to confession and yet willfully concealing some mortal sin, that you may have had the misfortune to commit; think of it, you who spend but little time or take but little trouble in examining your conscience before going to the Sacrament of Penance; think of it, you who kneel and receive that body upon your tongues, and then go away and in a few short hours make use of that sanctified member of your body in cursing or blaspheming, or in uttering words that bring a blush to the cheek; think of it, one and all; think of the great purity that should adorn the soul lest you go away with a condemnation of the Apostle upon you. "Prove yourself before receiving," that is to say, confess your sins; purify your souls in the Sacrament of Penance and then you will not be guilty of the body and blood of

our Lord. You have heard of the punishment that fell upon those who looked into the Ark; you have heard of Oza who was struck dead for touching it with profane hands; you have heard of Baltshazzar that mighty king who in the midst of the banquet, when heated with wine calls for the gold and silver vessels that his father had stolen from the temple of Jerusalem to be brought in, that his guests might drink from them. Suddenly the face of the great king grows pallid; his eyes are fixed and there a mysterious hand, despite the revelry, is seen writing his condemnation on the wall *Mane, Thecel, Phares*. *Mane*, God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it; *Thecel*, Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; *Phares*, thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. And that night saw the verification of the prophecy; for on that night Baltshazzar was slain. If such was the punishment decreed against this king for desecrating the sacred vessels of the temple; if Oza was struck dead for touching the ark and if two of the men and fifty thousand of the common people were slain because they looked into the ark through curiosity, in what manner will God punish the soul that is guilty of desecrating not the vessels used in the sacrifice of Mass, but desecrating the sacred mysteries themselves; "guilty" as St. Paul says "of the body and blood of Christ;" guilty even as Judas was of betraying their Lord and Saviour into the hands of the enemies for they take Him who is sanctity and purity itself, and enclose Him within a breast that is defiled by sin. The punishment will be as He declared by the voice of the Apostle "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself;" that is to say, eateth and drinketh what will prove his own damnation.

But our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist not only comes in His Wisdom and His Purity, He likewise comes in His Greatness and in His Majesty; comes as the Creator of the universe; comes as the King of kings, the Ruler of

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rulers. What sentiment of the human heart will do honor to His infinite majesty. If to-morrow we were told that some great personage was to call upon us, to remain with us for some time; how would we entertain our guest? would we not honor his dignity by our respect and reverence; would we not declare time and again that he honored us overmuch by visiting us, that we were sorry that our means would not permit us to greet him as his station demanded? Well, just so, must we act when we receive Holy Communion. Realize the fact that we are receiving the God of heaven, the Creator of all things; we must bow down in humility before Him; we must humble ourselves telling Him of our sorrow in not being able to entertain Him as God deserves to be entertained. Ah! behold the humility of St. John the Baptist! When our Blessed Lord comes to him to be baptized, confounded and astonished, he stays our Blessed Lord upon the banks of the Jordan and says to Him "I ought to be baptised by Thee and comest Thou to me," and again speaking of Him he declares that he is not worthy to open the latchet of His shoe. Behold the humility of St. Elizabeth and consider how she thought herself honored. When our Blessed Lady went to visit her no sooner had the Blessed Virgin entered the door than she humbly saluted her saying "Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should visit me." If such was the humility of St. John who the Scriptures tell us, was the greatest born among men; if such was the humility of St. Elizabeth when the Blessed Virgin visited her; what would have been their humility had they received our Blessed Lord Himself in this adorable Sacrament of the altar; what should our humility be when we receive a visit from our Blessed Lord in this great Sacrament of His Love. Should we not repeat with the Priest at the altar when he turns around and faces the people, holding the sacred Host in his hand; should we not repeat the words, "*Domine non sum dignus*" from the very bottom of our hearts. "O Lord I am not worthy,"

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“I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word and my soul shall be healed.” I am not worthy, nor should I dare approach were it not my God, that thou hast commanded me to eat Thy body, and to drink Thy blood; therefore do I approach Thee, as one acting from obedience, and from love; as one fully conscious of my littleness, and of Thy greatness; of my weakness and of Thy strength. I approach in order that I may acknowledge my dependence upon Thee, and receive strength from Thee to overcome the enemies of my salvation.

But not only does He come in His wisdom and in His Purity and his Greatness, but our Blessed Lord comes to us, in His Goodness and in His Love. Imagine all that love has ever accomplished in this world; the sacrifices it may have made; the works it may have performed. Take up the fictions of the poets and the novelists; admire all that this passion has impelled men to do from the beginning and all that the novelist and the poet have made it accomplish, in the field of fiction. The love of a husband for his wife, of a wife for her husband; picture the love of a mother for her child, and the love of a child for its mother: imagine the love of the Angels and the Choirs of heaven for God; descend to earth and realize if you can the love of the Saints for their Redeemer; the ardent love that inflamed the breast of a Francis Xavier to pierce into the wilds of Africa; nay summon up the love of the Blessed Virgin for Our Dear Lord; that love, that far surpassed all human love; that far surpassed the love of Angels and of men, and you have but a very insignificant idea of the love of Jesus Christ for us; for love led Him to become man, a mystery that we could never understand, if we do not explain it by saying that He loved us with His love. Love led Him to remain with us for thirty-three years; it led Him to die for us; it led Him to multiply Himself on this world; to place Himself in the hands of every priest, and upon every altar, whether

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it be in the grand cathedral, surrounded by all the pomp of ceremony, or whether it be under the hedge, with a few followers, trembling lest they may be caught by their persecutors, while assisting at the Sacrifice. It leads Him to unite Himself in a manner that has never been known before; to become our very food; to become our very drink; it is a love that the mind of man cannot conceive, that the words of man cannot portray; for it is a love that is Divine, a love that is beyond us, above us; and when we eulogize it we can but pronounce what God Himself has said of the highest type of love, "greater love than this no man hath; than that he lay down his life for his fellow man;" and that, God did for us, when He died upon the cross.

How are we to honor this attribute of Love in the Blessed Sacrament? Will it not be by returning our love, by showing Him that we love Him? This is the crown of all, The crown of Faith, of Purity and of Humility, is to love Jesus Christ in this adorable Sacrament. But how are we to know that we love Him? How are we to love Him? There is but one way, we must have the desire of being in His company; we must receive Him frequently into our hearts; we will not, nor can we learn to love Him, by staying away; we must draw nigh, study His beauties, and His love for us; then unconsciously, our hearts will glow with love. This was the manner in which the saints learned to love our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist; they appreciated fully His great love for them, and the poorest return that they could then make, was their own love. If we were asked what it was that made St. Catherine of Genoa exclaim when the priest would administer Holy Communion to her "Quick, quick, place it in my heart since it is my food." We would answer that it was her great love for Him: If we were asked why it was that St. Catherine of Genoa would faint away and seem upon the very point of death, when she communicated, we would say, that it was the longing desire which she had to

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be united to God; and if we were asked what it was that led St. Wenceslaus the king of Bohemia, through the snow-covered streets at midnight barefooted, we would say that it was his love for Jesus Christ that taught him to wend his way to the church when it was deserted by others; and if we were asked, how did these servants of God obtain this wonderful love for Christ, we would say that they studied and appreciated the love of God for the creature; and saw that there could be but one way to repay that great love of God for mankind viz. by loving Him in return. Approach then, this holy Sacrament frequently, do not wait for certain times and periods, the time of Easter and of Christmas: but come frequently, and out of love for our dear Lord, and when you do approach, come with that lively faith, which sees Jesus Christ beneath the sacramental veils; come with that purity of heart, and freedom from sin, which makes the angels rejoice in heaven; come with that humility, which adorned the soul of the Blessed Virgin; come with that love, which shone forth in the lives of the great saints of God; and then you will go away, repeating the words of the canticle of the Blessed Virgin, when she became the spouse of the Holy Ghost. "*Magnificat anima mea Dominus,*" My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

XLIV. SERMON.

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“ The patient man is greater than the strong man, and he who rules his soul, greater than he who takes cities.

PROV. XVI. 32.

WE have often heard, that he who conquers himself is the greatest of victors. But like so many other great truths that are expressed daily, we may have never asked its meaning, and we may have never understood how it is, that he who conquers self is really greater than he who takes cities. If we would appreciate the true worth of a conqueror we would consider his personal courage and bravery; we would view the enemy against whom his forces marched; and, finally, we would estimate the possessions he had acquired by his legitimate expedition and in proportion as the enemy was powerful and the victory gained was valuable, we would grant him the title of a great and powerful conqueror. So, too, when we come to investigate the truth of the text that we have read for you, we must consider the energy of the man in conquering himself, the enemy with which he has to cope, and the cause for which he fights.

We are told in Holy Writ that the life of man is a warfare upon the earth. We have then to know our enemy and we will find that the greatest enemy against which we have to contend are the passions. Here then is the

battle field. The cause for which we fight is the salvation of our immortal souls. All is staked upon the result; "For what will it profit you to gain the world and lose the soul?" What would fortune avail us? What would riches, what would possessions, what would the honor of a name, if we lose that for which we live, if we lose that for which we were created. Our enemy is one who will not compromise, our enemy is one who cannot be got rid of, for the passions deeply rooted in our nature; those passionate emotions of the soul indifferent in themselves, and inclining either to good or evil, they must conquer or be conquered. What, then, are we to do with the passions? Are we to seek to annihilate them, to crush them out of existence? If so, virtue will no longer merit a reward: for virtue would be then a victory without a battle. Stifle them and we no longer achieve anything that is great or good; root them from the heart of man and his victories are not worthy of reward nor his actions deserving of punishment. How then are we to subdue the enemies of our salvation? How are we to make them our friends? How can we use them so as to attain salvation and become possessors of a heavenly kingdom?

First of all we are to subject them to the teaching of faith. And under this head we will see the wonderful works of the Saints in mastering them. And at the same time we will view the many evils that have befallen mankind when the passions become dominant. And secondly, we will conclude that all the passions, without exception, must be subjected to those same monarchs of man Faith and Reason under pain or danger of losing our immortal souls. The will, then, enlightened by Faith and Reason must be the mistress of the passions she must be the queen of the soul and regulate those movements of the heart ever turning them to good, and estranging them from evil. We must guard against the mistake that some christian souls fall into. There are times when the mind is agitated and troubled; filled with phantasms that the soul recoils from.

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The heart filled with jealous feelings and dislikes; the will perfect master of itself, would banish those feelings, destroy those agitations and restore tranquility to the mind, it would not for the world give way deliberately to the enemies that are against it; and still there are persons who then think that their passions have overcome them; that they have been sinning; that they have become objects of hatred in God's sight. We must ever remember that when sin is committed, that it is the will that commits it. The sin lies not in the thought or in the desire or in the inclination to do evil, but in the will's consenting to the evil, or in the will's not resenting that thought, desire or inclination. Here it is, within this kingdom, that the battle is lost or won. Here it is, that victories are gained or lost every moment fraught with more importance than the conquest of the greatest victors. Well indeed, did the saints understand this; they fully understood that once the will was convinced by Faith, and by Reason, that God must be obeyed, it must never yield, no matter what the power or passion that was brought to bear against it. Examine the lives of those men, who lived voluntary exiles from the haunts of men; those thousands who went into the desert; among them were men who had tasted of all earth's pleasures; among them were men who had indulged in all excesses; over whom the passions had complete sway; and months and years after they had quitted the scenes of pleasure and of sensual gratification the old passions and inclinations for forbidden joys, would well up within them; but still they were not shaken; as they had been slaves of their passions, so must now their passions become slaves of their will. Such was the beginning of monastic institutions and who could tell the benefits they conferred upon the human race: they were the civilizers in the hands of God, of nations; virtues till then unknown to the world began to flourish; humility, or the proper appreciation of one's self in the light of heaven, took the place of pride; charity, or the proper respect that man

should entertain for man uprooted the pagan idea of selfishness; and purity, that virtue that the world strove in vain to keep alive in the hearts of mankind, succeeded in destroying the shameful practice of the Saturnalia. Such were the virtues we find in those who obtained the mastery over their passions: tempests and storms might sweep over their souls, but their wills were strengthened by God's grace and remained firmly attached to virtue. Nor could they be subjected by any external power. Passion from within had assailed them but could not subdue them. The tortures that persecution could invent would be brought to bear upon them; they were called upon to kneel and worship idols; they were asked to trample on the sign of salvation; to offer incense to the gods of the empire; they were told if they would not consent, persecution would invent tortures that would force them; they would be thrown to wild beasts; they would be placed upon the rack or wheel; and despite those threats armies of young virgins, young men, and the aged bowed down with years, asked for the crown of martyrdom; there was no terror that could appall them; no punishment that could shake their will; "We are christians, and must die, rather than betray our consciences; true, in putting us to death we leave all that we possess in the world, we depart from friends and relatives, our property will be confiscated, but still these thoughts that would lead us to play the coward must be stifled; We sacrifice the spirit of avarice, that would lead us to live and enjoy what we possess; we sacrifice the spirit of self, that tells us to consent to the tempter and receive the favors of the emperor; we sacrifice the spirit of pride, that asks us to partake of worldly honors, and of worldly favor as long as we may; and we sacrifice life itself, rather than allow our wills to betray our consciences; for what would all these profit us if we lose our immortal soul."

But what did their deaths avail the world? By that sacrifice of self they conquered the world; each life that was taken was another proof of the Divinity of Christ

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and of His holy religion; and when men were to ask hundreds of years after, for a proof of the Divinity of Christ, they would be told of those who shed their blood in testimony of that truth: they gave to the world the example of men who were truly courageous; of men, who when their wills were fully convinced of the manner in which they should serve Almighty God would sacrifice every interest and passion rather than give up their belief.

Take up the life of a Francis Xavier and who could estimate the amount of good performed by that saint; yet see him as a young man; he is ambitious and cares for nothing but worldly science; he obtains a professorship of Philosophy in Paris, and filled with pride and vain glory, he cares for nothing but fame; he would be known to the world as a great scholar; crowds of young men press about his chair, listen to his learned lectures and applaud him for his success; here it was that St. Ignatius met him; he saw the brilliancy of the young man, listened to his discourses, admired his worth and he thought within himself, could this young man be brought to labor for the glory of God, instead of his own glory, how much good he might accomplish. He assailed him with that one text of Sacred Writ "What good will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul." At first the young Xavier began to ridicule Ignatius, and told him that the meanness and poverty he lived in, betokened a lowness of soul that was unworthy of a man. But St. Ignatius would repeat his text and Xavier knowing that he was born of wealthy parents, began to see the sincerity of Ignatius. He thought of his words, he listened to some of his discourses and soon the light of grace, began to dawn in his soul. There was a struggle, but finally he conquered; and placing himself under the wise counsel of Ignatius, he won the victory over self; he learned that his predominant passion was vain glory; he began to practice the virtue of humility, by ascribing all that he possessed to God and henceforth, that passion for vain glory, became a passion

in Xavier for the glory of God ; so that he is now known to the world, as St. Francis Xavier the Apostle of the Indies, and though he died at the age of forty-six history tells us that he gained over no less than seven hundred thousand converts to the faith.

So too, if we take up other lives, we shall find that the whole aim of the saints, was to subject their passions to faith and reason ; they would not destroy them, but they would subdue them ; thus Francis of Sales from being the most irascible would become the mildest and meekest of men ; and yet, the most firm ; thus too, St. Teresa, the careless and undevout young girl, would be known to the world for her fervor. Thus, are we of our day especially taught a great lesson, and one that we should treasure up in our hearts. The excuse of to-day is that we cannot give up our passions, and habits, that we cannot subdue them. If so, how is it that the saints could overcome their inclinations ; were they not spirit and matter as we are ? Were they not thrown in the same occasions of sin that we are ? Had they other means than we have ? Were they not members of the same church ? Did they not partake of the same sacraments ? O my friends, for them God did no more than for us ; but the real reason, why we do not give up this or that particular vice is, that we do not convince ourselves of the folly of serving our passions and the world and hence unmerciful masters as they are, they make us their slaves.

But let us glance at the evils that fall upon the human race, when the passions become dominant in man ; we have seen the wonderful effects that the saints wrought in conquering these emotions of the soul, when inclining to evil. Here the passions are to be considered as not controlled ; like elements of fire and water, they are useful if properly governed, but destructive, if not under a master's hand, and we may look for terrible results. Let us then take pride and sensuality, the two great passions of the human soul, to establish the interminable effects that follow

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when the passions of man are not duly restrained. Pride, why, it was the first of sins; it drove our first parents from Eden, and brought all the ills that human flesh is heir to upon mankind. The first murder, that of Abel by his brother Cain, how was it brought about? By the sin of pride. The first family of the human race must count a fratricide, and his race is to be henceforth cursed. Again examine this passion, as the cause of nations lapsing into error and idolatry. They must needs raise a tower that will touch the heavens; but in their pride their language is confounded, and we have the dispersion of peoples. Traditions are lost, and the world witnesses nations that are idolatrous. Again, what has been the cause of the opposition to Christ's church throughout the world for centuries? The passion of pride would not give way to authority, and hence we have not only the oppositions of nations to Christ's church, but a defection from the faith. Why is it that Russia is Schismatic? Why is England to-day Protestant England? Why was it that a Becket and a More were executed? Because they would not recognize the supremacy of the king in spirituals, and hence England becomes Protestant. Why is it that the heads of nations to-day, are set against the vicar of Christ upon earth? It is the old ungovernable passion of pride, that will not down, that will not submit to Christ's vicar no more than it did to God himself in heaven, when Lucifer uttered for the first time, the "*non serviam*," "I will not serve" which has ever since been repeated by his agents.

Consider that other passion, which has brought such terrible destruction, time and time again, upon the human family. It is a passion that reduces man lower than the beasts of the field, and from the very creation of the world, men seem to have made themselves its voluntary slaves. Open the Old Testament, and you will read in the sixth chapter of the first book, that of Genesis, that God was sorry that He had made man. "It repented

Him that He had made man upon the earth, and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said ; I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man even to beasts ; from the creeping thing even to the fowls of the air ; for it repenteth me that I have made them." Mark those last words, " God repented that He had made man." Why ? For " all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." Is not this remarkable ? God is not said to have repented when Lucifer fell, and carried with him a third of the heavenly spirits. Neither is He said to have repented when man fell, and by his fall entailed misery upon the whole human race, nor did He repent when Cain killed Abel, but only when all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, when man was given up to his lusts, and wallowed in the beastly passion of sensuality, then it was that God repented and destroyed the human race by the deluge. Again read in that same book of the destruction of Sodom and Gormorrah. Inquire into the reason for such punishment and you will be told that it was a punishment decreed by Almighty God on account of the sins that were committed there. Read the history of that great king of the Israelites, David, and you will find that after he gives way to the passion of impurity, he becomes a murderer. Read the history of Solomon, the wisest of Sovereigns ; one to whom God had given the gift of wisdom as a special favor, blinded by passion he sins, and hard upon his crime follows the sin of idolatry. He who knew more of God than other men, kneels and worships idols.

But to come nearer to our own day. What was the cause of the great reformation ? If you take up the lives of the first reformers and read them, you will have to ascribe sensuality after pride, as one of the causes of that secession from the church in the sixteenth century. This might well be developed, and particulars entered into. We might speak of Henry the VIII, of Luther and of others. But we may content ourselves with one solitary example.

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St. Francis de Sales meets one of the reformers; they discuss the teachings of the Church, all difficulties were satisfactorily explained to the reformer by St. Francis. He assents to all that the saint said: but still there was one great difficulty that kept him from the Church; one great difficulty that he could not overcome; there was a woman for whom he had conceived an ungovernable passion, and her, he could not leave. We are then to bring our passions under the dominion of the teachings of Faith and Reason; nor will it do to subject one passion; no, we must subdue them all without exception; for as the practice of one virtue will sanctify and save us, so will subjection to one passion enslave and damn us. We have a notable example of this in Judas one of the disciples. You have heard of that apostle; he was one of the chosen twelve, one selected from the many millions that then peopled the world to preach the doctrine of Christ; to all appearance he was as good and as holy as any of the apostles; his conduct was beyond reproach; nay more it seemed to be above suspicion; for when seated at the last supper with our Blessed Lord, and when the twelve were told that there was one in their midst who would betray Him, it is not said that any of them even suspected that Judas would be the guilty one. And yet what was the fate of that disciple, even after he had been nourished with that first Communion, that was administered upon the world? He rises from the table, he knows that there are enemies hankering after the blood of his Master; and seeking to apprehend him. The spirit of avarice shows him silver, tells him of money that he might make, if he would but be the betrayer of our Divine Lord; and he immediately goes and for thirty pieces of silver he gives up that good kind Master into the hands of his enemies; and then goes and hangs himself; the passion of Avarice is his ruin; the greed for money, that vice alone condemns him.

Should we not learn from the life of the apostle the danger of consenting to any one passion; particularly we

who are Catholics, we who in a special manner like Judas have been chosen, members of the one saving Church, out of whose Communion there is no salvation; we, who because we belong to that Church imagine perhaps that we have a sure guarantee of our salvation; should we not learn to restrain and subject those enemies, the passions. We are not closer to our Divine Lord than Judas, we have no more powerful means than Judas, and yet he fell, fell because he listened to the spirit of avarice, that whispered in his soul, that he should lay up riches to himself in the world. Like him there may be some among us who feel that we are the slave to some passion, who know and have experienced for years, that we are the victims of some unruly vice; it may be that of avarice, intemperance, or pride; we feel ourselves conquered as it were, perfectly powerless when the object of our passion comes before us. Well for us is there no hope, no consolation to be offered? Most certainly.

Within that same college of the apostles, there was another disciple dear to our Blessed Lord; Peter, who was to be their head and prince, he fell through human respect, denied his Master, swore that he knew not the man; but unlike Judas he repented, he acknowledged his fault and was forgiven. Here is the model we must imitate. We have fallen, but like Peter we must repent, we must arise as Peter and humbly declare our fault, and then like Peter resolve never more to play the coward; nay more, that we would rather die, than be the slaves of this or that particular vice. Our will then, is the first power that we must bring to bear upon our passions; it is all powerful; it is a citadel that cannot be taken, no matter what power is brought to bear against it. It can be firm as we have seen, from the lives of these holy fathers of the desert, it can resist the violence of persecution and the sword as we have seen from the lives of the martyrs; still more; hell itself, with its legions of impious spirits and with its million suggestions to evil, cannot move it and if such be the

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natural strength with which it is endowed; and it is true, otherwise our will would not be free will, what will we say of it when strengthened by prayer; and this is the second power that we have to bring against those passions that would destroy us.

Our Lord Himself has promised to hear our prayer. "Ask of the Father anything in my name and it will be given." Ask for anything that will help you to save your souls, for I have come upon earth to save you. Ask it in my name of the Father and it will be given you. Couple the natural power of the will that we have just described, with the power of God's grace obtained by prayer, and where is the passion that can affect it. Ask Him to change by his grace their natural bent. He created us, fashioned our nature, and as He fashioned it, so can He change it by the power of His grace, and incline it always to good, provided that we ask His help, and correspond with His assistance. Contending in this manner, by our strength of will aided by God's own strength, we will subdue our passions and we will achieve a victory greater than that won by worldly conquerors, for we will frustrate the most powerful of enemies, and gain as our recompense, a kingdom destined to remain as long as God is God.

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