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The Christian Home

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# The CHRISTIAN HOME

By  
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## The Christian Ideal of the Home.

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IT was only with the dawn of Christianity that the true ideal of the home received its full and perfect expression in the words of the Divine Teacher. Among the Greeks and Romans it had been the formation of the perfect citizen which was aimed at. That the child be taught to dare all things, suffer all things for his country's sake—this was the goal.

With Christ it was indeed a citizenship—aye, more, a brotherhood—which the home was to inculcate in a spirit of mutual love and forbearance. And just as Christ taught nothing else which He did not show forth by example in His divine life, so He has given us, in His own filial love and obedience to Mary and Joseph, the divine type of the Christian home.

It is profitable for us to day to heed well these lessons of the Home of Nazareth. Modern industrial conditions have loosened the ties which should bind parent and child with hoops of steel. And those sacred influences under which Christ grew in age and wisdom are oftentimes neglected or rendered inoperative through the indifference of parents and the besetting hurry of the age.

To the mothers and fathers of families there is assigned a mission no less honorable than that of Joseph and Mary. Their offspring are the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, redeemed by His blood, and the parents are appointed by heaven their

### The Mission of Parents.



first apostles and teachers. Whether they will be teachers of salvation or of destruction, angels of light or of darkness, rests with them.

The love and solicitude of Mary and Joseph for the Child Jesus is expressed in the words: "Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And the filial obedience of the Son is made manifest in the short sentence: "He was subject to them." Herein are contained the two duties of parent and of child: the one of watchful, constant care; the other of simple, ready obedience, of respect for authority, of reverence for age—lessons so needed to be learned in our day.

The home is the primeval school. It is the best, the most hallowed, and the most potential of all the acad-

**The Home As a First  
School.**

mies; and the parent, especially the mother, is the first, the most influential, and the most cherished of all teachers. No human ordinance can abrogate or annul the divine *right* of parents to rule their own household, neither can any vicarious instruction given in the day-school or Sunday-School exempt them from the obligation of a personal supervision over their offspring. If Christian training is eliminated from the home and relegated to the class-room, the child, when emancipated from his studies, may be tempted to regard religious knowledge as a mere detail of school work, and not, as it should be, a vital principal in his daily life and conduct.

And yet I fear there are many parents who imagine that they discharge their whole duty to their children by placing them under the zealous care of our Catholic teachers. These instructors may supplement and de-

velop, but they were never intended to supplant the domestic tuition.

The education of a child should begin at its mother's knee. The mind of a child, like softened wax, receives first impressions with ease, and these impressions last longest. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." A child is susceptible of instruction much earlier than parents commonly imagine. It has the capacity to perceive and apprehend the truth, though unable as yet to go through the process of reasoning and analysis. Mothers should watch with a zealous eye the first unfolding of the infant mind, and pour into it the seed of heavenly knowledge.

For various reasons mothers should be the first instructors of their children.

First, as nature ordains that mothers should be the first to feed their offspring with corporal nourishment of their own substance, so the God of nature ordains that mothers should be the first to impart to their little ones "the rational, guileless milk" of heavenly knowledge, "whereby they may grow unto Salvation" (I. Peter ii. 2).

Second, the children that are fed by **Mothers As Teachers.** their own mothers are usually more healthy and robust than those that are nurtured by wet-nurses. In like manner, the children who are instructed by their own mothers in the elements of Christian knowledge are commonly more sturdy in faith than those who are committed for instruction to strangers.

Third, the progress of a pupil in knowledge is in a

great measure proportioned to the confidence he has in his preceptor. Now, in whom does a child place so much reliance as in his mother? She is his oracle and prophet. She is his guide, philosopher, and friend. He never doubts what his mother tells him. The lesson he receives acquires additional force because it proceeds from one to whom he gave his first love, and whose image, in after life, is indelibly stamped on his heart and memory. Mothers, do not lose the golden opportunity you have of training your children in faith and morals while their hearts are open to drink in your every word.

Fourth, you share the same home with your children, you frequently occupy the same apartment. You eat at the same table with them. They are habitually before your eyes. You are, therefore, the best fitted to instruct them, and you can avail yourself of every little incident that presents itself and draw from it some appropriate moral reflection.

The fruits of the realization amongst us of the divine beauties of the Home of Nazareth are not far to seek. The most distinguished personages who have adorned the Church by their apostolic virtues, or who have served their country by fine patriotism, or who have shed a luster on the home by the integrity of their private lives, have usually been men who had the happiness of receiving from pious mothers early principles of moral rectitude.

**The Constancy of St. Monica.** Witness St. Augustine, the great Doctor of the Church in the fifth century. In his youth he had lost his faith, and with it purity of conscience. He was

tainted with Manichæism, the most pernicious error of the times, and he became a prey to the fiercest passions. Monica, his saintly mother, prayed for him with a constancy which only a mother can exhibit. She hoped against hope; and before her death she had the consolation of seeing him restored to God and His Church. St. Augustine attributes his conversion to her, and in his matchless book, the *Confessions*, he speaks of her most tenderly.

St. Louis, King of France, is another example of what a mother may do. As a monarch and as a saint he owes his virtues, under God, to Queen Blanche, his mother. "I love you tenderly," she said to her child, "but sooner would I see you a corpse at my feet, and France bereft of an heir to the throne, than that you should tarnish your soul by a corrupt life."

If Queen Blanche could pay so much attention to her son's instruction, notwithstanding her engrossing administrative cares, surely the mothers of to-day, in private walks of life, should find leisure for a similar duty.

Nor need we look beyond our own country's first president for the fruition of that seed which was sown by a devoted mother. Washington was conspicuous for the natural virtues of frugality, industry, self-restraint, and respect for authority. Above all, he possessed a love of truth and an habitual recognition of the overruling Providence of God. And he gloried in declaring that these traits were impressed on his youthful mind by his mother, for whom he had a profound reverence, and whom in his letters he usually addressed as his "honored" mother.

If in our day we find the religion of Christ firmly

rooted in the land ; if the word of the Teacher of Men has quickened and brought forth good fruit ; if we see

**To Whom All Honor  
Is Due.** about us homes spiritualized and sanctified by the radiance of the Home of Nazareth, and lifted above

the worldly and material by the memory of the Divine Exemplar—this happy condition is largely due to the faith and piety of Christian wives and mothers. This noble army of apostolic women “are the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honor of our people” ; they are the saviors of society and a blessing to the nation.

It is true, indeed, that they are not clothed with the priestly character. They cannot offer the Holy Sacrifice or administer the Sacraments. But may we not apply to them the words of St. Peter: “Ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood” ? Yes, we may in all truth. They are consecrated priestesses of the domestic temple, where they daily offer up in the sanctuary of their homes, and on the altar of their hearts, the sacrifice of praise and prayer, of supplication and thanksgiving to God. They cannot preach the word of God in public, but they are apostles by prayer, good deeds, and edifying example. They preach most effectually to the members of their households, and the word of God scattered from the pulpit would often bear little fruit if it were not watered and nurtured by the care of our pious mothers.

No more weighty obligation devolves upon Christian parents than that of recognizing and discharging conscientiously these fundamental duties of the home. It is a sublime task. “What is more noble,” cries St. John Chrysostom, “than to form the minds of youth?



He who fashions the morals of children performs a task in my judgment more sublime than that of any painter or sculptor." It is, indeed, a far more exalted task than that of sculptor or painter that is entrusted to fathers and mothers. They are creating living portraits, destined to adorn not only earthly temples, but also the Temple above, not fashioned of man's hand

And therefore built forever.

And mark well: home education does not mean merely those lessons in Christian Doctrine which are to be taught to children. The home should be per-

**What the Home  
Should Be.**

vaded by a religious atmosphere. It should be the sanctuary of domestic peace, sobriety, and parental love.

Discontent and anger should be banished from it; and under these sweet influences the child will grow in virtue. Above all, let it be the asylum of daily prayer, and then the angels of God and the God of angels will be there.

It is to the mothers and fathers of to-day that we must look for the realization amongst us of this Christian ideal of the home—the Home of Nazareth. They are doubly bound to seek it, if need be "sorrowing"—as did Mary and Joseph. They are bound, on the one hand, by their Christian faith and the example of Christ; and, on the other, they owe a duty to the State. Thus shall they rear up for their country not scourges of society, but loyal, law-abiding citizens. "If any one," says the Apostle, "have not care of his own, and especially of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I. Tim. v. 8; Prov. xxxi. 28). Aye, more—he hath fallen short in his duty to his country.

## The Needs of Humanity Supplied by the Catholic Religion.

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**W**E live and move and have our being in the midst of a civilization which is the legitimate offspring of the Catholic religion. The blessings resulting from our Christian civilization are poured out so regularly and so abundantly on the intellectual, moral, and social world, like the sunlight and the air of heaven and the fruits of the earth, that they have ceased to excite any surprise except to those who visit lands where the religion of Christ is little known. In order to realize adequately our favored situation, we should transport ourselves in spirit to anti-Christian times and contrast the condition of the pagan world with our own.

Before the advent of Christ, the whole world, with the exception of the secluded Roman province of Palestine, was buried in idolatry. Every striking object in nature had its tutelary divinities. Men worshipped the sun and moon and stars of heaven. They worshipped their very passions. They worshipped everything except God only, to whom alone divine homage is due. In the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the corruptible man, and of birds and beasts and creeping things. They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever."

**Divine Worship Due  
to God Alone.**

But at last the great light for which the prophets of Israel had sighed and prayed, and toward which even the pagan sages had stretched forth their hands with eager longing, arose and shone unto them "that sat in darkness and the shadow of death." The truth concerning our Creator, which had hitherto been hidden in Judæa, that there it might be sheltered from the world-wide idolatry, was now proclaimed, and in far greater clearness and fulness, unto the whole world.

**The Coming of the  
Light.**

Jesus Christ taught all mankind to know the one, true God: a God existing from eternity unto eternity, a God who created all things by his power, who governs all things by his wisdom, and whose superintending providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of men, "without whom not even a bird falls to the ground." He proclaimed a God infinitely holy, just and merciful. This idea of the Deity, so consonant to our rational conceptions, was in striking contrast with the low and sensual notions which the pagan world had formed of its divinities.

The religion of Christ imparts to us, not only a sublime conception of God, but also a rational idea of man and of his relations to his Creator. Before the coming of Christ, man was a riddle and a mystery to himself. He knew not whence he came or whither he was going. He was groping in the dark. All he knew for certain was, that he was passing through a brief phase of existence. The past and the future were enveloped in a mist which the light of philosophy was unable to penetrate. Our Redeemer has dispelled the cloud, and enlightened us regarding our origin and destiny and

the means of attaining it. He has rescued man from the frightful labyrinth of error in which paganism had involved him.

The Gospel of Christ as propounded by the Catholic Church has brought not only light to the intellect, but comfort also to the heart. It has given us "that peace of God which surpasseth all understanding"; the peace which springs from the conscious possession of truth. It has taught us how to enjoy that triple peace which constitutes true happiness as far as it is attainable in this life; peace with God by the observance of his commandments, peace with our neighbor by the exercise of charity and justice toward him, and peace with ourselves by repressing our inordinate appetites, and keeping our passions subject to the law of reason and our reason illumined and controlled by the law of God.

All other religious systems prior to the advent of Christ were national like Judaism, or state-religions like paganism. The Catholic religion alone is worldwide and cosmopolitan, embracing all races and nations and peoples and tongues.

Christ alone of all religious founders had the courage to say to his disciples: "Go, teach all nations."

**The Universality of the Church.** "Preach the Gospel to every creature." "You shall be witnesses to me in Judæa and Samaria, and even to the uttermost bounds of the earth." Be not restrained in your mission by national or State lines. Let my Gospel be as free and universal as the air of heaven. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness

thereof." All mankind are the children of my Father and my brethren. I have died for all, and embrace all in my charity. Let the whole human race be your audience, and the world be the theatre of your labors.

It is this recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Christ that has inspired the Catholic Church in her mission of love and benevolence. That is the secret of her all-prevading charity. This idea has been her impelling motive in her work of the

**The Secret of Her  
Charity.**

social regeneration of mankind. I behold, she says, in every human creature a child of God and a brother or sister of Christ, and therefore I will protect helpless infancy and decrepit old age. I will feed the orphan and nurse the sick. I will strike the shackles from the feet of the slave, and will rescue degraded woman from the moral bondage and degradation to which her own frailty and the passions of the stronger sex had consigned her.

Montesquieu has well said that the religion of Christ, which was instituted to lead men to eternal life, has contributed more than any other institution to promote the temporal and social happiness of mankind. At times some inquiring minds will meet in congress or parliament to investigate, as they put it, the respective claims of the various religions, with the view that they would "prove all things, and hold that which is good," by embracing that religion which above all others commends itself to their judgment and conscience. I am not engaged in this search for the truth; for, by the grace of God, I am conscious that I have found it, and instead of hiding this treasure in my own breast, I long

to share it with others, especially as I am none the poorer in making others the richer.

But for my part, were I occupied in this investigation, much as I would be drawn towards the Catholic Church by her admirable unity of faith, which binds together in a common worship over three hundred millions of souls; much as I would be attracted towards her by her sublime moral code, by her world-wide catholicity, and by that unbroken chain of apostolic

**Her Love for the  
Needy.**

succession which connects her indissolubly with apostolic times, I would be drawn still more forcibly towards her by that wonderful system of organized benevolence which she has established for the alleviation and comfort of suffering humanity.

Let us briefly review what the Catholic Church has done for the elevation and betterment of society.

The Catholic Church has purified society in its very fountain, which is the marriage bond. She has invariably proclaimed the unity and sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage tie by saying, with her Founder,

**The Marriage Bond.** that "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Wives and mothers, never forget that the inviolability of the marriage contract is the palladium of your womanly dignity and of your Christian liberty. And if you are no longer the slaves of man and the toy of his caprice, like the wives of Asiatic countries, but the peers and partners of your husbands; if you are no longer tenants at will, like the wives of pagan Greece and Rome, but the mistresses of your household; if you are no longer confronted by usurping rivals, like Mo-

ammedan and Mormon wives, but the queens of the domestic kingdom, you are indebted for this priceless boon to the ancient Church, and particularly to the Roman Pontiffs, who inflexibly upheld the sacredness of the nuptial bond against the arbitrary power of kings, the lust of nobles, and the lax and pernicious legislation of civil governments.

The Catholic religion has proclaimed the sanctity of human life as soon as the body is animated by the vital spark. Infanticide was a dark stain on pagan civilization. It was universal in Greece, with the possible exception of Thebes. It was sanctioned, and even sometimes enjoined, by such eminent Greeks as Plato

**The Sanctity of  
Human Life.**

and Aristotle, Solon and Lycurgus. The destruction of infants was also very common among the Romans. Nor was there any legal check to this inhuman crime except at rare intervals. The father had the power of life and death over his child. And as an evidence that human nature does not improve with time, and is everywhere the same unless it is fermented with the leaven of Christianity, the wanton sacrifice of infant life is probably as general to-day in China and other heathen countries as it was in ancient Greece and Rome. The Catholic Church has sternly set her face against this exposure and murder of innocent babes. She has denounced it as a crime more revolting than that of Herod, because committed against one's own flesh and blood. She has condemned with equal energy the atrocious doctrine of Malthus, who suggested unnatural methods for diminishing the population of the human family. Were I not restrained by the fear of offending modesty,

and of imparting knowledge where "ignorance is bliss," I would dwell more at length on the social plague of ante-natal infanticide which is insidiously and systematically spreading among us in defiance of civil penalties and of the divine law which says, "Thou shalt not kill."

There is no phase of human misery for which the Church does not provide some remedy or alleviation. She has established infant asylums for the shelter of helpless babes who have been cruelly abandoned by their own parents, or bereft of them in the mysterious dispensations of Providence before

**As a Nursing Mother.** they could know and feel a mother's love. These little waifs, like the infant Moses drifting in the turbid Nile, are rescued from an untimely death and are tenderly raised by the daughters of the great King, those consecrated virgins who become nursing mothers to them. And I have known more than one such motherless babe who, like Israel's lawgiver, in after years became a leader among his people.

As the Church provides homes for those yet on the threshold of life, so too does she secure retreats for those on the threshold of death. She has asylums in which the aged, men and women, find at one and the same time a refuge in their old age from the storms of life, and a novitiate to prepare them for eternity. Thus from the cradle to the grave she is a nursing mother. She rocks her children in the cradle of infancy, and she soothes them to rest on the couch of death.

Louis XIV. erected in Paris the famous Hôtel des Invalides for the veteran soldiers of France who had



fought in the service of their country. And so has the Catholic religion provided for those who have been disabled in the battle of life a home in which they are tenderly nursed to their declining years by devoted sisters.

The Little Sisters of the Poor, to mention but one Catholic community, have now charge of hundreds of establishments throughout the world wherein thousands of the needy, the sick, the aged, are cared for, even until death. To these asylums are welcomed, not only the members of the Catholic religion, but those also of every form of Christian faith, and even those without any faith at all. The sisters make no distinction of person or nationality or color or creed; for true charity embraces all. The only question proposed by the sisters to the applicant for shelter is this: "Are you oppressed by age and penury? If so, come to us and we will provide for you."

She has orphan asylums where children of both sexes are reared and taught to become useful and worthy members of society.

Hospitals were unknown to the pagan world before the coming of Christ. The copious vocabularies of Greece and Rome had no word even to express that term.

The Catholic Church has hospitals for the treatment and cure of every form of disease. She sends her daughters of Charity and of Mercy to the battle-field and to the plague-stricken city.

**Ministering Angels.** During the Crimean War I remember to have read of a sister who was struck dead by a ball while she was in the act of stooping down and bandaging the wound of a fallen soldier.

Much praise was then deservedly bestowed on Florence Nightingale for her devotion to the sick and wounded soldiers. Her name resounded in both hemispheres. But in every sister you have a Florence Nightingale with this difference, that like ministering angels they move without noise along the path of duty, and like the Angel Raphael, who concealed his name from Tobias, the sister hides her name from the world.

Some years ago I accompanied to New Orleans eight Sisters of Charity who were sent from Baltimore to reinforce the ranks of their heroic companions, or to supply the places of their devoted associates who had fallen at the post of duty, in the fever-stricken cities of the South. Their departure for the

**At the Post of Duty.** scene of their labors was neither announced by the press nor heralded by public applause. They rushed calmly into the jaws of death, not bent on deeds of destruction like the famous six hundred, but on deeds of mercy. They had no Tennyson to sound their praises. Their only ambition was—and how lofty is that ambition!—that the recording angel might be their biographer, that their names might be inscribed in the Book of Life, and that they might receive their recompense from Him who has said: “I was sick, and ye visited me; for as often as ye did it to one of the least of my brethren, ye did it to me.” Within a few months after their arrival six of the eight sisters died victims to the epidemic.

These are a few of the many other instances of heroic charity that have fallen under my own observation. Here are examples of sublime heroism not culled from the musty pages of ancient martyrologies, or

books of chivalry, but happening in our own day and under our own eyes. Here is a heroism not aroused by the emulation of brave comrades on the battle-field, or by the clash of arms or the strains of martial hymns, or by the love for earthly fame, but inspired only by a sense of Christian duty, and by the love of God and her fellow-beings.

The Catholic religion labors not only to assuage the physical distempers of humanity, but also to reclaim the victims of moral disease. The redemption of fallen women from a life of infamy was never included in the scope of heathen philanthropy, and man's unregenerate nature is the same now as before the birth of Christ.

He worships woman as long as she has charms to fascinate; but she is spurned and trampled upon as soon as she has ceased to please. It was reserved for Him who knew no sin to throw the mantle of protection over sinning woman. There is no page in the Gospel more touching than that which records our Saviour's merciful judgment on the adulterous woman. The Scribes and Pharisees, who had perhaps participated in her guilt, asked our Lord to pronounce sentence of death upon her in accordance with the Mosaic law. "Hath no one condemned thee?" asked our Saviour. "No one, Lord," she answered. "Then," said he, "neither will I condemn thee. Go, sin no more."

Inspired by this divine example, the  
**A Work of Mercy.** Catholic Church shelters erring females in homes not inappropriately called Magdalen Asylums and Houses of the Good Shepherd. Not to speak of other institutions estab-

lished for the moral reformation of women, the Congregation of the Good Shepherd at Angers, founded in 1836, has charge to-day of over one hundred and fifty houses, in which more than four thousand sisters devote themselves to the care of over twenty thousand females who have yielded to temptation or were rescued from impending danger.

The Christian religion has been the unvarying friend and advocate of the bondmen. Before the dawn of Christianity slavery was universal in civilized as well as in barbarous nations. The apostles were everywhere confronted by the children of oppression. Their first task was to mitigate the horrors and alleviate the miseries of human bondage. They cheered the slave by holding up to him the example of Christ, who voluntarily became a slave that we might enjoy the glorious liberty of children of God. The bondman had an equal participation with his master in the Sacraments of the Church, and in the priceless consolation which religion affords.

Slave-owners were admonished to be kind and humane to their slaves, by being reminded with apostolic freedom that they and their servants had the same

**The Advocate of  
Bondmen.**

Master in heaven, who had no respect of persons. The ministers of the Catholic religion down the ages sought to lighten the burden and improve the condition of the slave, as far as social prejudices would permit, till at length the chains fell from their feet.

Human slavery has at last, thank God! melted away before the noon-day sun of the Gospel. No Christian country contains to-day a solitary slave.

To paraphrase the words of a distinguished Irish jurist: as soon as the bondman puts his foot on a Christian land he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled on the sacred soil of Christendom.

The Savior of mankind never conferred a greater temporal boon on mankind than by ennobling and sanctifying manual labor, and by rescuing it from the

**Manual Labor Sanctified by Christ.** stigma of degradation which had been branded upon it. Before Christ appeared among men, manual and

even mechanical work was regarded as servile and degrading to the freemen of pagan Rome, and was consequently relegated to slaves. Christ is ushered into the world, not amid the pomp and splendor of imperial majesty, but amid the environments of an humble child of toil. He is the reputed son of an artisan, and his early manhood is spent in a mechanic's shop. "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" The primeval curse attached to labor is obliterated by the toilsome life of Jesus Christ. Ever since he pursued his trade as a carpenter, he has lightened the mechanic's tools and has shed a halo around the workshop.

If the profession of a general, a jurist, and a statesman is adorned by the example of a Washington, a Taney, and a Burke, how much more is the calling of a workman ennobled by the example of Christ! What De Tocqueville said over seventy years ago of the United States is true to day, that with us every honest labor is laudable, thanks to the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.

To sum up: The Catholic Church has taught man the knowledge of God and of himself; she has brought

comfort to his heart by instructing him to bear the ills  
**The Church and** of life with Christian philosophy ;  
**Humanity.** she has sanctified the marriage  
bond ; she has proclaimed the sanc-  
tity and inviolability of human life from the moment  
that the body is animated by the spark of life till its  
extinction ; she has founded asylums for the training  
of children of both sexes, and for the support of the  
aged poor ; she has established hospitals for the sick  
and homes for the redemption of fallen women ; she  
has exerted her influence towards the mitigation and  
abolition of human slavery ; she has been the unwav-  
ering friend of the sons of toil. These are some of the  
blessings which the Catholic Church has conferred on  
society.

I will not deny, on the contrary I am happy to  
avow, that the various Christian bodies outside the  
Catholic Church have been and are to-day zealous pro-  
moters of most of those works of Christian benevolence  
which I have enumerated.

But will not our separated brethren have the can-  
dor to acknowledge that we had first possession of the  
field, that these beneficent movements have been in-  
augurated by us, and that the other Christian com-  
munities in their noble efforts for the moral and social  
regeneration of mankind, have in no small measure  
been stimulated by the example and emulation of the  
ancient Church ?

Let us do all we can in our day and generation in  
the cause of humanity. Every man has a mission  
from God to help his fellow-being. Though we differ  
in faith, thank God there is one platform on which we

stand united, and that is the platform of charity and benevolence! We cannot, indeed, like our Divine

**What We Ourselves  
Can Do.**

Master, give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb and strength to the paralyzed limb; but we can work miracles of grace and mercy by relieving the distress of our suffering brethren. And never do we approach nearer to our Heavenly Father than when we alleviate the sorrows of others. Never do we perform an act more God-like than when we bring sunshine to hearts that are dark and desolate. Never are we more like to God than when we cause the flowers of joy and of gladness to bloom in souls that were dry and barren before. "Religion," says the Apostle, "pure and undefiled before God and the Father, is this—to visit the fatherless and the widow in their tribulation, and to keep one's self unspotted from this world." Or to borrow the words of the pagan Cicero: "*Homines ad deos nulla re propius accedunt quam salutem hominibus dando*"—"There is no way by which men can approach nearer to the gods than by contributing to the welfare of their fellow-creatures."

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