

The True Apostle Of The Sacred Heart

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I.

THE MORNING OFFERING.

Purity of Intention.

THE SOUL, so to speak, of all our actions, of all our works, is the intention, which we have in performing them. It is the intention that determines the nature of these works, and fixes their degree of merit and the reward for them.

Each day, we perform a number of actions that considered in themselves are purely animal. Like the animals, we seek to satisfy our corporal needs; we eat, we drink, we try to avoid the dangers that threaten us. What raises us above the animals, even where we perform the same actions, is that we can, in performing them, propose to ourselves an end which the animals can neither know of, nor desire, a rational end, nay, even far beyond that, indeed — a divine end.

Saint Paul says to us: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinth 10:31). Thus, by virtue of this supernatural intention, our actions, even those that in themselves are purely animal, can become truly divine.

Such is the virtue of our intention, when directed to God, that it sanctifies all that we do and gives really infinite value to the lowest occupations.

Thus, we are right in saying that the intention determines the nature of our works and fixes the reward due to them.

As the moral nature of every work is determined by the intention which animates it, it follows that all works done from a motive of charity are acts of charity, just as the works performed with a view to our eternal happiness, which is the motive of hope, are acts of hope. And as the virtue of charity exceeds in excellence and in merit all other virtues, we can understand that the same actions, performed with the same exterior perfection, but animated with these different intentions, may be very different in their degrees of merit. What is the exact measure of this merit God alone knows. Only at the Last Day will it be revealed to men. On that Day, Saint Paul tells us, all our works will pass through the crucible of Divine Justice, and only those performed with a pure intention will have reward.

How great then should be our care to ensure, by the purity of our intention, for our works the full measure of merit. Purity of intention fills our hearts with the life-giving virtue of Charity, and so prevents the corrupting influence of self-love, and also helps us to avoid sin. How happy we should feel to know that we have a means of acquiring perfect purity of intention in all our actions, and of preserving that purity in its supreme degree of excellence.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus offers us the means of acquiring this perfect purity of intention. Long ages before this devotion was revealed to the world in its special form, Saint Paul had formulated the spirit of it when he wrote to the Philippians: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:6).

If we obey this precept of the Apostle, we shall practise devotion to the Sacred Heart in all its perfection. For, how could we better show our devotion than by making the intentions of that Divine Heart our own?

It is for that reason that this practice has been chosen as the only obligation imposed on the members of the Apostleship of Prayer.

There are two ways by which we can unite ourselves with Our Divine Lord in all His intentions. We can, with one glance, take in all the intentions of His Sacred Heart, and offer them to God as our own, and declare that we firmly resolve to have no other intentions in all our works than those of our Divine Master. As His faithful, loving servants, wholly consecrated to Him, and devoted body and soul to His service, we will have no other interest than His, and we firmly resolve to devote our lives to the carrying out of His wishes. To adopt in our heart the intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to realize them by our actions, to sacrifice to them all other intentions such are the three degrees of devotedness.

Now, as the devotion to the Sacred Heart is pre-eminently the devotion of devotedness, the Apostleship of Prayer could do nothing better fitted to make us enter into the spirit of this devotion than to require all its members to make the daily offering of all their prayers, their works, their sufferings in union with the intentions of the Divine Heart of Jesus. This pious practice is easily performed. When we reflect how small is the effort it requires, how short the time it takes, we can say with truth that it is as nothing. But when we consider the efficacy of this little practice, the fruit that can result from it, the merit that it can obtain for us, it must be given a place among the most efficacious of pious exercises.

It is certain that a supernatural intention formed each morning, with the full and perfect consciousness of our mind, and the strongest determination of our will, is strong enough to impregnate all the actions of the day with its merit. And as the intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are incomparably beyond all others, the most excellent and the most meritorious, the practice enjoined by the Apostleship of Prayer, if faithfully and fervently accomplished, is sufficient to render all our actions, our works, our sufferings inappreciably meritorious, to sanctify our whole lives.

However, to ensure for ourselves the full efficacy of this intention, we must not be satisfied with the general and implicit adoption of the intentions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We must study them in detail, and try to engrave each one on our minds and hearts.

These divine intentions are not unknown to us. We know the ends to which our Divine Lord directed all His works, and to which He still directs His prayers, His Sacrifices.

First of all, it is the glory of His Heavenly Father, the accomplishment of all His designs, the establishment of His Kingdom on earth, His victory over Satan and the malice of men.

It is in the second place, the salvation of men, the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of our souls.

These two ends form for our Divine Saviour but one; for it is, solely, in our salvation that He seeks the glory of His Heavenly Father. All else is as nothing to Him, earthly riches, earthly grandeur, the masterpieces of genius, the inventions of science, the rise and fall of empires; all these earthly things to which we are so inclined to devote, in an inordinate measure, our thoughts, our efforts. In all these things, Our Lord considers only the end for which the Providence of the Eternal Father has foreseen; and permitted them from all eternity the Glory of God in the salvation of souls. If we meditate on all these things, we shall accustom ourselves to conform our sentiments to those of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and so, instinctively, we shall repel any human sentiment which would tend to tarnish the purity of our intentions.

The more we make the intentions of Our Divine Master our own, the more we shall become like unto Him.

By obeying the precept of Saint Paul, "Let this mind be in you which was also the mind of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 2:5), we shall become able to say with the same Apostle "I live, not I but Christ lives in me."

II.

PRAYER AND ACTION.

PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, orators, writers, all these may be called the auxiliaries of Christ our King. But this title does not imply that it is only those so named who are called on to labour for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth. In the army of an earthly sovereign, it is not only the heads of the army who have to defend their King, but all the soldiers also must take their part in this duty. We, who have by our Baptism and Confirmation become soldiers of Christ, we, too, must protect the interests of our Divine King; we must labour in the establishment of His Kingdom on earth. "You are," said Saint Peter to the early Christians, "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

It was not only to His Apostles and the inheritors of their missions that our Divine Saviour said: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature." "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved". (Mark 16:15-16.)

All the children of the Church have been to a certain extent called on to share in this sublime mission. But, how can you all, faithful children of the Church, fulfil this duty that is at once so urgent and so sweet to loyal hearts? God has given you two means: He has given you two weapons of which you should make habitual use: Prayer and Action.

We must pray; we must pray unceasingly. That is the watchword of the army of Christ our King. A glance at the state of the world at present will suffice to excite us to prayer.

Setting aside the millions of men outside the Church, think of the numbers of those within her fold to whom she affords the means of sanctification, how many neglect these means utterly, how many are tepid, how many even hostile to the Church. If we remember the open warfare waged against the Church and her teaching; the ever-increasing ravages of unbelief; the plots to seduce innocence and virtue; the glaring violation of all laws — human and divine — the indifference of this age of ours; vices which no longer fear to show themselves in the daylight; the fearful indifference of men regarding God and the goodness of God, and even the rigours of His Justice; if we recall all these things, cause for so much sadness, however small may be our love of God, we cannot but prostrate

ourselves before Him and implore His Mercy; begging Him to hasten the advent of His Kingdom, to sanctify His name on earth, sanctified as it is glorified in Heaven.

If we would know the conditions essential for the success of our prayers, we shall find them clearly expressed in the words of Holy Scripture describing the scene in the upper room where the Apostles for ten days after Our Lord's Resurrection waited for the Coming of the Holy Ghost: "All these," we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14).

Such are the conditions of the success of our prayers: Perseverance, Unanimity, and the intercession of Mary.

May the Holy Ghost grant us that same unanimity. Let us not be satisfied with gathering around the same flag, under the same name. That is merely external unity. We must forget everything that divides us, all selfish and personal interests, in order to concentrate all our forces, all our ambitions on one sole object: the triumph of the Church, the salvation of souls, the advent of the Kingdom of Christ our King on earth. The Apostles and the holy women had Mary, the Mother of Jesus with them. Her prayers were united with theirs, and she acted as their Mediatrix with the great and only Mediator. But have we not the same Mediatrix, as the Apostles and the holy women had: Mary, whose all-powerful mediation extends throughout the ages? What she did for them, she continues to do in Heaven for the Church, for all who are faithful soldiers of her Divine Son, Christ our King, who are labouring to establish on earth His Kingdom. Let this thought encourage us to invoke daily with greater fervour and confidence the aid of Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Thus in all our trials, in all our labours, in all our efforts for the Cause of Christ our King and of the Church, our chief resource must be prayer: universal, unanimous, fervent prayer; prayer in union with all our Associates in every part of the world; that is our first duty.

ACTION.

But, as soldiers of Christ our King, our obligations are not limited to prayer alone. We must act as well as pray. Prayer and action: that is our watchword. A great number of good Catholics are fervent in prayer but they are slow to act in the good cause; on the other hand, there are many who are willing workers, but they are not constant, persevering, in invoking God's assistance in their works.

Unless we pray earnestly, continuously, for God's assistance whilst at the same time we labour devotedly in His Service, we cannot expect success.

If Catholics in every diocese, in every parish, gathered in a strong united body round their bishops and priests, firmly resolved to act with them and according to their directions; if in every parish, in every town, a Committee was formed, the members of which laboured by every lawful means to prevent the sale of the irreligious, immoral literature which to-day is working such awful ruin amongst souls, being as it is the most powerful of Satan's weapons to destroy the Kingdom of Christ on earth; if the members of these committees did all in their power to promote the spread of good Catholic newspapers, magazines and books; if they were as energetic, as determined to drive out evil literature as they would be in their efforts to stamp out some terrible plague which was threatening the lives of all; if, to this vigorous action, they united their humble heartfelt prayers, soon they would win success in the battle for the rights of Jesus Christ and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

More than ever, at the present time, it is necessary for the soldiers of Christ our King to oppose to the propaganda of evil, of falsehood, the propaganda of truth, of our belief in God. To the Apostolate of evil, let us oppose the Apostolate of good.

Let us then be up and doing; let us draw close our ranks; let us labour with our forces to defend the Kingship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A truce to all useless complaints, lamentations! Let us work constantly, with our whole hearts, making use of every lawful means to destroy evil in whatever form it may appear amongst us.

Prayer and Action: United, persevering, confident prayer, constant and courageous action, in the Cause of Christ, our King.

III.

PATIENCE.

THE SACRED HEART of Jesus is Charity incarnate. In Him, the ideal of this supreme virtue is perfectly realised.

When Saint Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, describes the distinctive characteristics of Charity, he lays particular stress on the quality of patience. "Charity," he tells us, "is patient" (1 Corinth 13:4).

In all our Divine Lord's relations with those for the salvation of whose souls He laboured during His earthly life, we find His Divine Charity ever rendered still more resplendent by His practise of sublime patience.

During the whole course of His Public Life He was pursued by enemies who sought on every possible occasion, to confound Him, to contradict all that He said, to annoy Him by every means in their power.

The Scribes, puffed-up with their learning, the hypocritical Pharisees, the pleasure-loving Sadducees; all these men, at enmity with one another on all other points, joined together to hinder Our Lord's mission. At every moment, they 'laid snares for Him'; they sought to entrap Him by insidious questions; they circulated vile calumnies about Him. Our Lord, Who could have crushed them with a word, treated them with infinite patience. If at times, He manifested His indignation, it was when He saw them abusing their authority by making unwarranted additions to the Code of the Divine Law, and crushing weak souls under the weight of burdens which they would not raise a finger to lessen.

When they heaped insults on Our Lord, He, simply, in the calmest manner denied their allegations. "I have not a devil," He answered, "but I honour My Father. And you have dishonoured me" (John 8:49).

He profited by the questions, which they put to Him with the most designing intentions, to give them useful instructions. He manifested the same patience with the multitudes that gathered to hear Him. He even condescended to clothe His teaching in the transparent veil of the parable that thus they might more easily grasp the truths which He would teach them.

The Apostles, themselves, how much patience did not their Divine Master exercise in their regard! He hid nothing from them. He explained His Parables to them, and availed Himself of every

opportunity to impress upon them the teaching of His Divine Spirit. What progress should not they have made during three years in the school of such a Master!

And yet, to the last day of His sojourn amongst them their intelligence remained dull, unable to grasp His meaning. During three years, He never ceased to preach humility to them by His example even more than by His words. And yet on the Eve of His Passion, they were disputing amongst themselves as to which should have the first place. He foresaw how they would abandon Him and yet, in His farewell discourse at the Last Supper He manifested the most tender affection towards them. He permitted the traitor Judas, to remain amongst His Apostles, showing him the same goodness. And in the very moment that he consummated his treason, Jesus still treated him as a friend.

Finally, how can we describe Our Lord's patience during the awful sufferings of His Passion, from His Agony in the Garden of Olives until He expired on Calvary?

Thus, we see how our Divine Master throughout His whole life, anticipated by His example, the teaching which He would give us by the mouth of His Apostle, "Charity is Patient."

It remains now for us to consider how we can put this lesson into practice.

Following the example of Jesus Christ Himself, we must, first of all, exercise patience by our loving acceptance of all the mysterious designs of Divine Providence. From all time, God has been pleased to try the patience of His servants. He wills that we should wait in patience for the fulfilment of His Divine promises with unshaken confidence that He will not fail to come to our assistance at the moment which in His Divine Wisdom He has appointed.

All of us, without exception, are called to practise that patience by which alone we can hope to win our eternal salvation. Saint Paul is addressing us all when he says: "Do not therefore lose your confidence which has a great reward. For patience is necessary for you that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:35-36).

Every day of our lives, how many opportunities of practising this virtue are afforded to us, furnished by ourselves and by those amongst whom we live. How much reason, have we not, in truth, to be dissatisfied with others as well as with ourselves. Who is there amongst us whose daily life runs perfectly smooth without any annoyance to vex or disturb him? But it is, above all, when poverty and illness strike us, when old age with all its infirmities leaves us helpless, when all illusions vanish — and when, looking to the future, we cannot discover the least glimmer of hope to brighten the darkness of the present time, it is then that patience is our sole resort.

It is the charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, alone, that in such moments can shield our poor human hearts from the fatal attacks of discouragement. Then it is that the faithful disciples of this Divine Heart are made perfect by their patience. "Knowing that the trying of your faith works patience. And patience has a perfect work that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing" (James 1:3-4).

Patience, serene submission to the Divine Will in the hour of great trials, and firm confidence in the Divine promises, such is the most precious sacrifice that we can offer to God. It is the highest degree of merit that we can acquire for ourselves.

IV.

MEEKNESS — MILDNESS.

IN PRESENTING to us ‘Meekness and Mildness’ as the second distinctive characteristic of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Saint Paul has placed in our hands the second weapon which should render all the devoted servants of this Divine Heart invincible. By patience, they will be able to offer insurmountable resistance to all the attacks of their enemies; by meekness, they will acquire an irresistible ascendancy over souls.

It was thus that our Divine Lord Himself triumphed, and such is, also, the condition for our success. Even before it gains for us the Kingdom of Heaven, meekness will assure for us dominion of the earth. “Blessed are the meek,” says Our Lord, “for they shall possess the land” (Matthew 5:4).

It was with these two weapons of patience and meekness that our Divine Saviour began His campaign to win our love in the Crib, at Bethlehem, which He would consummate on Calvary, and continue to the end of Time in the Tabernacle. It was of this second manifestation of the Divine Majesty, so different from that of Sinai, that Saint Paul cried out “When the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared” (Titus 3:4).

No; it is not His Infinite Power, His rigorous Justice, His inviolable Holiness that He reveals to us in the Crib or in the Tabernacle. The God of the Crib, of the Tabernacle, still possess all these attributes, for they are inalienable; but they are hidden, as it were, eclipsed by the manifestation of His goodness, His meekness. He lays aside all other arms and, strong in His love alone, He descends on earth to do battle with our pride, our self-love.

Throughout the whole course of His mortal life, when most violently assailed by His enemies, He opposes to them nothing but meekness, and He makes use of no other means to overcome all attacks. He would seem to have forgotten His All-Mighty Power, and He would not listen to those who mindful of that Divine Power, begged Him to use it for the success of His Mission. When James and John proposed to Him to bring down fire from Heaven on a city which refused to open its gates to Him, He rebuked them saying: “You know not of what spirit you are” (Luke 9:58).

These disciples in their ardent zeal, thought they were still in the time of the Law of Fear when Elias (Elijah) called down fire from Heaven to punish those who would not hear Him (2 Kings Chapter 1. It is called 4 Kings in the Vulgate.)

They had not yet learned that the Master of the Prophets had come to inspire them with a better spirit. But they soon understood, and John became so completely filled with this spirit that he could preach nothing but love.

There is, indeed, no lesson which our Divine Lord laboured more to teach, both by His example and His words. When He would sum up all His teaching in a few words, He said: “Learn of Me for I am meek and humble of heart.”

The practical understanding of this lesson does not dispense us from believing the other truths, and fulfilling the other precepts. But it will so well dispose our hearts and minds that all the other instructions will easily penetrate them, and the fulfilment of all other duties will become easy.

From the example of their Divine Master the Apostles learned to find in ‘meekness—mildness’ the principal secret of their Apostolate. They were witnesses how this mildness saved a poor soul that the harshness of the Pharisees would have driven to eternal destruction. These hypocrites, advocates of a purely external justice, brought to our Divine Lord a poor sinful woman who, according to the Law of Moses, was condemned to be stoned to death. They wished to have the malicious pleasure of finding Him, once at least, as severe as themselves. We know how Our Lord acted. Treating them

with His usual mildness of which they were so unworthy, He forced them, by a secret reminder of their own sins, to desist from their accusation, and gave them the opportunity to slip away one by one. Then, turning to the poor sinner, “Woman,” He asked, “Where are they that accused you? Has no man condemned you?” “No man, Lord,” was the sinful woman’s answer. Whereupon Jesus said to her, “Neither will I condemn you. Go, and now sin no more” (John 8:3-11).

Here we have, in the strongest relief, the contrast between the true spirit of the Sacred Heart and that spirit of the Pharisees, which; even in these days and amongst Catholics, still wages war against the Christ-like spirit of meekness, of mildness, and which does so much harm to souls. The Pharisees, by their cruel harshness, would have destroyed every good feeling in the poor woman’s heart, every germ of contrition; would have filled her with despair, and so have led to her death in final impenitence.

Our Lord, on the contrary, by His mildness, His mercy, arouses in the simple heart, a sentiment of gratitude and of repentance, and so gently leads the sinner into the way of salvation.

Was it not this meekness, this mildness, which attracted the Samaritan woman to Our Lord and drew from her the humble confession of her sins? Again, was it not the ineffable condescension, the mildness, the mercy with which He received the penitent Magdalen, which aroused in that sin-stained soul such repentance, such ardent, undying love for Him as raised her at once to the highest sanctity?

This mildness is the all-powerful weapon which Jesus wishes all the faithful followers of His Sacred Heart to make use of, in their daily intercourse with their fellow-creatures. “We shall be strong like Him”, if we learn the great lesson which He would, above all others, teach us. “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” But, let us not forget that this meekness, this mildness has nothing in common with that weakness, that indolence, that want of spirit which results from a temperament devoid of energy. This spiritless, inert passiveness has no resemblance to the meekness of the Sacred Heart. This kind of meekness is only Nature’s rough sketch, whilst that modelled on that of the Sacred Heart is a masterpiece of divine grace. The first kind of meekness is a natural disposition and, consequently, without merit, the second is an acquired virtue and eminently meritorious. Like all natural qualities, the first has its corresponding fault — weakness; the second, on the contrary, is allied harmoniously with the opposite quality which is strength; the first springs from want of power to struggle against external resistance; the second can only be the fruit of a long struggle against interior impulses.

The meekness which resembles that of the Sacred Heart is the meekness of Saint Francis de Sales who, to all appearance, seemed as if born with ‘the most peaceful disposition’ whereas, in reality, it was only after a long and desperate struggle that he succeeded in subduing his naturally fiery nature, and in acquiring the serene peace manifest in his whole appearance. Calmer temperaments, as well as weaker ones, can also acquire real meekness, and thus transform into a supernatural virtue that more peaceful disposition which nature had given them.

Whilst fiery natures are easily moved to anger, on the other hand, weaker natures are more inclined to become depressed, and give way to discouragement.

Dejection and ill-humour are almost as contrary to meekness as fits of anger, and to overcome them requires a great struggle.

Both dispositions are equally far from meekness. The meekness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the ideal after which they must strive, aided by divine grace which alone can make their efforts of avail.

But how powerful, how great is the example of one who, aided by grace and at the cost of generous efforts, obtains mastery over his fiery nature, and acquires real meekness, gentleness of manner, in words, in action. There is no earthly attraction, however fascinating, which appeals with greater and more enduring power to all than that of true meekness — the meekness of Jesus Christ.

May all the disciples of the Sacred Heart strive to acquire this precious virtue and thus, by their example, lead souls to follow the Divine Master Who said, “Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.”

V.

CONFIDENCE.

THE PRINCIPAL MOTIVE of that confidence which should animate all who labour in the cause of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is pointed out to us by Saint Paul when he tells us that all things in Heaven and on earth were created in Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16).

And this is also what the same Apostle expresses by a very striking image when speaking of the action of the Eternal Father. He says “And he has subjected all things under his feet” (Ephesians 1:22).

As long as we are united to Jesus Christ; as we work for Him, and as we are docile in following the inspiration of His love; we are assured of the success of our labours. God Himself has given this assurance of success to all those who give themselves into His hands to be His instruments, and to work in union with Him for the end which He has proposed from all eternity.

Now, none can more easily fulfil the sole and infallible condition for the success of our works, that is when the work is done for God and with God, than the clients of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and amongst those who fulfil it more perfectly are those who, in union with Him, practise the Apostleship of Prayer.

The care to consult in all their actions, the wishes of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, constant fidelity in following the inspiration of His Divine Spirit, and reliance solely on the assistance of His grace; such is, indisputably, the most excellent of all the practices of devotion to this Divine Heart, and is that which the Apostleship of Prayer makes the principal object of the zeal of its associates. In exhorting them to make the intentions of the Sacred Heart theirs, they are not allowed to forget that, amongst these intentions, there are some which concern themselves only, and the realisation of which depends on their own free will. ‘None can have any illusions on this point’. They know very well that they cannot — without contradiction — unite their prayers to those of the Sacred Heart for the salvation of other souls, and refuse to realise the desire of that Sacred Heart for the sanctification of their own.

Those, who are animated with the spirit which the Apostleship of Prayer seeks to spread everywhere, embrace to their full extent the desires of the Sacred Heart. They make these desires the sole rule of their sentiments and their conduct. Such of these divine desires as concern themselves, they try to realise in their actions, those which concern souls over whom they have no influence, they labour for the realisation by the union of their prayers with those of the Sacred Heart. Thus, the work of God becomes their work; they embrace it to its full extent, and never cease

to labour for it by the deliberate determination of their will; they never pursue any other end than His, and they never take any step without relying on His all-powerful help. It is those who thus practise devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus who can have the infallible assurance of definite success in their efforts.

Confidence in God is the special fruit of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Confidence, firm, continual, boundless, invincible confidence, such should be the predominant quality of all those who have enlisted in the Army of their King, and who fight under His banner against the powers of darkness.

Such is the particular obligation of those who make special profession of honouring the Sacred Heart. The more intimate knowledge which they have acquired of His infinite Mercy and Goodness should fill their souls with a confidence which will communicate itself to their brethren as the heat of a fire warms the surrounding atmosphere.

And thus, in propagating the spirit of confidence, the associates of the Apostleship of Prayer will labour in a most effectual manner for the Cause of Christ their King. For we must acknowledge that, precious as is this virtue of confidence, it is hard to preserve it in times of trial.

In hours of darkness, of sorrow, of misfortune when we have lost all that constitutes earthly happiness, when all hope seems dead, truly, it is hard to preserve confidence. What constitutes the merit of this virtue, constitutes, also, the difficulty of practising it.

Want of confidence, discouragement is, in time of trial, the great temptation which we should resist with all our strength. If we would, like Saint Paul, rejoice in the midst of tribulation; if we would preserve unalterable peace in the severest trials, let us have recourse to the Adorable Heart of Jesus, His Goodness, His Power, and we shall surely find peace, we shall maintain firm confidence, no matter how great our sorrows.

VI.

LOVE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

DEVOTION TO THE Sacred Heart of Jesus is intimately connected with the Blessed Sacrament. Saint Margaret Mary was the lover of the Tabernacle as she was of the Cross. To receive Jesus in His Sacrament of Love was her only desire. She says herself that her only source of help was the Heart of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. Our Lord, she tells us, asked her to offer Him the Communion of Reparation, and He wished her to receive Holy Communion as often as she could, no matter at what cost to herself.

And thus, it is that as the devotion advances, according as it takes deeper root in a soul, the more that soul feels urged to receive Holy Communion more frequently and with greater fervour. "The particular object of this devotion," Father Croiset, S.J., tells us, "is the love of the Son of God which caused Him to deliver Himself to death for us, and to give Himself entirely to us in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." And again, he tells us that the Blessed Sacrament is with the Passion the greatest proof that we could have of the love of Jesus Christ for us.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice," said Our Lord in His sermon on the Mount. It is by the Blessed Sacrament that this hunger and thirst for holiness, this desire for perfection, for the love of God will be aroused within us. To grow in holiness, we must often receive Holy Communion, which is the most efficacious of all means for the sanctification of our souls, and if we neglect this means we shall never grow holy. Of course, we must be in a state of grace, and desire to

receive this Divine Food of our souls. But, the more often you receive Holy Communion the greater will be your desire, and you will grow in grace and holiness. This Divine Food of the soul has this particular effect that the more often it is received the more the soul hungers for it.

The Tabernacle is the throne whereon Jesus reigns as the Lamb ever living to make intercession for us it is the throne of His love for us; it is the throne of His Sacred Heart.

Thus it is, that all who labour for the complete establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth should gather closely round the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament; round the Tabernacle.

As we have said already, the Tabernacle is the central point of devotion to the Sacred Heart, for there it is that we shall find the most complete manifestation of the love of that Divine Heart for us. There He manifests that divine love better than in the Crib at Bethlehem. There He sacrificed all the splendours of His Divine Nature to become like unto us; in the Tabernacle, He has sacrificed His human body to become one with us. In the Crib, He became our brother; here He becomes the food of our souls. In the Crib, He united His Divine nature to our human nature; here, on the Altar, He contracts a union with us which surpasses all that human language could express. He confounds His life with our life, His Majesty with our misery, in such a manner, that when we turn away from His Altar after having received Him in His Adorable Sacrament, His angels are constrained to prostrate themselves to adore Him in this new Tabernacle.

In the same manner, as we cannot learn to know God better than by studying in the school of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, so, we cannot better profit by the lessons of that school than by prayer before the Tabernacle. It is there that the accents of that Divine Heart of Jesus are heard more distinctly, and that He reveals to us the Secrets of His love more completely.

In all the troubles, the trials, the sorrows of this earthly life; when the loss of all our dear ones has left us desolate, alone; when failure in our undertakings deprives us of the means of living, and we are reduced to poverty; when sickness strikes us down and leaves us helpless, tortured with cruel pain; when we are struggling against some fierce temptation; even if we have, in a moment of temptation yielded to that temptation, and stricken with remorse would seek forgiveness in the very darkest hours of life; when it would seem as if all hope were lost and we are in danger of falling a victim to despair; at such times let us have recourse to the All-Merciful Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We shall find consolation in our sorrows, light in our darkness, counsel in our doubts, relief in our sufferings, help in our undertakings, strength in our temptations. We shall even learn to rejoice when we are calumniated; we shall know no resentment, no bitterness with those who have injured us.

"I have come," said our Divine Saviour during His mortal life, "not only to bring life to men, but that they may have it ever more fully."

It is, above all, in the Blessed Sacrament that Jesus realises to the full, the end for which He came on earth. And it is in Holy Communion that we shall receive this supernatural life for we shall possess within us the very source of life Jesus Christ Himself.

Yes, surely, in those moments when we are united to the Source of life itself, we shall receive that life in ever-increasing fullness. But that we may merit this outpouring of divine life, let us not forget during those blessed moments when the Sacred Heart of Jesus is really present within us, that He is for us the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and let us then ask Him to enlighten us with His Divine light, to teach us to imitate His virtues, to animate us with His strength, His love, His sentiments. It

is then that we shall be filled with the plenitude of eternal life, and shall know that true joy which the world cannot give nor can it take from us.

In the Adorable Heart of Jesus in the Tabernacle, we shall find support, strength, assistance in every need. He will be with us in all that we do for Him, He will bless all our undertakings, lighten the burden of our labours. He is all ours that we may be wholly His and may increase every day in His grace and in His love.
