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Kind Words From Your Pastor



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HUNTINGTON, INDIANA

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Bishop of Fort Wayne

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INTRODUCTION.

Every pastor realizes how difficult it is to make his people truly spiritual. Not only is the spirit of the world, in which they live, at enmity with God, but so much of their time and attention must be devoted to material things. Then the bad example and other evil influences surrounding them act powerfully toward obliterating the principles on which a good Catholic life must be based.

But no matter what care and labor it may entail, interest in God and His Church must be kept up; the eternal truths must guide people's lives; Catholic principles must be upheld.

So when a pastor finds many of his flock growing tepid, he has resort to missions or retreats as means of reawakening their faith and reviving in them a thorough Catholic spirit.

But there should be in every home a printed reminder of the same lessons and principles that are preached at missions, in order that the members of the family may be frequently referred to promises made and resolutions taken.

Such is the purpose of this brochure. It is intended to be a "missionary in the family," containing an appeal both to practical and careless Catholics, and also to the non-Catholic who may be connected in some manner with Catholic families.

Covering so wide and important a field as it does, this booklet is in great demand by pastors for distribution among the members of their flocks.

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OUR CALLING.

I

"Brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—II Peter i, 10.

These words of St. Peter afford great consolation, but at the same time contain a warning. He tells us that we can make sure our election to the heavenly honors and treasures for which we are candidates—but he reminds us that it requires hard work—"labor the more."

You have often observed how the candidate for a political office works for his election. He loses no time, spares no labor, in order to better his prospects. He studies how to gain influence here, how to remove obstacles there; he consults with his friends; his first thoughts in the morning and his last thoughts at night are about "his chances." Yet after all his arduous work, after time carefully employed, and perhaps money profusely spent, he may not attain his heart's desire.

Such is a sample of the daily struggle which worldly men wage for worldly honors and worldly goods—and from it we should learn an important and wholesome lesson. If men can be so attracted by the uncertain, empty, passing honors and goods of this world; if they can set their whole hearts and souls on the attainment of such shadows, how irresistibly should we be impelled to "labor the more" for the high honors and priceless eternal treasures that "God hath prepared for those who love Him." A superficial glance at the conduct of the generality of people makes it plain that very few are working half as hard to become chosen ones for Heaven as men work for an office here on earth; and therefore the truth of Christ's words uttered on two occasions, becomes evident—namely, that of all called "only few are chosen;" and the truth of St. Paul's words, which tell us that all who enter the race by no means win the heavenly prize.

From the enthusiasm he displays and from the earnestness of his efforts to be elected we say that the political candidate *runs* for an office. St. Paul uses the same figure of speech to express how deeply interested we should be in the great affair of our salvation; he says we must run, and run hard, for the heavenly prize; "so run that you may obtain." Then, in order that no one might be too confident of success, this great apostle, though called a "vessel of election" tells us how he himself runs lest even he might not win. "I run," he says, "not as at an uncertainty; I chastise my body and keep it under subjection." Do you do as much? If all people kept their bodies under subjection, their chances for Heaven would be good. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You resolve to pray, your body protests; you conclude to fast, your body objects. It is your body that wants sinful pleasure, that wants more liquor than it should have. Yet do most people chastise their bodies? Do they not rather pander to their bodies? Such will not win.

No; considering that Heaven is the greatest gift in the power of God, Who can give all things, it is worth our greatest efforts. If every moment of our lives, if our every act, our every word were devoted to its attainment, we would be getting Heaven very cheaply. Now since daily experience proves that most people are not doing much to make sure their election, isn't it plain that "few should be chosen"?

II

Here is the case then: I am a candidate for Heaven. I can become one of the chosen ones, but unless I take more interest in the work, unless I do more for God and for my soul than the generality of people, I shall not win.

Seeing such bad example on all sides, even we Catholics lose sight of a great truth, which should always be uppermost in our minds. It is this: the years we live here are given us for no other purpose than to prepare for ourselves a happy life with God after death.

This being true, let us make a few reflections. How many years have you lived? If your chances to become a chosen one were to depend on the years you have lived, do you think you would win? Have you not lost and misused much precious time, many golden opportunities, put many obstacles in your own way? And how many years will still be given you to make certain your election? This may be your last. During the past year the time expired for over 31,000,000 of those called to heavenly honors. How many of them became "chosen ones"? Ah, be wise in time. Enter the race in earnest today; "so run that you may obtain," "labor the more that by good works, you may make sure your calling and election." To win, you must be on the "narrow way"; you must run perseveringly; you must win by good works, by sound faith, only after many tribulations, by chastising your body.

Who are sure not to win? St. Paul mentions some. He says Heaven is not for the adulterer, not for the fornicator, not for the unjust, not for the curser, not for the drunkard. It is just as surely not for the Sunday Mass-misser, not for the Friday meat-eater, in general, not for any one who refuses to comply with God's requirements.

III

It is true that "God wills all men to be saved." Bethlehem, Gethsemane, the Cross, Calvary make this truth plain. God has done His part; He has mapped out the way whereby people may "make sure their election." He offers all the help they need, but he has made the attainment of Heaven to depend largely on their own will. If they lose, it is because they are unwilling to comply with His will. His will might be expressed thus: "Keep My commandments and be a faithful member of My Church."

We hear many say, "I believe that if one does what is right, he will be saved." This is true, but the trouble is, a person is not doing what is right, unless he does what God wants him to do, and God wants him to be a member of His Church and live up to it.

WHAT YOUR CHURCH IS.

I

If your only purpose on earth be to save your soul, if that be the one thing necessary, then the dearest object to you on earth should be that which helps you to save your soul; and that is the Church. God arranged it so. Did you properly realize this, the privilege of belonging to the Church would be your greatest boast; you would not exchange this boon for the wealth of our millionaires, for the honors of the world's rulers. The Catholic knows the sure way to make certain his election and, in the Church, has so many God-given helps to make easy the winning!

Would that Catholics realized what their Church is to them! Would that they realized that as the true faith is the greatest gift God has bestowed upon them, so the loss of the true faith would be the greatest punishment which God could send them! If this were realized, there would be no such person as the fallen away Catholic. But how common are such apostates! People relinquish the Church on the least pretext. They have trouble with the priest; they dislike some action of the priest and quit the Church. How foolish! Did not Christ foretell that scandals would arise in His Church, yet warn the people to be steadfast in spite of scandal? At any rate, it is not proper to mistake the Church for the scandal-giver and blame God's Church for the scandal. No priest or bishop is the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is God's own institution to continue Christ's work on earth, to apply to you the fruits of your costly redemption, to take away your sins, to instruct you in God's truth, to assist you on the way to Heaven; and in so far the Church is faultless, without a spot or wrinkle; as such she is Christ's holy spouse, whom He loved so tenderly that He died for her. As such the Church should be viewed, and when you quit the Church for any reason, you part company with your truest benefactor; you take a step that will bring disaster upon your soul.

In her members, whether rulers or subjects, the Church is human, very human, sinful; in fact her great work is to deal with the sinner. Her clergy are for the most part devoted, faithful, pious, God-fearing, leaning on God as the only object worthy of their love, but, being human, they may occasionally make mistakes. Didn't Christ prepare you sufficiently for this view of things when He allowed two of His first clergy, who had been prepared for the priesthood by Himself, to make serious mistakes?

Read what Count Isidore von Loeben, a Protestant, has to say about your religion:

"The Catholic churches, with their ever-opened portals, their ever-burning lamps, the ever resounding voices of their thanksgiving, with their masses, their ever-recurring festivals and days of commemoration, declare with touching truth, that here the arms of a mother are ever open, ready to refresh every one who is troubled and heavy laden; that here the sweet repast of love is prepared for all, and a refuge by day and by night. When we consider this constant occupation of priests, this carrying in and out of the Holy of Holies, the fulness of emblems, the ornaments, varying every day, like the changing leaves of the flower, the Catholic Church will appear like a deep, copious well in the midst of a city, which collects around it all the inhabitants, and whose waters, perpetually cool, refresh, bless, and pervade all around."

WHO IS THE LOSER?

I

No, my friend, do not try to excuse yourself for not practising your religion, for you yourself, and only you are the loser. When you quit the Church for any reason, you are hurting yourself immensely and hurting others by your bad example, but are not hurting the Church. If you mean it as revenge, you are taking revenge not on the priest, bishop or people, but on God Himself; for it is He Who requires you to live up to the Church; "He that despiseth you (the Church) despiseth Me," are the words of God Himself.

Let everyone assure himself that though his parish, if small, might miss him a little financially, the Catholic Church can do without him and a few millions of others and be the grandest institution on earth still. She has done it. When Henry VIII of England threatened to leave the Church and take millions with him, should the Pope not grant him a divorce, the Pope answered: "For your own sake I hope you will not leave the Church; but if you do, the Church will live on without you."

Remember that the Church cannot dispense with any of God's own laws or requirements; if people will not comply with them, they must stand the consequences. As God does not need you in Heaven, neither does the Church on earth. But since you do need Heaven, if you consult your best interests, so do you need the Church—as she is the way to Heaven. Satisfy yourself that you cannot get along without the Church.

II

Did you ever consider the responsibility one incurs who leaves the Church? The faith has probably existed among your ancestors for centuries. Would you let it stop with you? Would you deprive your descendants of it? If you live a good Catholic and raise your children good Catholics, in a few centuries there may be thousands belonging to God's

Church because you were a good member. But leave the Church, and in a few centuries there will be thousands of unbelievers who might have been Catholics, had you remained faithful to the Church. Do you see the responsibility? I repeat again: no reason in the world is sufficient to justify one in relinquishing the true Church.

Think of 10,000,000 men, women, and promising youths submitting to cruel martyrdom in the early centuries rather than relinquish their faith.

Think of what your own ancestors endured to preserve their faith for themselves and for you.

Think of the thousands of missionaries who have given up everything to go among the heathen in the hope of saving souls. They would be willing to lose their lives for the sake of one soul like your own.

Your soul is your most valuable possession, and you have only one. Lose it, and unending misery awaits you. Reflect, and do not commit spiritual-suicide to spite anyone.

CHURCH SUPPORT.

I

Though the Church is all and more to you than described in the preceding chapter, yet in her external constitution, she is an organization, a society, composed of rulers and subjects just as the State is. As the State should work, the Church does work for the common good of the people, and hence, like the State, she must be supported by the people. The Church is as much more deserving of support than the State, as the Church is higher than the State, as the good she does is greater than that done by the State. Yet, Oh, inconsistency! (surely the devil is to blame for it), people find no fault whatever when the State asks for some of their earnings, but let the Church do so, and what faultfinding! The State levies taxes according to the amount of one's possessions—so much on \$100.00, and the people pay it. If they do not pay it, the authorities sell them out. But in many congregations each person would like to be legislator and determine what should be the amount of tax or pew rent.

In most countries, the tax for the Church is levied like the tax for the State, and the people pay heavily toward the support of the Church, though you may imagine they pay nothing. It is true that the government pays for the support of the Church, but are not the people taxed heavier by the government on that account?

Some people imagine that because the Church is not of earth, because her work is of the spiritual, charitable order, she ought to get along without money. Would that she could! She is not of earth, but she is on earth, and who or what can get along on earth without money? God Himself realized this for

II

He gave the first law regarding taxation for the Church, and He levied a heavy tax—one-tenth of all one's earnings. Listen to God's own words:

1. "I have given to the sons of Levi (priests) all the tithes (one-tenth) of Israel for a possession, for the ministry wherewith they serve Me in the tabernacle."—Numb. xviii, 21, and again:

2. "All things, which you shall offer of the tithes and shall separate for the gifts of the Lord, shall be the best and choicest things."—Numb. xviii, 29.

3. "Everyone shall offer according to what he hath."—Deut. xvi, 17.

4. "No one shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord."—Deut. xvi, 16.

5. "Give unto the Most-High, according to what He hath given to thee."—Eccus. xxxv, 12.

6. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and give Him of the first of all thy fruits."—Prov. iii, 9.

Look over these texts again and note how general their application is. "All the tithes," "every one shall offer," "no one shall refuse." People who would be insulted if others paid their grocery or butcher bill, are perfectly willing to let others pay for their place in church. The "*Literary Digest*" of January 17, 1903, quotes statistics showing that Catholics, considering their large number, contribute less than Protestants toward church support. Hence complaint from Catholics is unreasonable, when we reflect how much more they get from their Church than Protestant churches can give.

III

Besides being commanded by God to give one-tenth of all their earnings, we read in Exod. xxxv, 29: "All the children of Israel dedicated *voluntary* offerings to the Lord." And again in I Paral. xxix, 9: "And the people rejoiced when they promised their offerings *willingly*, because they offered them to the Lord with all their heart." "God loveth a cheerful giver," says St. Paul.

Religion demands sacrifice, and people who are not willing to do much for the Church certainly do not prize very highly the benefits they derive from the Church. To do good is all that we are allowed to

live for, and surely one can do no greater good or enjoy greater honor than by helping build and maintain temples wherein alone God is properly honored. Do away with Catholic churches, and I think God would hurriedly do away with the world.

But to sift things down to a finer point, how much do you really give to your church—you who think church dues are too high? Thirty to forty dollars a year? That appears to be a big amount, but it is about ten cents a day. Do you smoke? The price of one good cigar laid aside every day, would pay your church dues. Do you drink? The price of one bottle of beer put aside every day would pay your church dues. Do you go to the theatre occasionally, to other amusements? What you give thus for pleasure, for a pastime, would pay your church dues. The butter you put on your bread would easily pay them, and yet you grumble over the amount; though we have seen that nothing on earth is so useful and necessary to us as the Church is.

My dear friend, by your little outlay you make it possible for the truth of God to be preached in your locality, for Christ to dwell in your midst as truly as He dwells in Heaven; you draw upon yourself God's blessings, receive His graces, which are worth more than all the world. You are assisted on your way to Heaven. Do you get your \$40.00 worth? You could never give as much to the Church as you receive from her. God assures us that He will not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity; but remember, "He who soweth sparingly, will also reap sparingly."

UNITY AND PEACE NECESSARY IN THE PARISH.

I

If God be so interested in His Church as He assures us He is, then there is nothing grander on earth, in His eyes, than a congregation whose members work in unity and harmony for His greater honor and glory, and surely nothing can be more displeasing to Him than opposition between priest and people or any other want of harmony. St. Paul tells us that "God is not the God of dissension, but of peace" and gives this warning: "Be careful to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace." Christ pronounces a blessing on the peace-maker and consequently a curse on the peace-breaker: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Yet in almost every congregation, we find discontented parishioners—some who are chronic fault-finders. This should not be. There will always be diversity of opinion among parishioners about important measures; but as each cannot have his own way, let all abide by the judgment of the pastor or that of the majority.

You must consider God's Providence. He often permits things to occur in a parish which are not pleasant, but He wants to try the people's faith and their love of Him. We show our love for God when we are willing to bear hard and disagreeable things for His sake. There are two sides to every question. You may have much fault to find with the priest or with other people in the parish, but don't "take it out on God," for He certainly has more reason to complain of your behavior towards Him. Remember, above all, that no priest is the Catholic Church, and you go to church not for the priest's sake, but to give worship to God and to do good to your own souls.

II

The Catholic Church today is the same in character as it was during the days of the Apostles; so

the words addressed by St. Paul to the congregations he organized will apply most fittingly to the people of every parish and show at the same time how much he prized unity and harmony among the parishioners:

1. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no schisms among you."—I Cor. i, 10.

2. "Fulfill ye My joy, that you be of one mind, having the same charity, being of one accord, agreeing in sentiment."—Philip. ii, 2.

3. "Be ye of one mind in the Lord."—Philip. iv, 2.

4. "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind laboring together, for the faith of the gospel."—Philip. i, 27.

And his prayer for the parish was:

5. "Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of one mind, one towards another according to Jesus Christ, that with one mind and one mouth, you may glorify God."—Rom. xv, 5.

How well does this sound?:

6. "All the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul."—Acts iv, 32; but how terrible this from St. Paul:

7. "Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and avoid them."—Rom. xvi, 17.

In all his utterances St. Paul was inspired by God; so his words show how God Himself must love and bless a peaceable congregation, but how He must abhor and keep His blessings from a disunited parish.

THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL.

It would take up too much space to enlarge on all the reasons why Catholics are asked to make such sacrifices for the education of their children. I shall make only a few reflections, but to the man or woman who is able and willing to think, these reflections will be irrefragable arguments. I shall first state what education is; then ascertain whether the public schools really educate; whereupon it will be proper to decide whether the parochial school does. What is education?

I

All Christians will admit that every child is born to live two lives: a short one in society here, and an eternal one with God hereafter. They will admit, moreover, that the child comes into the world under the greatest disadvantages as to both. Therefore it must be fitted for both; it must be so reared that it will become a good useful citizen on earth and a saint in Heaven. This is the child's destiny. Fitting it for this is Education. The child must be instructed in secular knowledge that he may not be at a disadvantage here below, and he must be taught about God, about his duties toward God, about the eternal truths before he can comply with his heavenly calling. Is not this plain?

But even now, the child is only partly educated. Instruct the child in every branch of secular knowledge, and you have no grounds for believing that he will make a good citizen; and instruct him fully about God and all the truths of faith and you have no assurance that he will attain Heaven.

What is wanting? The moral side of the child's nature needs education also. Secular and religious knowledge instruct the mind; but that the child might become a good, honest citizen in society, and that he might love and serve the God Whom he has been taught about, that he might "live by faith," he must have his heart and conscience educated. Briefly then, Education consists in developing all the

powers of the child's being—the heart, the mind, the conscience.

II

Now do the public schools do all this? You know better. They leave the moral side of the child entirely untouched, and do not fit the child even for this life. Their failure in this respect is becoming so plain, that even prejudiced eyes are noticing it. Public school champions are today reluctantly making the humiliating concession that their method is a failure, that something must be done. Protestant ministers who have been wont to accuse the Catholic Church of being opposed to education are "taking it back" and saying "you have the right way."

Reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and the rest, without religion, are making sharp men, clever men, men who know how to get the better of you, such men as fill our penitentiaries. But reading, spelling, arithmetic, etc., etc., are not going to make men honest, pure, law-respecting and God-fearing; they will not make a man a faithful husband, nor a woman a good wife; in other words, will not fit a person even for this life.

It is plain then, that the public schools neglect entirely one side of the child's nature, and that the principal side, since unless a child's conscience and heart be educated, it were better that he should not be educated at all. Let a man's mind be educated ever so well, if he be irreligious, society has a rascal and a scamp to deal with, whom it would be much better off without. But educate the heart and consciences of our infidels, atheists, anarchists, socialists, even of our criminals, and you will make of them ideal Christian men.

The world, I admit, stands in need of intellectual men, but far more in need of honest men, pure men, faithful men, and the public schools do not even pretend to turn out such. One thing is therefore plain, namely, that the public schools do not impart all that education implies; that they only educate one faculty of the soul—the mind.

We are still granting them too much, for they do not even educate the child's mind in what is most important, or rather¹ in what is absolutely necessary for the child to know. Truth is the object of the mind. The truths of faith are the highest truths, the most important truths, but the child is not taught them. Not one word is taught concerning God, though He is the beginning and end of all knowledge. Not a word is taught the child about his origin, his duties here, his destiny. A knowledge of God's laws, of the child's duties to God, is a necessary condition for their observance, and their observance is a necessary condition for salvation, but the child learns nothing of them in the public schools.

Patrons of the Public School will answer us in this manner: We turn the child over to the Sunday School for a knowledge of God, of the truths of faith, of his duties as a Christian, etc., and we also leave the whole moral side to the Church. Let me reply that they thus acknowledge what we are proving, that the public schools do not educate fully. But now let us see whether the Sunday School can make up the deficiency.

First of all, as stated above, experience testifies too plainly that in spite of all the churches and Sunday schools in the land, the majority of our citizens know and care little about God, about law, about honesty, about purity, about morality in general.

Secondly, the parents of two-thirds of the children in the United States are not active members of any church. Will they take a deep interest in seeing that their children get the proper moral training? That so many parents are not church members, is due to the fact that they were not properly educated when young.

Thirdly, even if all children attended Sunday school, would it be just to give sixty times as much attention to the mind as to the moral side of the child? To spend thirty (30) hours a week imparting secular knowledge and to set aside only one-half hour a week for religious knowledge? This would prove that public school patrons do not set a high value on

the child's moral training, which is, in reality, immeasurably more important than secular knowledge.

III

It is now in order to determine whether the Parochial School educates fully and properly. Listen a moment and decide for yourself. Education, in its full sense, as we have seen, means to fit the child for this life and for the life hereafter. The public schools make no pretention to do more than to fit the child for the business part of this life. This is not enough for one who understands the relative importance of things; so we Catholics turn to the public schools and say: "That child is not half educated even for this life and you have taken no account whatever of the next life for which it must also be fitted; don't you know that the welfare of society depends much more on that child's character than on its intellectual training?" The public school answers: We know it, but we can only give the one side of education. Then the Catholic Church turns to her own and says: Parents! it is important that your child become an intelligent citizen, but it is more important that he become a good citizen, a pure, an honest citizen, and it is absolutely necessary that he be taught about His Maker, his duties to Him, for only thus can he be fitted for eternity; and because the public school does not teach him the eternal truths and does not even aim to make him a good citizen, "suffer your little children to come unto Me," I will educate their minds fully, and will also educate their hearts and consciences. I will instruct them in the things of this life, and in the things of the life to come. I will impart all the secular knowledge that they can get elsewhere, and I will besides teach them their duties to God, their duties to you and their duties to their fellow men. I shall also train their hearts to love God, to love and respect you and all others. I shall impress them with a sense of right and wrong, train their consciences to fear God, to respect the rights of others and pursue good. I shall place over them as teachers men or women,

whose very dress will remind them that there are higher things to live for than the things of this world; men or women, inspired by holy motives, who at the altar of God have dedicated their lives to "instruct others unto justice." Even with the child's secular studies I shall intermingle an element of devotion and religion. And after I have had your child under such salutary influence, if he does not become a good citizen of society and a faithful member of God's Church, it is either because he has a bad example at home, or because he is acted upon by evil influences of the world or because he abuses God's graces.

Does not the Catholic way of educating appeal to you as immeasurably better and more complete than any other way? Dealing with every side of the child's nature, the parochial school educates properly and fully. I don't mean to hint that every product of the public school will turn out badly, but I do contend that men and women who attend the public school and who are now esteemed members of society owe their good character not to the public schools but to good home training, or to other salutary influences.

I might have gone further and shown that the Catholic Church alone has the right to educate. St. Paul says so: "How can one teach unless he be sent?" And Christ sent only the Church. The Catholic Church alone has the full truth of God, and hence she alone can teach it correctly. Moreover the Church *must* teach, for God has entrusted to her the eternal interests of man; she *must* teach, because Christ gave her that commission: "Teach all nations and I shall be with you."

IV

Many Catholics have a wrong notion of the real purpose of the parochial school. They suppose that we build and maintain our own schools merely that we may teach the children catechism every day. No, their purpose is rather to lay a solid religious foundation for the faith of our future fathers and mothers.

The principles of faith must be impressed on the minds and hearts of the children; their early daily actions must be regulated by the eternal truths, that later, they may "live by faith."

To live rightly, people must not only know but realize the truths of religion, and this is only rendered possible when the children are deeply impressed with them. When the early years of the child are spent in the very shadow of the church, with teachers whose example and exhortations spur them on to good, he can hardly fail to get wholesome impressions which will last. Moreover, he learns to be reverent in church, how to assist at Mass, how to pray devoutly, his faults are corrected, and he receives a better preparation for his first Holy Communion.

Years ago the parochial school was not so much of a necessity. There were not so many attractions and evil influences for the child, and parents were for the most part more strict with their children. Today, with the cheap novels, newspapers, and free libraries, people read more and read so much against God and the Church that our children must needs have a clear knowledge of and be deeply impressed by the truths of faith, or they will be led astray. If we expect the fathers and mothers of tomorrow to be good Catholics we must plant solid faith in the boys and girls of today.

"This is eternal life, that they may know Thee and whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." The knowledge of God, says Christ, is eternal life, yet this true knowledge cannot be obtained in any but the parochial school. And listen to what the Holy Ghost says: "Cursing, lying, infidelity, and adultery abound, because there is no knowledge of God in the land." Isn't it then the plain duty of God's Church to put knowledge of God in the land?

Yes, the parochial school aims to fit children for this life and for the next life, and in doing so it educates in the fullest sense of the word.

MIXED MARRIAGES.

It is not my purpose to scold those Catholics who have already cast their lot with a Protestant or an infidel, for except in very few instances, they secretly concede that it was the mistake of their lives. Many Catholics, who before marriage could see no wrong in the step in their case, have told me that they would never do it over.

And as to the unmarried, I shall not write them a sermon, for they have a real horror for sermons on mixed-marriages, and on account of this horror, they seldom give an attentive ear to the reasons for the Church's strict position regarding such marriages. My purpose then, will be merely to enumerate some of these reasons in a manner plain and convincing to everyone who will use his "thinking powers" a little.

1. First of all, let me say that it is God Himself who will not tolerate mixed-marriages, and the Church merely explains and enforces His will. Even in the Old Testament, mention of God's prohibition of mixed-marriages is so frequent that it would occupy too much space to quote all passages. I shall mention only a few:

"Thou shalt not take of their daughter's (unbelievers) a wife for thy son.—Exod. xxxiv, 16.

"If you will embrace the errors of those nations and make marriages with them, know you for a certainty, that they shall be a pit and a snare in your way."—Josue xxiii, 12.

"You have transgressed, (done something forbidden), and taken strange wives to add to the sin of Israel."—I Esdras x, 10.

"We have sinned against our God and have taken strange wives."—I Esdras x, 2.

Read the whole chapter x, of the First Book of Esdras to see how mixed marriages were viewed by faithful Jews.

2. If God Himself forbade such mixed-alliances in the Old Law, when marriage was only a natural contract, how much more reason is there for such prohibition now, that Christ has raised this contract

to the rank of things most holy. For Christians marriage is now a sacrament, representing and effecting a holy union and intended to sanctify those who enter it. It can be such a holy union only where faith marries faith, where both parties are under the dominion of God's Church.

3. No law is more reasonable and charitable than the law forbidding mixed-marriages. We are on earth to work for Heaven; that is certain. And most people must do that work as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers, in other words, in the marriage state. Wherefore their marriage should put no obstacle in the way; it should rather help them. But when a Catholic marries a Protestant, he does put an obstacle in the way. If I want God's blessing on my married life, I must not break His law whilst entering it; I should rather endeavor to have God present at the marriage ceremony. He is not present at a mixed-marriage, for He forbids such. God cannot be inconsistent.

4. In marriage, husband and wife become one moral person. They must endeavor to sanctify each other. This cannot be done in a mixed-marriage, for how can there be harmonious co-operation towards salvation? They cannot even speak and think alike about their duties to God. A mixed-marriage makes a "house divided against itself." In marriage man must have a "help like unto himself" especially in religion, since thereby he strives to bring about the "one thing necessary."

5. When a man and woman enter marriage, they must be ready to become father and mother. Then on the Catholic devolves the very strict duty of bringing up the children faithful members of the Catholic Church. Need I tell you that this is rarely accomplished where one party is a Protestant. I say rarely, for I admit that some few instances might be referred to.

Statistics will show better than any argument what good Catholics the off-spring of mixed-marriages become. The "Literary Digest" a few years ago, quoted statistics gleaned from a house to house

canvass, as follows: Where both father and mother were Catholic, ninety-two per cent of the grown-up children are Catholics, but in mixed-marriages only thirty-four per cent of the children go to church at all. That means that two thirds of the children of mixed-marriages are lost to God's Church, and I might say, lost to Heaven.

Can you believe, that God will bless such unions when they tend to pull down rather than build up His Kingdom? "Thy Kingdom come," (increase) is what we pray for. God's Kingdom would diminish fast, as statistics show, did the Church permit mixed-marriages.

6. Where husband and wife differ in religion, the child must generally be trained in doubt, not in faith. The child can hardly bring itself to believe that membership in the Catholic Church is so necessary, if one of its parents be not a member.

7. What if the Catholic party should die whilst the children are still young? The Protestant party must now see that the children be instructed in the Catholic faith, that they attend to their religious duties, etc. Even if the Protestant party do this, the children will take little interest when the surviving parent does not practice what he or she preaches and inculcates.

8. The non-Catholic party in a mixed-marriage either is opposed to the Catholic religion, or he is indifferent about all religion, or he is disposed toward the Catholic religion. Now, if he be opposed to the true religion, he is surely not pleasing to God; if he be indifferent about all religion he is not pleasing to God; if he be disposed toward the Catholic religion, as long as he defers entering the Church, he is not pleasing to God. So where is there any mixed-marriage that pleases God?

9. The plainest reason for God's, and consequently the Church's, prohibition of mixed-marriages is that God wants marriage entered into from holy, pure, supernatural motives. You are not actuated by such motives when you marry one not of the faith. Your reason for marrying a Protestant is, let

us say, his good looks, his means, or even his pleasing, kind disposition; it may be he is "just according to your taste." What does God care for all this, if his soul is not right, if his mind will not accept the truth and his will be not disposed to keep God's laws?

God wants faith to marry faith, grace to marry grace. Grace is everything with God. If the beauty of God's image, by grace, be not on the soul, all the other good habits, fine qualities of that person taken together will not satisfy God. Now in mixed-marriages grace seldom marries grace; for if the non-Catholic be not baptized he is not in a state of grace; even if he be baptized he is most probably not in a state of grace.

10. Of course, many Catholics who are keeping company with non-Catholics believe that in their case things will go all right after marriage. I speak for their best interests when I say: be careful; do not deceive yourselves. Others have thought the same thing but have become sadly disappointed. Remember that our lives will be happy or unhappy precisely as God wants them to be; and remember, too, that the devil is also very much interested in your marriage. You may later have to confess: "The serpent deceived me."

But do not converts often result from mixed-marriages? Not half as frequently as apostates. The non-Catholic should become a convert before marriage and take plenty of time, too, to acquaint himself with the teachings and practices of the Church he enters.

THE CATHOLIC MARRIAGE.

I

It has always been the teaching of theologians that when God calls a person to any state of life, He is ready so to dispose and arrange things that they will work together for that person's good unless the person himself by want of caution make himself unworthy of such a favor.

Now matrimony is such a state of life; hence if God has called you thereto, He will lead the way to a happy marriage for you providing you will let Him have more to do with it. He will direct the choice and see that you secure the right partner, if you pray to Him for this and by a careful life dispose yourself for this favor from God. The seriousness of the step from which one cannot recede and the hundreds of thousands of unhappy homes in our country should make the young more careful when choosing a partner for life. But many young people are so blinded by inclination and passion that they do not see danger ahead. They forget that just as the call to the marriage state comes from God so upon Him must they rely for all that will make their marriage happy, which includes, of course, the sending of the right partner.

By reckless company-keeping, etc., these youths turn against God; then the devil has his way. He is shrewd, and having experimented with the young for centuries, knows by what bait they are best drawn into an unhappy marriage. Such is the teaching of the Holy Ghost Himself, as we read in the book of Tobias (vi, 17): "For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from their mind, over them the devil has power."

In advising young Catholics, then, who feel themselves called to the marriage state, I would call their attention to another utterance of an inspired writer: "we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens who know not God" (Tob. viii, 5). I would remind them that "a

good wife shall be given in the portion of them that fear God to a man for his good works" (Ecclus. xxvi, 3); and that "a prudent wife is properly from the Lord" (Prov. xix, 14). To make sure that your partner will be "from the Lord," I would ask you to pray and consult your pastor (and parents) just as you would do in case you felt a call to the religious life; then do not choose one who is evidently not "from the Lord," but from the devil, such as an enemy of your religion, a person of bad habits, etc. "Above all things pray to the Most High, that He may direct thy way in truth" (Ecclus. xxxvii, 19). "My son do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done" (Ecclus. xxxii, 24).

II

Just as the ceremony at a mixed marriage is the simplest and the coldest at which the priest ever officiates, so the ceremony by which two good Catholics are united for life is one of the most solemn in the Church's ritual. The Catholic marriage, in the words of St. Paul, is "a great sacrament," and hence the ceremony is performed in the church. Moreover, as the marriage state is one of the three states of life to which the parties are called by God, and in which they are to serve God together till death—like the reception into the religious life, marriage is entered into before the very altar.

Instead of being "joined together as the heathen who know not God," (Tob. viii, 5), before two good Catholics speak the word which makes them one, they, by a good confession, remove from their souls everything that might prevent God's presence at the ceremony, and by putting themselves in the state of grace they dispose themselves for God's blessing on their wedded life. Now God looks down upon them with the same loving eye as when the cleansing waters of Baptism made them His adopted children. He sees the light of faith and the beauty of His own image resplendent in their souls. As their hearts become one, so does grace marry grace and faith marry faith.

No sooner are they united in marriage, than the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered for them with special prayers for God's blessing and protection on their lives and for His powerful help to enable them to perform their new duties well. The Church even allows an interruption at this Mass, which is not permitted to the priest at any other time. During the principal part of the sacrifice, whilst Christ is personally present on the altar, the priest leaves off the Mass, invites the newly-married couple to approach the altar, and then turning to Christ, the priest asks Him again to grant them a long life, a happy life, a life so blessed and replete with good works that it will be a sure way to the Heavenly Banquet. A few moments later the Son of God becomes their first food that morning and thus unites Himself more closely to them than they are united to each other.

Could God's blessing be withheld from a marriage thus prepared for and thus entered into? Isn't there an unspeakable difference between the cold, sad, mixed-marriage and the solemn joyful Catholic marriage?

Are you now surprised that the Church inveighs so strongly against mixed alliances?

After such reflections, will any who read this enter into marriage without prayer, without a fit preparation? Will they allow themselves to be led into an unhappy marriage by an enemy of their religion, by a person of bad habits? How could they do so, with these terrible words uttered by the Holy Ghost ringing in their ears? "They who in such manner receive marriage, as to shut out God from their mind, over them the devil has power" (Tob. vi, 17).

TO THE NON-CATHOLIC IN A MIXED-MARRIAGE.

I

What has been said in the chapter on Mixed-Marriages is said with all respect to you. My purpose was not to offend, but to give to the Catholic plain reasons for God's disapproval of mixed-marriages. If you will kindly reflect but a moment, you will admit that God cares more for your soul than for your body; and hence in marriage, He is more concerned about the union of your souls than the union of your bodies. You and your partner are working together for the things of this life; God wants you to work together for the things of Heaven; but can you work together thus when you do not believe alike?

I do not blame you for not having accepted your partner's faith, if you never believed that he or she had the truth; but will you kindly listen to a few facts from which you might ascertain whether one of you has the true faith and which? Most surely you are willing to listen to argument, for every reasonable person is. No one on this earth is so deserving of respect as the man or woman who is sincere, and earnest, who wants to know and to do what is right.

II

What is your belief? Your partner is a Catholic. If you differ from him or her, then both of you cannot be right; one of you surely has not the truth. Do you profess any religion? If not, I am going to ask you a question:

Do you believe in the Divinity of Christ? That is, do you believe that Christ was really God? That the Christ, whom we revere as God, lived on earth 1900 years ago can be proved more plainly than any other fact of history, for not only one, but many historians of His own time speak of Him. But was He God? His enemies try to prove that He was not, but the harder their attempt, the more clearly do they convince the people that He was God.

They grant that He was everything short of God; that He was a model of perfection; the holiest person that ever lived. Let us take them at their own word. Would He have been a model of perfection if His whole public life had been spent in deceiving the people? Would he have been the holiest person that ever lived, if he was guilty of blasphemy, and the blackest falsehood? But if He was not God, then He was a deceiver, a blasphemer, a false teacher; for His every act and most of His teaching were directed to impress on the world the belief that He was God. Now his worst enemies have too much respect for Christ, to charge Him with deception, blasphemy, falsehood. If He was not such a wicked person, then He was what He so emphatically professed to be—God. But His many miracles, and especially His Resurrection, in support of which there could not be stronger evidence asked; His whole teaching, and the effects of His teaching, all prove most conclusively that Christ was the very "Son of the living God."

III

But what was God doing on earth in human form? One great purpose was to enlighten the world in matters of tremendous importance. During the 4,000 years previous to His appearance on earth, only one people knew anything about what is of the greatest importance for man to know. People knew nothing certain of their origin, their purpose on earth, nor of their destiny. They paid God no true worship, or rather, they worshipped things that were not God at all. Christ taught the world much about God; that God made us for Himself; that our purpose on earth is to honor, love and serve this God according to His requirements; and that as a reward, we should be made eternally happy in Heaven.

In order to have uniformity of belief and worship, Christ instituted a Church of which he strictly requires all to become members as a condition for attaining Heaven.

If Christ was God and requires this, then we are not free to join this Church or not to join it. Heaven

belongs to God, and if He wants you in His Church as a condition for attaining Heaven, then you cannot expect Heaven without complying with this condition. You cannot vote unless you are a citizen of the United States; you cannot be elected to the Presidency, no matter how well qualified you may be, unless you were born in this country. If such are the requirements laid down by the constitution, they must be complied with. In like manner, if God makes Heaven dependent on membership in His Church, then His demands must be complied with.

IV

Listen to the conversation I would hold with you, if you were already a member of some church, but not of the Catholic Church.

If you told me you were a member of a Protestant church, I would naturally ask: of which one? for there are four or five hundred of them.

If you answered, of the Methodist Church, I would again ask: of which branch? for it has seventeen branches.

If you answered: "I am a Lutheran," I would again ask: Do you belong to the Missouri synod, or to the Reformed Lutheran, or to the Evangelical Lutheran, or to one of the other nineteen bodies, and to which?

If you told me that you were an Episcopalian, I would be compelled to ask the same question: Do you belong to the High or Low or Broad Church?

If you replied that you were a Presbyterian, I would again want to know to which of the twelve branches you belong.

As each of these denominations consists of many branches, one differing from the other, it would be pretty hard to decide whether you or a member of one of the other branches, professed the exact teaching of the founder of the sect in question.

After learning what church you belong to, I would ask: Could you prove to me that that church is the Church which Christ established? For Christ certainly did not establish all of the hundreds of con-

tradictory sects. He founded A Church and wants everybody to belong to *It*, not to some other. He calls His Church *My* Church, *The* Church. If you don't happen to belong to that one, then you belong to somebody's else Church besides God's.

V

Now, can the one true Church be distinguished from the rest? Here are some incontrovertible facts which will greatly assist us in discovering the true Church of Christ:

Four hundred years ago there was only one Church and that Church dates back 1500 years farther,—to Christ's time, and that Church is today stronger in membership than all the other 400 or 500 sects together; that Church is spread all over the world, yet not split up into branches, but wonderfully united in belief and practice. That Church happens to be the Catholic Church. Are these not strong points in favor of the Catholic Church being the Church of Christ?

Here are some more undeniable facts: No Protestant denomination is over 400 years old, whereas Christ's Church must be 1900 years old. This fact alone excludes all the Protestant sects. Moreover history mentions the names of the men who started the Protestant denominations.

Protestants knowing this, answer us: We are aware that the Catholic Church is the oldest Church; we know too that she was once the true Church, but she fell into gross errors a few centuries ago; therefore today she is not the true Church.

Now, my friend, I hope you are sincere, so reflect a moment; you have been imposed upon. If the Catholic Church has no longer the truth, then 499 out of the 500 Protestant sects have not the truth either, for they all differ, and truth is one; the probability then would be that you don't belong to the right Protestant sect either.

But now, could the true Church fall into error? Remember that Christ, who was God, established the Catholic Church; history admits this. Would a wise

and omnipotent God allow the Church, which He established for all times, to fall into error when He could prevent it? St. Paul asks husbands to love their wives as Christ loved His Church and died for her. But would Christ have entertained deep love for His Church if He permitted her to leave Him, or if He left her?

No, my friend, once the true Church, always the true Church. Christ even promised that this would be so; that He would remain with His Church till the end of time; that He would send the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, to keep her in truth; that hell would not gain a victory over her. St. Paul vouches for the Church's stability in truth when he calls her the pillar and ground of Truth.

I must be more brief; so here are a few points to reflect upon:

In the Apostles' Creed, the oldest of all creeds, we read: I believe in the holy *Catholic* Church.

The 10,000,000 martyrs of the first three centuries died cruel deaths rather than abandon the truth of the Catholic Church.

Do you know of an earnest, well instructed convert to the Catholic faith, who ever regretted that he became a Catholic?

Did you ever hear of a Catholic becoming a Protestant on his death bed for safety sake?

Every day Protestants become Catholics on their death beds for safety sake.

Instead of the Catholic Church it is the Protestant denominations that are changing. Presbyterians have discussed changing their creed for the last two years. Imagine the Baptists dropping baptism, but they have considered that. No Protestant denomination is the same as when founded; the different branches show that. Wesley, for example, did not found seventeen branches of the Methodist church.

Other churches are adopting Catholic practices more and more.

If the Catholic Church is not the true Church, then none is, for all others are based on the Bible,

which the Catholic Church gave them and which she tically admit the Catholic Church's infallibility, that is, they admit that she could not teach error; then she never did; then she is the true Church today; then Protestantism has no excuse for its existence; then the so-called Reformation was rather a Deformation, if it changed the creed of God's Church.

When Protestants charge the Catholic Church with having invented new doctrines, or with having discarded old ones, how is it that they can never say "when"? New definitions by Councils are not new doctrines.

Objections:

Why are so many Catholics bad if their Church be the Church?

Ans.—Because they do not live up to their Church.

Why do so many Catholics leave the Church if to belong to it be such a privilege?

Ans.—Because, on account of not living in accordance with the requirements of the Church, God allows them to lose their faith as a punishment, and a severe punishment it is.

Why is the Church persecuted even in Catholic countries?

Ans.—Because where God has a strong hold on the people, the devils fight hardest. Why, my friend, the very best proof of the Catholic Church being declared inspired. If the Catholic Church had not been God's infallible Church at that time, then no Protestant denomination knows whether the Bible contains God's word at all or not.

By accepting the Bible as inspired, they prac- God's Church is that she is persecuted. Christ says so: "They have persecuted Me; they will persecute you too."

But it is a hard step for many Protestants to become Catholics.

Ans.—Undoubtedly, but Heaven is surely worth it. Remember that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence." Be careful, you are looking more for your comfort than to please God.

But one hates to leave the Church in which he was reared.

Ans.—Now, don't be guided by feeling, but by conscience and reason.

But I don't believe in confession.

Ans.—Your partner does; 300,000,000 others do; the priest himself goes to confession. It is not half as hard as you imagine; you will feel a hundred per cent better after your first confession; you will then believe in it, and like other converts you will want to go often.

I am not explaining Catholic doctrine in this little book; but examine the different truths in some Catholic book that does explain them and you will believe them all, if you are in earnest and pray for a little light.

Would that people cared more for the religion that pleases God than for one that pleases themselves. We cannot expect Heaven through the latter kind.

Now, my friend, when I tell you that it is necessary to join the Church of God, I am not making a law; I am simply in all kindness reminding you of a duty that Christ Himself imposes upon all. Read over again this chapter carefully and earnestly, and see if it is not pretty plain that your partner, whether good or bad, has the true faith. The fact that there are bad Catholics will not excuse you from becoming a Catholic as soon as you are convinced that God requires it.

Really would it not be better also if you and your spouse were members of the same Church, rearing the children in strong faith, and working together for the "one thing necessary?" Convince yourself that a moral life alone will not lead to Heaven; we must "live by faith." Even your good works are worth nothing to God, if you refuse to do His will in His greatest demand—join His Church. "Without faith (the true faith of course) it is impossible to please God."

Pray with St. Paul: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

TO THE FALLEN-AWAY CATHOLIC.

1. My good friend, I would ask you to be serious, just for a few moments, and to listen to one who has your best interests at heart. Tell me why you have left off going to church.

You certainly have not ceased to believe in the existence of God; for that would mean you have begun to believe the greatest absurdity, namely, that the sun, moon and stars, the earth, the seas and the first living creatures made themselves. If these things did not make themselves, then an Almighty Being made them. We call that Being, God. Isn't it rather that you wish there were no God, so that there would be no hell and no judgment? But this wish will not change the state of things any more than the murderer's wish that there were no penitentiary, will do away with such a place of punishment.

2. Or have you begun to doubt the Divinity of Christ? Read the preceding chapter over and convince yourself that Christ was truly God and that living up to the Church He established is the only way to Heaven for you.

3. Or have you put yourself out of the Church by an unlawful or invalid marriage? In so doing you made a tremendous blunder, but that mistake can be corrected. And I beg you not to defer its correction long; go to see your parish priest at once.

4. Have you put yourself out of the Church by joining **SOCIETIES FORBIDDEN BY THE CHURCH**? Then again, I would say that if you cannot belong to both the society and the Church, good sense will dictate that you give up the society. For even if you see no reason for that society's condemnation, you must at least grant that it cannot lead you to Heaven; that it is a human organization.

To choose a human organization in preference to the divine one instituted by Christ, is an awful insult to God. Moreover, you can take for granted that the Church's condemnation is based on solid reasons, though you might not clearly comprehend these rea-

sons. The chaplain and Bible, which all secret societies have, show that religion enters into them, and the fact that that Bible is not the one approved by the Church, and that chaplain is not commissioned by God, makes the religion of these societies heretical. Hence the Church can no more permit you to belong to such societies (with a religion different from her own) than she can allow you to join a Protestant church.

If these societies merely had a tendency to make people take less interest in their Church, that reason would be enough for prohibiting Catholics from joining them. And that this tendency exists, I know. Even Protestant ministers, who often become members of secret societies for policy sake, concede that persons who join them often give up active attendance at church, giving as a reason, that they get religion enough in their lodge.

Catholics who belong to these societies often refer to the religious features as reasons why the Church should approve of them rather than condemn them. If such were the case, then the Church should approve of all other religions, for the preachers of such religions do not teach the people evil. Christ established one religion; that one and no other pleases God. "He who is not with Me is against Me," are Christ's own words.

5. Or have you just remained away from Church through carelessness,—neglected Mass and your Easter duty? I beg of you for your own soul's sake to begin again at once to live up to your Church; you have deprived your soul of much good and have positively sinned; you are walking away from Heaven.

6. Or have you been addicted to some sin which you were unwilling to give up and therefore felt that it would do you no good to go to church? If so, my friend, come to your senses this day. The sin may be hard to give up, but it will be harder to go to hell; you are on the sure way thereto. If you care more to please your passions than to please God, you can not expect Heaven. About the past do not despair,

for are not these words cheering: "On whatever day the sinner is converted (repents), his iniquities I shall not remember." But do not postpone this repentance, for God may refuse you the grace later.

7. Or have you forsaken Church because affairs of the congregation were not run rightly; because of trouble you had with the priest; because of some scandal that arose in the church? All these are no reasons why you should take revenge on your own soul, nor why you should refuse to give to God the service He is so justly entitled to from you.

8. No, my friend, if all were to follow your example, if all were to refuse God what He so reasonably asks and what He is so willing to repay; if all were to refuse to pay homage to God, especially on His day, (Sunday), I am sure, that God, receiving no honor and glory from His creatures, would put an end to things here below.

Do not relinquish your Church, for that would be denying Christ, and listen to what Christ says He will do to those who deny Him: "He that will deny Me before men, him I shall deny before My Father Who is in Heaven." One who does not keep his promise is not very honorable. Remember what you promised through your sponsors in Baptism, what you promised yourself in First Holy Communion and Confirmation. You promised solemnly, in church, that you would ever be a faithful member of the Church,—even a soldier of Christ.

I certainly have the interests of God and your own best interests at heart, when I implore you to begin at once to live up to your Church again. Endeavor to get some good out of the remainder of your life. No matter how long it has been since your last good confession, go this very month; the priest will assist you and I assure you that you will feel happy to be again on friendly terms with God.

All the reasons which you might adduce to justify yourself in staying away from church will not suffice; for as Heaven is the one thing we cannot afford to lose, so is the way to Heaven (the Church) the one thing we cannot dispense with.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.

I

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, our God, to receive glory and honor; because Thou hast created all things.”—(Apoc. iv, 11).

“Come, let us adore and fall down before the Lord that made us; for He is the Lord our God; we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”—(Ps. xciv, 6, 7).

It is with a feeling of sadness that I must reprimand many Catholics for refusing to comply with a law which they should obey so cheerfully.

It is indeed sad to think that man can become so forgetful of his real purpose on earth as not to see the reasonableness of giving himself up entirely at least on one day of each week to the service of God.

Considering that we are on earth only to serve God, and considering the eternal reward promised us in return for this service, we must admit that God asks very little of our time for His exclusive worship. Because He does ask so little, it seems that He designedly calls especial attention to His third commandment by prefacing it with the word “remember”; as much as to say: “I am requesting but one day out of seven for Myself but this day I want,—remember, that thou keep it holy.”

I shall not enter into the reasons why the first instead of the seventh day of the week is dedicated to God in the New Law, for substantially the commandment remains the same,—requiring man to rest from his work and to worship God publicly on one day of each week.

II

After establishing the fact that we are strictly commanded to keep the Sunday holy, the next thing to make clear is the precise manner in which God must be worshipped on this day. And it will be plain to any thinking mind that God must be honored differently from others. The honor we pay Him must contain an acknowledgment of our entire dependence.

on Him. We call such honor sacrifice. And because we do not owe everything to any one else but God, we are not permitted to offer sacrifice to any one but to Him.

The honor we pay to God, then, must be greater both in quality and in quantity than the honor shown to any other person.

As to quality, it must be sacrifice; and as to quantity, it must be the highest possible.

Even here on earth the dignity and character of the person are considered when there is question of rendering homage. We show no marks of recognition whatever to a non-acquaintance; we greet an acquaintance; we shake hands with a friend; we meet the President with committees, decorate public buildings in his honor and escort him through the streets amid music and cheers.

If honors should increase in quantity according to the dignity of the person, how is man to honor God adequately, before whom kings are nothing, to whom he owes his very life and countless other blessings? Sacrifice must be the quality of worship; the quantity must be infinite,—because we owe an infinite debt to God. But how can man pay an infinite debt? He must first have a gift of infinite value. And this, thanks to God's goodness and love, the Catholic Church has.

In the Mass we have a sacrifice of infinite value—one that honors God adequately. I shall make this more plain.

III

You understand well, that when Christ sacrificed His life on Calvary for the world's sins nineteen hundred years ago, God received an infinite worship from an infinite Person. It was the first time in the world's history that due honor was paid to the Almighty; but since that day God has not been satisfied with any inferior sacrifice. His wisdom devised a means whereby His only Son, our beloved Savior, would be a "priest forever." "But how?" you may ask; "Christ died once, and so cruelly that once was

surely enough; moreover, He went to Heaven with the body which was immolated in Calvary's sacrifice." This is very true, yet I repeat that God's wisdom, prompted by boundless love, made it possible for Christ to offer every day until the end of time, the sacrifice of Calvary,—only not in the same manner. The manner does not count so much. The object offered and the Person offering are what count, and they were always to be the same.

Here is what God's wisdom and love devised: At the last supper, the night before Calvary's bloody sacrifice, Christ began His priesthood "according to the order of Melchisedech,"—the kind of priesthood He was to exercise forever. By creative words He produced His living Person under another form; under the form of bread and wine. Then for God's perpetual honor and for the world's perpetual good He empowered His Apostles and their successors for all time to do the same thing. That is, He empowered them to produce His living Person on the altar of sacrifice, whenever they as His representatives and as ministers of the people should say over bread and wine the self-same words He used: "This is My body; this is My blood." This is what takes place in the Mass.

Now it will be plain to everyone that if the living Christ in Heaven is rendered present on earth whenever Mass is offered,—no matter under what form,—He can repeatedly sacrifice Himself to the Father to atone for the world's sins and to implore blessings upon immortal souls.

Is it not plain now that Christ can be a "priest forever"? Is it not plain now that the Mass is a form of worship of the same value as the sacrifice of the cross,—since the same body and blood of Christ are immolated? And considering that it, and it alone, honors God adequately, are you surprised that the Catholic Church imposes on her people an obligation to be present at Mass at least once a week, on Sunday, the day which we must keep holy?

V

No obligation imposed by God or man should

be so cheerfully complied with as the obligation to hear Mass on Sunday. In fact it should not be considered a duty, but a privilege to be present, and hence Catholics, instead of looking for excuses justifying their absence, ought rather to surmount great difficulties in order to offer to God this infinite gift to pay their infinite debt to Him.

Even if there were no law requiring people to attend Mass on Sunday, they should be eager to do this much in recognition of favors received during the week previous, and to implore blessings for the coming week.

Last week hundreds of thousands of people died, met with various accidents, and were visited with manifold afflictions; you were not included in the number. Is not this worth your recognition? Next week as many more will be visited similarly by God; could you better dispose God to exempt you again than by going to Mass and offering Him His beloved Son for mercy?

It is really surprising what excuses many Catholics offer in justification for Mass-missing. Some will say: "I am not very well." This is often an imaginary excuse; let a physician first declare whether it will hurt you to take a little walk. Whom do you rely upon for improvement in your health? If you had faith, you would imitate those who ran to Christ and said: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me;" and where can you find Christ better disposed to help you than in the Mass?

"I am old now and not very strong."

Answer: You should be eager to get some good out of your few remaining days. You will not be able to assist at many more Masses; so do not miss any more than you absolutely must.

"I live so far from church."

Answer: You would drive ten miles for ten dollars.

"There are always some of our family at Mass."

Answer: All ought to be there, if possible. Each member of the family owes adoration to God; each stands in need of help.

"I am tired after a week's work."

Answer: At Mass Christ offers a great sacrifice for you; you must offer a little troublesome one for Him; the harder the work performed for God, the greater the reward. You would not be too tired for an excursion or a fishing trip.

"I had company."

Answer: God comes first; take your company to church with you; should they be unwilling to go, that would be no excuse, for you have a standing invitation to be God's company.

"I must work on Sunday morning."

Answer: I have asked the employer of several Catholics who offered this excuse and was told by him that he did not know the man cared to go to church, otherwise he would not have prevented him. Moreover you must try to find different employment, if it interferes regularly with the duties you owe to God.

"Why go to Mass? I can pray at home."

Answer: God wants more than prayer from you on Sunday; He wants you to worship Him in public and in the manner that He or His Church prescribes.

VI

Even if one should be prevented from attending Mass, he is not on that account excused from keeping the day holy. He must not do unnecessary servile work, must keep away from persons who spend the Sunday entertaining the devil; from places where there is no room for God.

He should, even after fulfilling the morning obligation, spend the remainder of the day in recollection and quiet, if possible, in reading a Catholic paper or good book.

What we want to impress on our minds is this: That we have no right to excuse ourselves from observing a law. The legislator alone can excuse us. Imagine a man trying to excuse himself from paying his taxes. The Sunday belongs to God; we belong to Him; we must give to Him the things that are

His. He alone can excuse us from a law that He makes. So the Church alone can excuse us from complying with a law which she makes. She does excuse us from attending Mass for several weighty reasons, but not for half of the reasons to which people resort.

I shall not dwell on the self-evident fact that we must assist at Mass with a view to profiting by it,—that is with earnest attention and devotion; nor on that other most important point, that where several Masses are said regularly in a parish church, you should arrange to attend as often as possible that Mass, at which the word of God is preached.

VII

I believe the world is much more wicked and corrupt today than it was at the time of the deluge, when Almighty God “destroyed all flesh” to put an end to sin.

And if the Almighty withholds a worse chastisement from the world now, it is because He receives honor enough to offset the wickedness,—but only through the Mass.

In the Old Law the sacrifices could not appease God sufficiently; in the New Law, His only Son is with the world to beg pardon for its wickedness. Christ is praying: “Father, forgive them.”

I have dwelt on this subject longer than I really intended, but it is because God’s honor and the welfare of so many readers require it. Have before your mind the purpose of your existence, and the Sunday obligation becomes most plain.

Refuse to “give to God the things that are God’s,” and He will refuse to give to you in eternity the things prepared for His faithful servants.

God is certainly “worthy to receive glory and honor, because He has created all things.”—(Apoc. iv, 11).

“Remember, thou keep holy the Sabbath Day.”

APOTHEGMS.

Only Eternal things are worthy the aspiration of an immortal being.

* * *

All that your dead hand will hold will be what you have given away.

* * *

It is strange that an inheritance, Klondike, or other attraction of earth should be more alluring to people than the prospect of Heaven.

* * *

There is no moral training in the development of the intellect. The world is beginning to realize that the majority of criminals inflicting humanity are educated.

* * *

When a man learned and religious steps into public life, society receives a jewel. To turn out men learned and religious is the aim of the Catholic school.

* * *

The would-be atheist is inclined to believe in a God when the thunders roar, when the lightning strikes, or when the earth quakes.

* * *

A person who does not benefit the world by his life, usually benefits it by his death; for one who lives to no purpose lives to a bad purpose.

* * *

Take hold of the present opportunities; use the present graces. Many people spend half their time anticipating tomorrow, and the other half in regretting yesterday.

* * *

Looking back on the years that have passed, how consoling it would be, at the close of your life, to feel that you had lived not for passion, appetite and the empty pleasures of the world, but for your soul, for God, for the happiness of Heaven, which would soon be yours to enjoy with angels in that "Paradise of Delights."

Syracuse Plan

[Tolomee, Conjunction 7]

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ANOTHER "FIRST" FOR SYRACUSE

CHARLES KEENAN

"SYRACUSE FIRST" is their slogan, and the Syracusans are living up to it. That does not mean that they put the interests of Syracuse before everything else, but that Syracuse is giving the lead for others to follow.

Fortune for January 1944 carried an article on the Syracusans' wideawakeness and farsighted planning for the postwar in their city. The plan, said *Fortune*, is being carried right down to the man and woman in the street:

There has been from the outset in Syracuse a very acute understanding of the necessity for consulting the public about the planning. One of the first steps was to ascertain whether people were willing to give time and attention, during wartime, to the future of the community.

The answer was an enthusiastic "Yes!" Syracusans understand well that the time to plan the future is the present, and that time and attention given now pay dividends later on.

Religious leaders in Syracuse realized what their fellow citizens could do; and they planned to interest them in a much bigger thing than the future of Syracuse; yet a thing which vitally involves the future of Syracuse—the peace and the postwar world. They met together and planned a "Civic Gathering" at which the nature and importance of proper planning for international peace would be made clear to the people of Syracuse.

Once the first step had been taken, the actual organizing proved surprisingly easy—a tribute to the initiative and willingness to cooperate of the Syracusans. A three-man committee was formed, representing Catholics, Jews and Protestants—Rev. R. E. Dillon, Vice-Chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Syracuse; Rabbi Friedman, of the Jewish Welfare Federation; Rev. C. M. Thompson, of the Syracuse Council of Churches. Each religious group undertook to find its own speakers, and it was a simple matter to divide the program among them.

The Seven-point Declaration on a Just Peace, issued last October by Catholic, Jewish and Protestant leaders was the natural basis of the Civic Gathering. The Declaration embodies the fundamental principles of natural law upon which any peace must rest if it is to be just and stable. This document is without parallel in American history, carrying, as it does, the authority of the outstanding religious leaders in the three greatest American religious bodies. It may be questioned whether Americans, since the Constitutional Convention of 1787, have met together to produce a document upon whose ratification and implementing by the American people so much has depended for ourselves and the world.

The men of Syracuse who met to discuss and organize their Civic Gathering, and all those who helped and encouraged them, knew that documents do not implement themselves, and that even the accord and approval of leaders does not—at least in

a democracy—mean that intentions will be carried into action. Action, of the kind that will be important in the making of the peace, must come from the people—from the people making it clear to their representatives just what sort of peace they want.

The planning committee allowed itself two months for adequate preparation and publicity, and set the meeting for February 15. Interest and cooperation on the part of the citizens of Syracuse was genuine and enthusiastic. On the Sunday preceding the meeting, the *Post-Standard* and the *Herald-Journal*, leading city papers, carried a full-page advertisement "sponsored by Syracuse business men of many faiths in acknowledgment of their sincere interest in this common cause." Besides the information about the time, place and personnel of the meeting, the advertisement presented the Seven Points, and insisted that the coming peace must be built upon God's law and that it was "up to the people of this nation." Both newspapers gave the meeting full coverage, with editorials, news stories and pictures.

On Tuesday morning the *Post-Standard* devoted the center of the front page to a picture of destruction from the Marshall Islands, with the caption "Does Man Live for This?" Underneath was an editorial asking Syracusans to realize that "unless the people of the world change their thinking and their devil-take-the-hindmost philosophy, the next war is as inevitable as tomorrow morning's sunrise."

"Syracuse," continued the editorial,

is taking the lead tonight in seeking to change the thinking of the little people all over the globe. They are not the ones who make wars, but they are the ones who fight them—and they are the ones who elect men who determine national policy.

Tuesday night, in spite of inclement weather, saw thirty-five hundred people in the Lincoln auditorium. (The statistically-minded can tell you that a proportionate crowd in New York would be well over eighty thousand.) Chief speakers of the meeting were: Rev. Calvin M. Thompson, of the Syracuse Council of Churches, with "A Statement of the Meeting"; Rev. William B. Pugh, of the Presbyterian Church General Assembly, on "The Sovereignty of God"; Rabbi Samuel Wolk, of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, on "Minorities"; Very Rev. Robert I. Gannon, of Fordham University, on "The Kingdom of God is within You." The opening invocation was given by Bishop Foery, of the Catholic Diocese of Syracuse; and the final benediction by Rev. Alfred L. Taylor, President of the Syracuse Council of Churches.

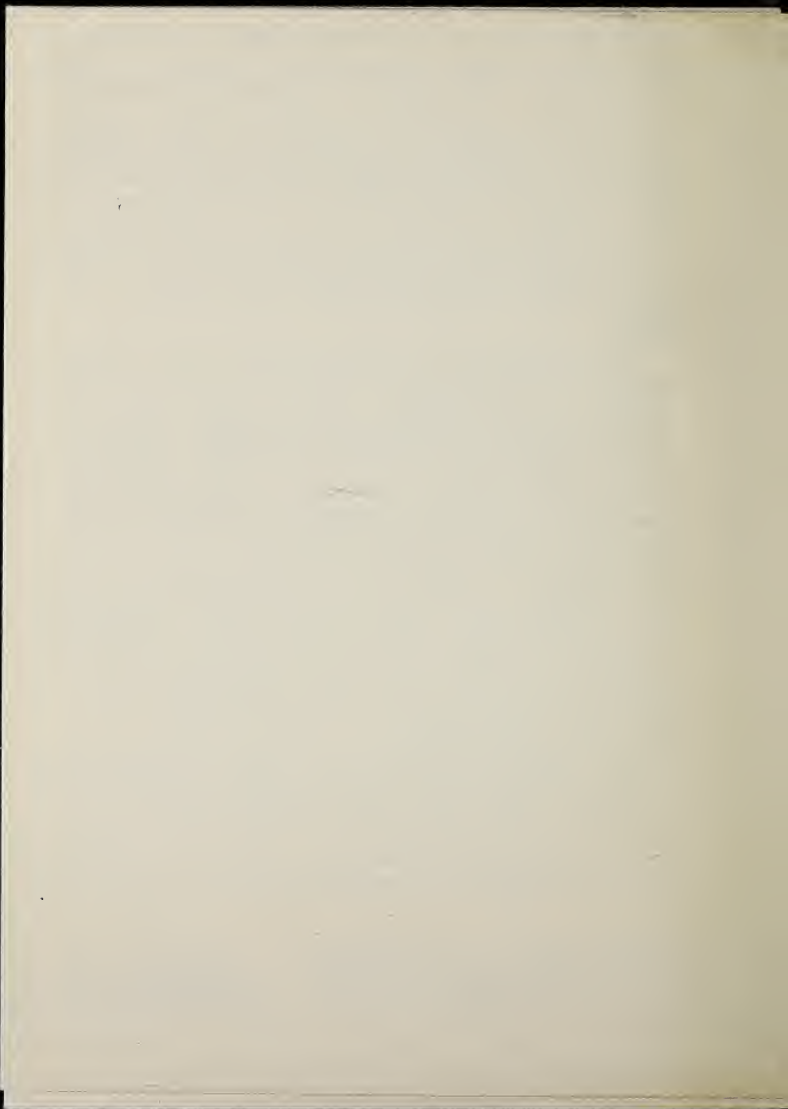
Once again it is "Syracuse First"—in the conviction that, as one of the speakers said, peace "will not come from a conference table at Geneva . . . but from such a place as your own Syracuse and from such a gathering as this."

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People owe everything to God, yet usually pay their church-dues the very last of all their debts. Is this proper recognition of God's Providence? When God made church-laws, as He did for the Jews, He required the first fruits of a man's labor.

* * *

A will in which the Lord is not made one of the heirs is a bad will."—*Cardinal Manning*.

* * *

The atmosphere of the home cannot be kept Catholic without Catholic literature; yet how many families do not even subscribe for a Catholic paper or periodical, much less own a small Catholic library?

* * *

We don't realize how little we are needed in this world until we hear of the demise of great men, and see how well the world gets along without them.

* * *

The religion of some people has been compared to a woodenleg. There is neither warmth nor life in it; although it helps them to hobble along, it never becomes a part of them, but has to be strapped on every morning.

