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What are you doing to Jesus Christ
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A Trappist asks:

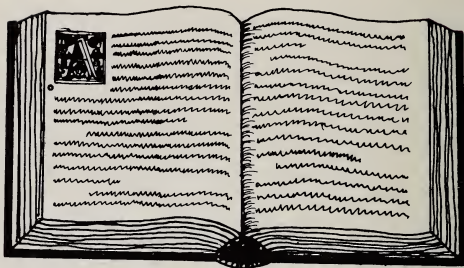
WHAT

➔ Are You

➔ Doing to

➔ Jesus Christ?

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What Are
You Doing
to
Jesus Christ



NIHIL OBSTAT:

Fr. M. Albericus Wulf, O.C.S.O.

Fr. M. Maurice Malloy, O.C.S.O.

Censores

IMPRIMI POTEST:

✠ Fredericus M. Dunne, O.C.S.O.

Abbas, B. M. de Gethsemani

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ Joannes A. Floersh, D.D.

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TO
MY VERY GOOD FRIEND
MR. JOHN DINEEN
PRAYING
THAT HE
MAY
LIVE
THE DOCTRINE
OF
THE MYSTICAL BODY
OF
CHRIST

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO JESUS CHRIST?

I suppose your first impulse is to say, "Nothing."

But that is one answer that cannot be given. As long as you live, move and have being, you are doing something to Jesus Christ. I am asking: What is it?

He died nineteen hundred years ago, I know; but He rose again, and He lives again. He lives today just as really, just as truly, even more intimately than He lived when Herod clothed Him as a fool, Pilate washed his hands of Him, and high priests taunted Him to come down from His cross. Yes, and you are doing something to Him. What is it?

I care not how old or how young you are; I care not what creed you were born in or brought up on; I care not what your class or color; you, as long as you have life, are doing something to Jesus Christ. What is it?

Perhaps you have never faced this question before. Perhaps you have never even thought of it; or thinking of it, refused to face it fully and answer it honestly. Face it now. Face it fully and answer it most honestly, for it is important. Eternally important. On it, and on it alone, depends your all.

We dodge many questions in life. Sometimes from policy, sometimes from fear, sometimes from politeness. But we are fools if we dodge this question, for on its answer depends our agony or glory unending.

You can dodge it if you will. You can close your eyes and block your ears and stifle your conscience. You can refuse to look this question in the face. But if you do, it will loom with double tremendousness the moment you close your eyes in death; for then the tenses will be changed, and instead of "What are you doing to Christ?" you will be asked, "What have you done to Christ?" And then,

just as now, the one answer that cannot be given is, "Nothing."

Can you answer me? Have I taken your breath away with a mysterious question? That should not be. Were I to ask you: "What are you doing to humanity?" you could answer me. The question would not strike you as strange, far fetched, mysterious or mystical, would it? You would feel that I was asking you to deal with tangible factors — yourself and your fellowman. You would not accuse me of presenting you with a puzzling query or taking your breath away with a conundrum. Were I to ask you: "What are you doing to man?" you would be ready to answer me. Then why not be equally ready when I ask you "What are you doing to the God-Man?" He is equally tangible. You are doing something. What is it?

You see, when a Baby was born in a Bethlehem cave, nineteen hundred years ago, the redeeming Head of the human race came into being. Thirty-three years later, when that Baby died, it was the Head of the human race who died, giving you and me and all subsequent humans the possibility of being born again as children of God. Since then every man who has drawn breath has done something, or is doing something, to Jesus Christ. It is unavoidable. If you are human, you belong to Jesus Christ just as branches belong to the vine or the hand to the human body.

Yes, I am in the depths of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ; but it is not mysterious. It is as tangible as fact and more thrilling than fiction. It is as intimate as your heartbeat, and tremendously more important. Much has been written on it that is explanatory; not enough that is exhortatory. Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J., has done something. He grasped the fact that Christ and the individual man are one, and he could not keep the secret. He had to share his ex-

altation and exhilaration with others. He had to thrill mankind with truth. He did so in his truly thrilling book, **Our Part in the Mystical Body.**

His title is apt. Throughout the work he shows what Christ's action has done to us. He insists, and rightly so, on the fact that the salvation of humanity lies in its realization of its divinity. He proves conclusively that the doctrine of the Mystical Body elevates the littleness of man to heights immeasurable and the nothingness of man to the all-embracing splendor of the Infinite.

I reverse the picture now and, instead of showing what God has done to you, I will show what you are doing to God.

You acknowledge the historical Christ. You have to. He is undeniable. He is not a question of belief; He is a demonstrable and demonstrated fact. You must also acknowledge the Mystical Christ, for He is equally undeniable. He lives today just as really, just as truly, even more intimately, than He did nineteen hundred years ago. But instead of a physical body, He has assumed a mystical one. Not a mysterious one, mind you, but a real, palpitating, passible one; one in which He lives again the life He lived when Herod was king and Rome the mistress of the world. But He has come nearer. As long as He walked Judean hills He was individual; when He died on Calvary's hill He became universal. Bethlehem's birth gave us the Mystical Body; Calvary's death joined the body to the Head. As a Jew of the First Century Christ, in a sense, was outside us; as the Risen God of the Twentieth Century, in a very true sense, He is inside us; or better, we are incorporated in Him.

But I must not become technical. I will be factual. History repeats itself, and what Jew, Gentile, Greek and Roman did to the Physical Christ nineteen hundred years ago, modern man is doing to the Mystical Christ

today. That is the actuality. So I ask you pointedly:

What are you doing to Jesus Christ?

IS IT WHAT THE BETHLEHEMITES DID?

You know that story. It is the tragedy of closed doors and crowded inns. Men and women intent on self, greedy for comfort, money and a good time, locked out a poor carpenter from Nazareth and his humble wife, who had in her virginal womb the God of the universe.

I call it tragedy, not because Jesus had to be born between an ox and an ass; not because the pure Mother of God had to bring forth her Child in a dirty, dingy cattle-shed; not because the manger of beasts was God's first bed. No! None of those things are tragedies. The tragedy is not on the Divine side at all; it is entirely on the human side. The awful tragedy is not for Christ but for the Bethlehemites. Because of love for comfort many a home in that little town lost immortality that night they lost the chance of being the house in which God was born. That is tragedy. Because of selfishness many a man and woman missed a God-given opportunity that mysterious night: the opportunity to be the first inhabitants of earth to bow before the God of Heaven. That is real tragedy. Need I say that because of greed for gold some innkeepers lost an everlasting fortune? Hardly.

Have you ever wondered why this utter tragedy? It is quite obvious. They had set their hearts on the wrong things. They were the Chosen People. Their history had been one long story of constant miracles and God's intimate favors. Their forebears were the patriarchs and prophets, God's closest friends. And they had sung in unceasing strain of the coming of the King. Bethlehem was clearly designated as the place, and the seventy-two weeks of Daniel as the time. Should

such a people be on the watch for anything but the birth of their Savior? Of course not. But were they? Indeed no! The present, Caesar Augustus and his enrollment, absorbed them. The crowds that were gathering fascinated them. Their blood was up, for they saw before them the promise of excitement: eating, drinking and high glee. Many of them rubbed their hands in joyous anticipation; they saw a chance for quick profits. Having set their hearts on such things — look what happened to them! Lost in the maze of the moment, gripped by the gathering of the throngs, mastered by the movements of the times, they locked out their God!

Why did they refuse Joseph? They said: "No room." They should have said: "Comfort, pleasure, ease." They should have said: "Selfishness." They should have said: "Money."

Joseph was poor, and he looked it. Mary was with child, and they knew it. And the Bethlehemites were looking for profit and pleasure and did not wish to be incommoded by the pair. So, because of self, sensuality and a few shekels, they committed that tragedy of all tragedies, they locked out their God.

History repeats itself. The tragedy of Bethlehem is being re-enacted in our own sight. But with what greater culpability!

If when He was on the Cross He could plead for those who had put Him there, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," He most certainly could plead that same plea for poor blinded Bethlehemites who refused Him a place at birth. But He cannot pray that prayer for the Russia of today, who not only says, "No room for Joseph and Mary, no room for Jesus Christ," but who goes so far as to say, "No room for God or even the name of God." He cannot plead that plea for a Mexico who allows Him little more than straw, swaddling clothes and

a cattle-shed, when she limits the number of His clergy. He cannot beg forgiveness for the Spaniards, who only a few years ago murdered religious with an abandon that makes Nero seem kind and Diocletian merciful. He cannot say that Bolshevik, Fascist or Naziist "know not what they do." They have had nineteen hundred years of cribs and crosses, nineteen hundred years of Christmas carols, Good Friday services and Easter "Alleluias."

Yes, history repeats itself; but always with greater cruelty because of greater cognizance. The more progress we claim to make, the more civilized we claim to be, the more barbarous we prove ourselves. Closed doors and crowded inns are all around us, because men and women have set their hearts on the wrong things. The tragedy of Bethlehem is our everyday occurrence.

AND WHAT OF YOURSELF?

Are **you** sending Christ out to the ox and the ass? No? That is fine. But tell me, on what have you set your heart? Do not the things of the day frequently make you forget your eternity? Are you not much more concerned about building up your bank account than you are about minting heavenly merits? Do you not give very much more of your thought to your pay envelope than you do to your prayer? Is not your boss more often in your mind and on your mind than your God? Do you look for and pray for and plan for a good eternity as often as you do for a good time? Do not Hitler and Stalin and Roosevelt take much more of your time and attention than Jesus Christ? Are you not alarmed by the possible disasters that war can bring to you and yours than you are about the very real disaster it has already brought to Jesus Christ and His Church? Tell me honestly, are you not playing the Bethlehemite? Is not your heart a

10 What Are You Doing to Jesus Christ?

closed door and your mind a crowded inn? Have you not sent Christ out to bleakness and the beasts?

No? That is grand. But tell me, what are you doing for Christ? Do you frequently take Him into a heart that is warm with love? He is born every morning, you know, and wrapped in the swaddling bands of Bread. Do you bow down and adore Him? Every day is Christmas Day and every altar a cave of Bethlehem. What are you doing to drown out the lowing of the ox and the braying of the ass? What are you doing to disperse the chill and brighten the bleakness? What are you doing to distract God from the hurled defiance of men?

You do not possess gold, frankincense and myrrh, I know. You are not a Wise Man or a King. But you have neighbors. And good example is golden, as fragrant as incense and as pungent as myrrh. As you walk down the street, do your neighbors look upon you as just another citizen, or do they see a stalwart, sterling, militant Catholic, a soul walking its way to Heaven? Does your employer look upon you as another cog in a machine, just a name or a number, or have you so radiated Christ that he is forced to look upon you as an exile from another land, a pilgrim on his way home to God, his Father? Do your friends look upon you as a respectable man, or have you made them recognize in you a child of Eternity?

Strange questions, aren't they? They have a foreign ring to them and strike your ear with an alien tone. That is not surprising. They are unpagan questions. They are genuinely Catholic and Christian queries and are bound to sound strange to all who have been somewhat paganized.

Do you see what had happened to the Bethlehemites? Pagan aims and pagan ideals had robbed them of their religious sensitivity. They were thinking more of Caesar Augustus

than of their God. They realized that they were the subjects of Rome and forgot that they were the "Chosen People." They were all agog about the census a little man was taking and forgetful of the coming of Christ. Daniel's seventy-two weeks had run their course, but the Bethlehemites were unconcerned. They were engrossed in the present: pleasure was to be had, profit to be made. The past was past, and the future had not yet come; so they made their money and had their pleasure — and turned out their God to the ox and the ass in the hillside cave.

Do you not see what has happened to you? Pagan aims and pagan ideals have absorbed you. Pagan atmosphere has fully doped you. Pagan life has robbed you of religious sensitivity. So much so that when I ask you the one question that should dominate your being, it strikes you as strange.

Would any of the above queries have puzzled the early Christians? Would they have been astonished and embarrassed into a gasping and a groping for words had they been asked, "What are you doing to Christ?" Hardly! When the pagans in open admiration exclaim, "How these Christians love one another!" we have our answer. What were the early Christians doing to Christ? — That which they were doing to one another. They were **loving Him, by loving one another.** They were living the truth of the Mystical Body. They knew that by caring for the leaves, the branches and the bark, they were caring for the Vine; that by tending to the fingers, the elbow and the hand, they were tending to the Head; that by ministering to man, they were serving God. And that is the lesson that you must learn and the lesson you must live.

NEARER THAN YOUR NEIGHBOR NEXT DOOR

The Mystical Body is no mystery. It is a simple teaching that God is near, nearer than

12 What Are You Doing to Jesus Christ?

your neighbor; and that we can glorify the Lord of the universe by aiding the man and the woman next door.

That sounds like Humanitarianism and sheer Philanthropy, doesn't it? It is both, but without the capitals and preceded by the word "Catholic." For there is no real brotherhood of man without a vital recognition of the Fatherhood of God. Before I acknowledge my neighbor as my brother, I have to know that God is our common Father; I have to know that the blood of Jesus Christ gave us not only a new name but a new nature; I have to know that we have all been adopted by Omnipotence. Once I know these things, then I can become the true Catholic humanitarian, he who serves mankind but does not worship it. Then I can become the true Catholic philanthropist, he who performs the works of mercy, not to alleviate misery, but to build up the Mystical Body of Christ. For let it be known that the Catholic humanitarian never ministers to humanity as humanity, but to the divinity in humanity; let it be fully recognized that the Catholic philanthropist is a philanthropist because he can adore God by being merciful to men.

That is what this doctrine means. It means that "whatsoever you do to these, the least of my brethren, you do it unto me." It means that if you neglect your neighbor, you are a Bethlehemite, you have closed your door and crowded your inn. It means that if you do not stand out in your neighborhood as a stalwart Catholic, a model for all men, a person who knows what time is for and what the earth is worth, an individual who knows how to live, you have sent Mary out to the ox and the ass and Jesus to the cattle-cave.

Now understand me. I am not asking you to give food or money or clothing. I am not asking you to take in an orphan or a wayfarer. I am not asking you to go from prison to prison, hospital to hospital, or to

give your grave to the dead. No! Philanthropic pagans have done all these things and have never yet performed a "work of mercy"! I am not asking you to do any of these things, for most of you have not the time, the talent or the money. But I am asking all of you to do the "works of mercy." I am asking you to feed Christ, clothe Christ, quench Christ's thirst; I am asking you to house the homeless Christ, visit the sick and imprisoned Christ, and bury the dead of Christ. You may not be able to do any of these things materially, but you most certainly can do all of them mystically.

Good example is food and drink, clothing and lodging, gold for the spirit. A striking Catholicity shown to all your community does more for Christ's Mystical Body than the building of an orphan asylum from sheer philanthropy. Let your life be a sermon to all who surround you, and you have visited the very sick and the very deeply imprisoned. If you radiate Christ, that is, if you externalize the fact that you "have not here a lasting city," that you are a good citizen of the land only because you belong to the Kingdom of Heaven, that you dwell in a house here below, but your home is a mansion above, that you handle the things of time and the happenings of the day as means to your eternity — if you radiate such Catholicity, you have not done to Christ what the Bethlehemites did. You have taken Him in and allowed Him to grow. But do you so radiate Christ?

CHANGE YOUR MIND

Once again I must ask you to understand me. I am not asking you to change your nature. I want you to have a "good time." I want you to have plenty of "good times," but never at the expense of your eternity. I am not asking you to become "pious." I detest "pious" people. I am merely begging you to become practical. I am not asking

14 What Are You Doing to Jesus Christ?

you to become a monk, a priest or a nun. No! I am pleading with you to be a Catholic man or a Catholic woman; individuals for whom Christ was born and died; individuals for whom and in whom Christ now lives. You do not have to change your nature. You do not have to change your manner of living or your state in life; but you do have to change your mind and your heart. You do have to give Christ full birth in both and allow Him full growth in both.

Perhaps you don't believe me. Then answer this one question honestly: Were I to walk into your home this moment, would I be forcibly struck by its Christ-atmosphere? ... Look around you. Would I find among the paintings and the pictures on your walls a Madonna, a Pietà or The Last Supper; and that in the most conspicuous place? Would the statues and statuettes of Venus and Diana, Artemis and Aphrodite be dwarfed by a beautiful bust of the Sacred Heart or a glorious cast of the Immaculate Conception? How many holy-water fonts would I find? As you showed me your boudoir would I find above the mirrors, the powders, paints, creams and lotions, a gleaming Crucifix? Would every room show me something of Christ? If not, why not? Is it that you have been duped as were the Bethlehemites and become more pagan than Christian, more material than spiritual, more taken up with the cares of the body and the concerns of time than you are with your soul and your Eternity? Do you not need a change of mind?

No? Then tell me this.... Were I to sit down in your parlor or your den and chat with you, talking about the love for God and how to manifest it, would I be speaking a foreign language and treating a subject unknown? Were I to take every political, social and economic question of the day and discuss them only from the Christ-viewpoint, weighing their worth in the balance formed by the beams of His cross, and pricing them accord-

ing to their practicality for eternity; were I to take all world questions and thrash them out in their relation to the Son of the Living God; were I to take every moment that stirs mankind and bring it to the Touchstone of Truth, Him who is a "stumbling-block to the Jews," "foolishness to the Gentiles," but the "head of the corner" to the wise; would you then look upon me in amazement, call me either a mystic or a madman, and be totally unable to uphold your end of the conversation? If so, then again I must ask you, have you not done what the Bethlehemites did? have you not a closed door and a crowded inn? should you not change your mind?

Do you begin to see how intimate is God and how large is Christ? He dominates everything and permeates everyone. So much so that you can glorify God while playing golf and smile into the eyes of the God-Man when looking on a beggar, if you become conscious of your incorporation in Christ and do all things for the glory of the Father.

Do you begin to realize that you are doing something to Jesus Christ every minute? That is what the doctrine of the Mystical Body means. It is not only exhilarating, it is positively paralyzing, when we realize how near is God. Thrilling, yes; but also quite saddening for Bethlehem's callousness is our everyday occurrence.

When you have entered your soul and answered this first question, then face the second.

ARE YOU DOING WHAT HEROD DID?

I mean Herod the Great, that Idumean monster who ordered the slaughter of the innocents and drove Christ into exile. You know why he did it. He wanted to hold his position and his power.

I need not tell you that the Mystical Christ is equally exiled in this our day, and that a more cruel slaughter of the innocents goes on.

16 What Are You Doing to Jesus Christ?

No. For you know something of Russian tactics regarding marriage, education and the home; you know something of Communistic Mexico and Nazi Germany and their exile of Christ from the school; you know a great deal about their regimentation of youth, not to teach them that they are members of the Mystical Body — the truth that elevates, dignifies and deifies; but to tyrannize, terrorize and trip-hammer home the lie that they are pawns of the State — the falsehood that degrades, desecrates and demoralizes. Why do they do it? Is it not from the same motive that moved Herod to command that “all the men children, from two years old and under, be killed”? Can Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini or any other totalitarian hold his power or his position except by the slaughter of the innocents?

In our own land Herod's work goes on, too. Children are taught every 'ology' except theology; the one subject that is fundamental. We root out illiteracy, but not immorality; because we teach “reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic” but not RELIGION!

I hear that New York is looking for the scabbard to sheathe Herod's sword by allotting one hour a week for religious training. That is not the scabbard! That will never sheathe the sword! That will only promote the slaughter! For what can youth think? It sees its legislators put chemistry, biology and modern languages before God; the alphabet and the multiplication tables before the Ten Commandments; Caesar's Gallic Wars before the Gospel. What can youth think except that morality is the last and the very least consideration.

No, New York has not found the scabbard. But there are millions who have found the sword. And there are millions who wield it ruthlessly. Herod is dead. But not his army. At a very conservative estimate Herod has 2,100,000 swordsmen in America. 2,100,000

murderers. 2,100,000 slaughterers of the innocents. And oh! the meanness of the murder! Worse than when Rachel was witness to brutality unspeakable. For when Rama reechoed with mournings and lamentation it was only for "the men children from two years old and under"; but today, from border to border and sea to sea there rises in our land a wail that reaches to Heaven; it is the wail of the world unborn, the male and the female children who have been slaughtered by the 2,100,000 refined, cultured and callous murderers of Twentieth Century America — the abortionists!

Figures do not lie. The above are taken from the Congressional Record, which states that between seven and eight hundred thousand abortions are reported **annually**. Now, omitting those that are not reported, we have to face the awful fact that in every abortion thus reported there are at least three people guilty of murder. There is the surgeon who does the actual slaughtering; then the individual who allows her womb to be made into a tomb; and finally the male whose child is murdered.

I know that there will be some who will challenge those figures on the ground that each abortion does not mean a separate surgeon. They are right. Thank God we have not between seven and eight hundred thousand medical murderers in our land. **BUT** — it must be remembered that there is usually a nurse present; she is an accessory. And furthermore, it must never be forgotten that not all, nor anywhere near all, the cases are reported. Being mindful of these facts, you will see that the figures given above are wrong; they are below the actuality.

Isn't a female Herod a blood-chilling concept? Think of it! One whom God has so marvelously fashioned that she can be the sacred sanctuary of a new life, a living tabernacle for a new image of God, becoming like the Idumean monster and ordering the

slaughter of her own innocent! Think of it! A woman, whom God has so delicately and so sensitively formed that she stirs all that is gallant and good in man, transforming herself into something more hideous, hateful and foul than that man of blood whom History calls Herod. Does it not seem impossible? Yet there are over 700,000 such transformations annually! How can they do it? How can they deliberately make a fleshy sepulcher out of that organ of theirs which Divinity has fashioned to chalice His breath and to nourish a new member of His Mystical Body?

But there is a subtler slaughter of innocents going on; one that is more diabolical and destructive than that commanded by Herod, or the one carried on by the abortionists. In this awful slaughter the principals cannot be technically charged with murder, for they do not directly take life. But they DO slaughter. They slaughter their own souls, and they slaughter the human race!

I know that the guilty parties will not believe me, and I am afraid that even you may think that I exaggerate; so I let poor France, the nation that collapsed, speak for me. General Pétain spoke like a soldier: pointedly, bluntly, truthfully. In naming the causes for France's sad collapse, he gave as reason number one — BIRTH-PREVENTION.

I call it "birth-prevention" because I have respect for words and for facts. They call it "birth-control"; but they have no regard for language, life or truth. "Control" has never been a synonym for "prevent"! and contraception means the **prevention** of conception. As London's eminent gynecologist, Frederick John McCann, M.D., has defined it, "Contraception means the **prevention** of conception, the **prevention** of the meeting of the male fertilizing element, the spermatozoon, with the ovum or egg of the female; in other words, the **prevention** of the generation or

propagation of the species, the **prevention** of new life."

So France knows that there is a finer edge to Herod's sword than when his strongarmed soldiers wielded it two thousand years ago; and America is learning that there are female Herods more subtle, more cultured and refined, and yet more barbarous, destructive and deadly than the Idumean. American history tells of one male traitor: and he was a failure even as a traitor. His name was Benedict Arnold. But American history must tell of many female traitors who are most successful in their betrayal. And the name of these female traitors is "Legion," for they are the minions of Satan; but we know them as "Birth-Controllers."

Is America being betrayed? Well, Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J., in his latest book, **Our Lady in the Modern World**, writes that **Collier's**, in late 1939, investigated and found that out of one hundred American marriages, sixty are childless; and of the remaining forty, only ten have more than two children! Let us bow to the patriotic "Birth-Preventioners"! They are fast filling our land with emptiness! If this keeps up, I wonder over what (not whom) the Stars and Stripes will float one hundred years from now. And yet, these people claim to be civilized, cultured, refined and patriotic! They are criminals! They sin against the race, the country, the individual and God!

I have called these "Birth-Preventioners" minions of Satan. I must tell you why. When Lucifer was created by God, he was made Prince of this world. When he was cast into Hell, he lost all love, but he did not lose his power over this world. So, ever since, his one work has been a work of hate. His one aim is to destroy all that has come from Love and is lovely. For two thousand years he has concentrated on the destruction of the Mystical Body of Christ. Through his proud emis-

saries on this earth, he has concocted heresy after heresy, as with all the skill of a very clever surgeon he has endeavored to sever member from member and thus bring death to the Mystical Christ. As the years rolled on the heresiarchs died; so, too, did their heresies. And Satan was quite baffled. Then from the depths of Hell, in all his angelic cleverness, he brought the heresy that precludes the necessity of all other heresies; from the deepest depths of Hell he has brought — birth-prevention! It is depopulating the earth, decimating the Church, desecrating the sanctuary of marriage; and its practitioners are hell-bound, so long as they follow the lead of Satan.

Horrible picture, is it not? Yet true! And the heart-crushing part of it all is that these people are succeeding where Herod failed! Yes, for when Herod slaughtered, Heaven gained, and Christ was not touched; but in today's slaughter, earth loses, Heaven loses, and only Hell and Limbo gain. More! Christ is injured! For humanity ceased to be just humanity when Mary said, "Fiat" and God took flesh. That is why every outrage against humanity is a crime against, divinity, the divinity in us, and a mutilation of Jesus Christ. Every user of a contraceptive directly injures the God-Man. Abortionists and "Birth-Preventioners" are persecutors of Jesus Christ.

Contraceptionists are criminals. They have sinned against life, love and humanity. The cornerstone on which rests the human race is conjugal society. Contraceptionists have disturbed that stone and are shaking the very structure of the world. And oh! the sin they have committed against themselves! Let this disorder enter and they lose all respect for self, for society and for mankind. Let this disorder enter and they have debased their whole character. Their soul no longer has the courage, the heart or the hope to live. Their will is sick, stricken with a wound more hideous than the pus that flows there-

from. The core of their very being is cankerous. And when they enter the silent recesses of their own mind, they are filled with such an unutterable loathing for self and for all humankind that life is hideous.

The rarity of births horrifies the thinkers of the nation. The ruin of health terrifies the medical men of the land. The debasement and the disintegration of the individual character fills the soul of every sound psychologist and man of morals with shudders. But all these, terrible as they are, are nothing compared to the injury and the outrage done to Jesus Christ.

I cannot blight the bloom and prevent the fruit without affecting the vine. I cannot destroy acorns without damaging the genus, oak. I cannot imprison the arm and prevent its growth without crippling the body. No, of course not. Nor can I use a contraceptive without outraging Christ. As God He made the body with all its organs and all their functions; as God-Man He incorporated all humans in Himself, so that He is the Head and we are the myriad members. Hence the awful actuality — every injury done a member is an injury done the Head; every perversion of a faculty or prevention of a function is a disfigurement to the Head; every frustration of nature is an injustice to humanity, an injury to the God who made humanity great, and an outrage to Christ who made it greater.

I have called it Herod's sword. It is. But it is more efficient than when it was wielded by that worm-eaten wretch; for when he used it, he did not touch Christ, though he meant to; but when moderns strike with it, their thrust is true; every time it goes home, reaching, with infallible certainty, the Christ.

Just as truly as Roman soldiers smashed nails into His hands and feet, and drove thorns into His head; just as truly as Longinus sent the spear-point crashing through His

side, and on up and into His very Heart; so directly and truly do contraceptionists strike Jesus Christ.

You have read of Herod's death, have you not? It was monstrous beyond words. Corruption set in while he was yet alive. Have you ever pictured his judgment? What could he say to God? Most certainly, he could not plead ignorance. For God would say, "You had my Chosen People. You knew their history, the promise of the patriarchs and the prophets. And more! I sent you Wise Men—a revelation of what had happened in Bethlehem. From the chief priests and Scribes of the people you learned that Christ was born. Your return for such intimate favors was the butchering of the babies."

Can you picture the judgment of a contraceptionist? Can such a one plead ignorance? Hardly! And God can say, "You out-Heroded Herod. You slaughtered the innocents. You wounded My Christ."

What would justice demand?

Before judgment comes to you or to me, it behooves us to realize and always remember that the Sixth Commandment can be stated positively; that it actually means: "Respect humanity." And since "the Word became flesh" that glorious Commandment means: "Respect the divinity in yourself and others."

Yes, it is true. God made humanity great; the God-Man made it greater. Hence, by reverencing, respecting, holding every faculty and function of your body as sacred, you are worshiping God. Oh, Christ is near. Nearer than your heartbeat. Look deeply into the eyes of any man or maid and you will see Jesus Christ. Is it not thrilling to know that not only the souls but the very bodies of all humans are sacred? Remember that. And remember that every instrument to prevent conception is nothing but a sword taken from

the hand of Herod, seeking the very Body of Jesus Christ.

IS IT WHAT THE NAZARENES DID?

Jesus had begun His public life. Miracles had been worked in Cana and Capharnaum, and all Galilee was astir with the reports of the wonders worked by this Man from little Nazareth. Then one Sabbath He went into their synagogue and spoke to His fellow townsmen. He held them spellbound. By their silence and eager attention they paid Him their tribute of admiration. But then some of them began to rationalize. Into their narrow, carping minds crept the reflection that, after all, Jesus was only a villager like themselves, a young, untaught, inexperienced one at that. Soon the question was whispered from mouth to mouth, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

Petty prejudices were closing their minds and blinding their visions; so, despite the testimony of their ears, despite the countless witnesses of Cana and Capharnaum, despite the words they had just heard from lips that were more than human and the reports of the works that were obviously divine, these dwellers in a back-water, these dwarfed intellects and stunted understandings were determined on seeing Jesus only the son of the carpenter and not the Son of God.

When He told them the truth about themselves, they rose up as one man, drove Him from their synagogue, hounded Him through their streets, pushed and pulled Him to and fro, and hurried Him to the edge of the cliff whence they would have hurled Him to death. But Jesus spared them this crowning sin. They should not be guilty of His murder.

Nazarenes still live. The whole school of the so-called "Higher Critics" is nothing but a school of narrow-minded, short-sighted, blear-visioned Nazarenes. Adolf Harnack and his like are as blind as were the fellow-

citizens of Jesus Christ. They pay their tribute to the genuineness of the Gospels, but then squint at Jesus and say that, after all, He is only like themselves — a mere man! Like the Nazarenes, despite the sublimity of His doctrine and the supernaturalness of His works, despite a life that was flawless and a death that was divine, despite thirty-three years of a wondrous Physical life and twenty centuries of a still more wondrous Mystical life, these thin minds ask, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

That question has come down the ages. Minds as small as those of tiny Nazareth still manifest their intellectual blindness by asking, "Is not this the son of Joseph?" From provincials with their ignorances and their prejudiced modes of thought we expect and pardon certain stupidities; but when individuals who pose as enlightened, learned, open-minded, will assume professors' chairs and doctors' degrees and yet prove themselves as ignorant, arrogant, stolid and stupid as the provincials of little Nazareth, we grieve for modern progress and the effects of higher (?) education.

Is it not sad to learn that lecturers in many of our state universities are mere echoes of Nazareth's dolts and dullards? Is it not painful to be assured that prejudice can be so impervious to acid that two thousand years of persistent applications have not eaten through the one generated by a handful of knownothings who resented a fellow-townsmen's ability? Is it not heartbreaking to realize that the people of America are subsidizing halls of higher learning in which is daily taught that which stamped the Nazarenes of A. D. 30 as utterly unintelligent and completely lacking in perception? From the State University of Maine to that of Southern California and from that of Washington to that of Florida modern Nazarenes, with more flippancy than their ancestors, ask, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

Were you to tell these learned doctors that, not only is Jesus God, but that He elevated all men to the possibility of becoming sons of God; were you to tell them that every one who sits in at their lectures can be an actual member of the Mystical Body of the Son of God; were you to tell them that humanity, because of the "son of Joseph" has been divinized, they would put on their deepest doctoral frown, look their heaviest professorial look, and say what the learned fools of Athens said to Paul, "We will hear thee again concerning this matter." Which of course, is a polite dismissal of a subject that is beyond their grasp.

Oh, the modern Nazarenes are purblind. They not only look on the Son of God as only the son of Joseph, but they tell and assiduously teach the adopted sons of God that they are nothing but evolutions from the ape! Oh, it is maddening, this learned ignorance of the modern Nazarenes.

Yes, they are rightly called Nazarenes; for they would hurry Christ out of the school, hound Him from the churches, pluck Him from the hearts and minds of men and hurl Him to death from the towering precipice of their "Higher Criticism" and their mountainous intellectual pride. They are worse than the Nazarenes of old; for the fellow townsmen of Christ failed to kill Him, but not so the modern Nazarenes. They have actually killed Christ in the minds of many a man and many a woman by the books they have written, the lectures they have given and the lives they have led.

Then there is another set of modern Nazarenes who are positively farcical, but also tremendously sad. I refer to those Protestant divines who claim to be Christian clergymen and yet deny the divinity of Christ. Shakespeare would most certainly have asked of them, "What's in a name?" — "Divines" who deny divinity; "Christians" who deny Christ! Is it not farcical? Oh, they admit that He

was the paragon of mankind, the holiest man who ever lived, the sublimest teacher of purest morality, but only a man. Are not such antics the perfect aping of those narrow-browed, squinting Nazarenes who after listening to God asked, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

Yes, it is farcical, but it is also tremendously sad; for these men have succeeded where the Nazarenes failed. They have hurled Christ from the cliff! That is why Protestantism, as a religion, is only a corpse.

And what of yourself? When you fail to puzzle out the why of things; when you cannot solve the problem of evil; when the mysteries of our Faith remain mysteries; do you not ask, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

You know the Nazarenes wanted the wonders of Capharnaum worked in their own sight. "Seeing is believing" was their cry. But seeing is not believing; it is knowing. And the ninth beatitude, spoken to the doubting Thomas, is not for the seers but for the believers. Christ did not accede to their wishes. He told them that "no prophet is accepted in his own country," meaning, "even if you saw, you would not believe." He knew their minds and their hearts. He saw how fixed was the one idea, the carping, critical idea; "this is the son of the carpenter." He knew how all words and works would be wasted; for a prejudiced mind is a Gibraltar, impregnable to all truth. He knew that the most irrational being in all the world is the narrow mind that prides itself on being rational. He told them the truth about themselves, and they resented it.

Are you not very similar? Do you not often want the wonders of Christ's Physical life? Do you not often try to rationalize the utterly irrationable and the completely mysterious? Do you not try to materialize the absolutely spiritual? Do you not sometimes resent the ways of God in your regard? When

your petitions are not granted, do you not rebel?

Are you not a Nazarene as far as the Mystical Body of Christ is concerned? What do you see in your neighbor? — The “son of a carpenter”? Do you ever see more than humanity in the figure of a woman or the stature of a man? Do you look for and find the image of God in every son of Adam and in every daughter of Eve? Do you recognize at least a potential member of Christ in every person you pass? If not, you are a Nazarene. Your mind is narrow, your vision short, your soul prejudiced.

Again I say God is near. Jesus was the son of Mary and the foster-son of Nazareth's carpenter; but He is also the Son of God. If the Nazarenes had opened their eyes, they would have seen it. As you look at your neighbor, open your eyes. You will see the son of a carpenter and the daughter of a mason, but you will also see the Mystical Christ.

On the brow of the hill whence the Nazarenes of old would have hurled Jesus to death, there stands today the “Chapel of Mary Weeping.” In it the Son of the Carpenter is adored and His Mother Mary honored. We can only pray that on the brow of every intellectual hill, whence modern Nazarenes would hurl Jesus to death, there will soon arise a place of worship for the “Son of Joseph” and a place of honor for Nazareth's Maid.

If you have been a Nazarene to the Mystical Christ, seeing in man only humanity, build into your being this day a chapel where you can worship the Divinity in humanity and console the Mystical Mother of our Mystical Christ who weeps over the narrow minds of modern Nazarenes.

IS IT WHAT THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES DID?

The Physical Jesus had one implacable enemy as long as He lived. It was that set of religiously righteous individuals known to

history as the Scribes and the Pharisees. The Scribes were the Doctors of the Law; the Pharisees, the Puritans of the Law. Nearly all the Scribes were Pharisees, and many of the Pharisees were Scribes. They were the educated class, those learned in the Law, the recognized teachers and interpreters of Mosaism. Steeped in self-conceit, proud, arrogant, domineering, disdainful of the lower classes, they lived their lives of ritual and literal recititude, and allowed their hearts to petrify, their souls to solidify, and their consciences to atrophy.

Jesus was not the Man they longed for. They wanted a Messias, it is true; but they wanted Him to be another David, Samson or Judas Machabeus. They wanted someone who would shake off the hated Roman domination and roll it into the sea. They wanted a Man who would be like themselves, a stickler for the minutiae of the Law, a formalist, a real rigorist for the thousand and one prescriptions of Leviticus. When Jesus did not measure up to their standards, when He did not do all that they wanted Him to do, when He scouted their religious righteousness and pierced their sham, they hounded Him to death.

Jesus is not the Man for many a modern! They like not His thorn-crowned head, His pierced hands and feet, the infamy and shame of His Cross. They want a Redeemer, yes; but they do not like Him to be the Man of Sorrows. They want to be saved; but they like not the price of salvation. They thrill to the Resurrection; but they shy at the way to it. They like not the Blood on Gethsemani's grass, the spittle of the dungeon, the crimson-splashed pillar in the atrium; they like not that staggering, stumbling route to the Hill of Skulls; they like not one second of Good Friday's three long hours. They want some other way to Easter's glory than through the gloom of Golgotha. And because there is no other way, the Mystical Christ

has and will ever have one implacable enemy.

The Physical Jesus recognized His enemies and, from beginning to end, did all in His power to make them see; but they would not. No, they would not! When the Child was born at Bethlehem, they knew; but they would not ... it might have compromised them with Herod. When He stood by the Jordan and called to them, they would not ... it might have lowered them in the eyes of the people. When He came to them in the Temple at Jerusalem, they would not ... malice had set in. When they came to Him in Galilee, they would not ... miracles meant nothing to them.

From the very beginning they set themselves in determined opposition. In Judea they challenged His claim to set Himself up as teacher; in Jerusalem and Galilee they blamed Him because He broke the Sabbath law; in Capharnaum they were shocked to hear Him forgive sins, associate with publicans and sinners and even with a woman of the streets; finally they became incensed because His disciples did not wash before they ate. They were there at His triumphal entry to chide Him for what His followers were saying; they were there to the very end taunting Him and defying Him to come down from His Cross. Jesus could do nothing to satisfy them. In no way did He measure up to their idea of what a Messiah should be.

Pharisees did not all die with the destruction of Jerusalem. No. They live today! And they are doing to the Mystical Christ what their forerunners did to the Physical Christ, they are hounding Him to death. The Mystical Christ is not to their liking. Many of His members are like the Apostles and the early disciples — plain, untutored, simple souls who neither know nor observe all the niceties. The Mystical Jesus, made up of all peoples of all climes and classes, shocks them. He is too learned and too ignorant; too cultured and too crude; too refined and too bar-

barous. But apart from all paradoxes, what especially outrages their sensitivities is the fact that the Mystical Jesus is too poor and too plebeian!

Oh, God has done all in His power to make these people see. But they will not! No. They will not. Despite the chastity and the charity that is the marvel of all mankind, a chastity and a charity that could only be inspired by Almighty God and maintained by His grace, they will not. . . . The chastity they attribute to misanthropy, and the charity to sheer philanthropy. Despite the heroic love and voluntary self-annihilation generated by the Crib and the Cross, they will not. . . . The Crib and its consequence of generous love, they assign to mythology; the heroic suffering undergone for the sake of the Cross, they attribute to melancholy. Despite the tens of thousands of nuns who incarnate purity, humility and meekness, they will not. Despite the thirty thousand priests who strive to be the embodiment of godly generosity, all-embracing solicitude and utter self-forgetfulness, they will not. Despite the four hundred millions who are the Mystical Christ, they will not. . . . Moral miracles mean nothing to them. Superhuman daring and doing cannot displace the malice that is in their minds. They simply will not.

Ah, but these are not the worst enemies of the Mystical Christ. No. It is the Scribes and Pharisees in His own Body who do the greatest damage. The Catholic Pharisees who keep the letter but not the Law; who go to church on Sunday and appear very pious, but who are pagan the rest of the week; who have the name of Christian, but none of the Christian's nature; whose religious life is completely and absolutely divorced from their business, social and domestic lives; who worship God in the Mass but never in the masses; who see Christ in the tabernacle but never in their neighbor next door; who know the

Ten Commandments but nothing of the Counsels, the Beatitudes or the Works of Mercy.

It was the Scribes and Pharisees who put the Physical Jesus to death. It is the Catholic Scribes and Pharisees who are putting the Mystical Jesus to death. Yes, putting Him to death; for let me tell you that there is one irrefutable argument against which an apostle is powerless. It is the argument of "the Catholics I have known." People will acknowledge the logic of the Catholic claim, they will listen attentively to an explanation of her dogma and be ready to accept her Creed, when they will remember some "Catholic that I have known." Logically, of course, such people are wrong. But psychologically they are most right! Practice should follow principle as the night the setting of the sun. Those who are Catholic on Sunday should be Catholic on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and the rest of the week. Those who bow before Christ in the Eucharist should radiate Christ in the office, the home, the shop or the store. Those who parade themselves as members of Christ to the parish, should not show themselves as pagans to the rest of the world. Ninety-nine out of every hundred people are influenced more by the "Catholics they have known" than they are by the Physical Christ, and that is why the Mystical Christ is dying.

Priest, nun and Brother can expound, explain and endeavor to inculcate the purity that is Christ in all who come on the campus; but the Mystical Body of Christ suffers, and in some members dies, when the Catholic young men and women go off the campus and are not pure in thought, word and action. That is the work of the Scribe and Pharisee!

We teach Temperance. It is a cardinal virtue. But when a Catholic man or woman indulges to excess, the world that was blind to them before suddenly opens its eyes, sees them and recognizes them as Catholic college students — and the work of the Scribes and Pharisees is done.

A pagan may mulct a city and create very little stir, but let a Catholic policeman take the smallest bribe, and we have a sacrilege, a sensation and a scandal.

That is the way the world wags. You know it better than I. Actually, it is a tribute to Catholicity, for it is a recognition of the Mystical Christ. But it should sober and startle many of you, for it shows you your divine responsibility. God has entrusted you with the marvelous mission of making Him known, and loved, and served. God has given you the apostolate of building up His Mystical Body. Omnipotence has placed in your little hands — Himself!

You **are** your Brother's keeper, whether you like it or not. You were made such by your Baptism. You are the keeper of your Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. Your life's work is to take care of Him in every man, woman and child that crosses your path. Your duty is to see that He grows. Life has no other meaning. You must see that He grows in yourself, first, then in all others. You must feed Him, clothe Him, house Him, teach Him, admonish Him, instruct Him; you must visit Him in hospital and prison, and pray for Him living and dead. You have a twenty-four-hour-a-day employment with no time off. You have the glorious work of making men like unto God! You have the immediate task of saving every other apostle the embarrassment of listening to that irrefutable argument contained in the words, "the Catholics that I have known."

Again we are back at the power of example and the necessity for the works of mercy. Again we tell you an astounding truth and a frightful corollary. You, who are to bring Christ to birth in every one you know, can instead do the work of Scribe and Pharisee and lead Him to death if you do not **live** your Catholicity.

Nominal Catholicity will never save your

soul. You must be a practical and a practicing Catholic. That means Christ-consciousness seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, until death. You must be a totalitarian Christian, else you fall under the eight dreadful "woes" that Jesus pronounced against Scribe and Pharisee.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees! Hypocrites!"

And were they not? They obeyed the minutiae of the law, but not the Law. They paid the tithe of mint and anise and cummin, but had no faith, justice or mercy. They washed the outside of the cup well. They washed their hands again and again. But never did they wash their souls. It is so much easier to wash a cup or a body than it is to wash your soul. For the first, a little water and a towel; for the second, tears of repentant love and the fire of real resolve.

The modern Pharisees know much more than their predecessors about washing the body and much less about washing the soul. The moderns will use dainty dentifrice, perfumed mouthwash, and antiseptic throat spray, then from this scrupulously cleaned organ, pour forth — filth! They will bathe and shower daily, using scented soaps and aromatic bathsalts, fragrant lotion and sweet-smelling powders, but will leave the mind a sink of loathsome thoughts and the heart a sewer of noisome desires. The outside of their cup is cleaned, immaculately cleaned. But it is only the outside!

When will the modern Pharisee wake up? When will he realize that the cult of the body does not make a man or woman clean in soul? Never! It is not soap and water that is needed; it is Confession and Communion! When will he realize that antiseptics and prophylactics will never keep a person spiritually clean? No, never! Only the Blood of Christ will do that. Remember, it is the mind unsullied and the heart undefiled that

make a man a man, and a woman the majestic person she should be. It is Christ-consciousness, and Christ-consciousness alone, that awareness of Incarnate Purity in ourselves and in others, that will keep us from becoming a "brood of vipers" and "whited sepulchers," worthy of the "woes" that the gentlest of men had to thunder against those who were fair without but foul within — the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Religion has many external forms, it is true; for man is partly animal. But external forms are not religion. "The kingdom of God is within you." And this neither the ancient nor the modern Pharisees admit. That is why the Physical Christ died. That is why the Mystical Christ is not growing. The mind must be steeped in Christ, the heart immersed in His Sacred Heart, and the whole being plunged into His immensity; then when we are permeated with His spirit, shot through and through with His characteristics, we will look out on life and all things in life with His eyes, and love them with His love.

St. Paul's command, "Put ye on Christ," was not spoken to religious alone; those whom most people look upon as the only professional, totalitarian Christians. No. Paul was talking to **you!** He was talking to everyone who lives, but especially to all who have been baptized. And let me tell you that Christ cannot be assumed from without. He must be put on from within. He grows in the soul.

The ancient Scribes and Pharisees refused Him place in their minds, hearts and souls. Are you doing the same? Does Catholicity for you consist rather in taking than in giving? in the letter of justice than in its spirit? in the Law and not in the Love of Christ?

To answer any of these questions honestly, answer this: What think you of the Mystical Christ, your neighbor?

ARE YOU DOING WHAT THE CROWDS DID?

My heart breaks when I think of what the crowds did to the Physical Jesus.

Crowds are always fickle. In them there is no depth of thought, no soundness of reason, no balance of judgment. They are weather-vanes twisted and turned by every wind that blows; bats blinded by every rising sun; moths lured by every flame that leaps. And yet they wound deeply by their very shallowness.

Jesus had worked especially hard for the crowd at Capharnaum. Miracles were literally multiplied in their midst. It was here that the son of the ruler was miraculously cured; the mother-in-law of Peter given back her health; and the woman with the bloody flux saved by the touch of the hem of His garment. It was here that demoniac after demoniac was delivered of his possession. It was here that the Centurion's servant was healed after the Centurion's grand act of faith. No crowd in all the land saw so much as did the crowd of Capharnaum. They were there when He multiplied the loaves and the fishes. They called Him "prophet" and wanted to make Him king. But when He put their faith to the test, they failed Him. When He promised them the Eucharist, they turned their backs on Him and walked away!

"This is a hard saying," they said, "and who shall hear it?" Yes, it was a hard saying; but what of the hard seeing? Had they not seen wonder piled on wonder? Had they not seen works such as no man had done and no man could do? Had they not seen five barley loaves after His blessing and breaking feed five thousand men, not counting the women and the children? Had they not seen devils obey His word and diseases yield to His touch? Had not blindness and deafness and dumbness fled before His power? Had He not raised Jairus's daughter from the

dead? What more could they ask? They had seen lepers given back the ruddy flush of health and paralytics the use of their limbs. They had seen every imaginable wonder and wonders that were unimaginable; and yet they failed Him.

Undoubtedly it was a hard saying, but after all this hard seeing failure seemed impossible. But fail they did! They would eat the barley loaves that came into being at the touch of His hand, but when He said, "I am the Bread of Life," they faltered. When He went on and said, "And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world," they walked away.

My heart breaks for the Physical Christ. Crowds failed Him. My heart breaks wider for the Mystical Christ; for crowds find His saying hard and will not hear it. Despite twenty centuries of hard seeing; despite two thousand years of life coming back from death, health from sickness, sight from blindness, sound from silence and music from muteness; despite physical miracles unnumbered and moral miracles uncounted, they still shrug their shoulders, shake their heads and walk away.

Christ says, "No divorce." They walk away. Christ says, "No birth-prevention." They walk away. Christ says, "Be pure, be just, be merciful." They walk away. Christ says, "Keep the Ten Commandments, the Six Precepts." They walk away. They do it today, and they have done it down the centuries. Germany, with its Luther, walked away; as did England with its Henry VIII. France again and again has found His saying hard, and walked away. But the sorriest of all sorry sights is to see the masses of the world today walking away.

Why did the crowd at Capharnaum walk away? — Lack of faith! The grandest offer of love that even He, the God-Man, could devise was rejected because puny little man

with his tiny little intellect could not fully understand. The reason is the same today. No faith! Puny little man with his very thin little intellect, cannot fully understand, so he walks away.

The saying was hard then; it is hard today. But the work of man then is the work of man today; namely, to discover beneath human flesh — God! The crowd of old looked at the Physical Jesus and saw only man; the crowd today looks at the Mystical Jesus and sees only flesh!

When your pastor or his assistant speaks to you officially, do you hear only a man? When your Bishop gives out an ordinance, do you accept it as from only a man? When the Pope writes an encyclical, do you read a letter from only a man?

Have you ever once tried to look deeper than the skin, not only of hierarchy and religious, not only of the actual members of Christ's true Church, but the skin of infidel, pagan and atheist, and find in each the miraculous chrysalis of a potential Christ? Have you ever tried to discern the Carpenter's Son and the Son of God in every day-laborer, street-pedlar and ordinary beggar? Have you ever honestly endeavored to acquire the penetrating vision that can see through appearances and reach reality? Have you found the divinity in every one who has human flesh?

You must! else you are doing what the crowd at Capharnaum did. You are walking away.

I know that the saying is hard. But look who says it. Infinite Truth. He who cannot deceive has said, "As long as you did it to these, the least of my brethren, you did it unto me."

Monsignor Fulton Sheen, who, by the way, has written an excellent book on **The Mystical Body**, on one occasion said, "The next time a beggar asks for bread and you respond with a bitter word and a closed door,

enter your heart and ask, 'What if that man be the Christ?' " I know what the Monsignor meant; and I am sure that he will know what I mean, and I hope that by this time you will understand me when I say, it is no longer a question of possibility, it is a fact. That man is the Christ! For that man, either actually or potentially, is a member of the Mystical Body; and of that Body Christ is the Head.

Remember that as long as an individual breathes, God is in Him, for God is life. Remember that as long as a heart beats, God is behind it, for He alone can give the heart its rhythm. Remember that as long as you see light in human eyes, you see God, for He is the Light. Yes, it is all true! As long as blood courses through veins, it is the crimson Blood of the Mystical Christ either actual or potential. Hence, when you have no reverence for man, you have no reverence for God; when you slight a human being, you are slighting Divinity; when you walk away from a fellow-creature, you are walking away from Christ.

The doctrine is not mine; nor St. Paul's, nor St. John's. The doctrine is Jesus Christ's. He spoke it plainly and with mighty emphasis. He used repetition after repetition to drive home the oneness of the Christ, the Christian and God the Father. With fierce solemnity He said, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

The words were addressed to His disciples, it is true, just before they set out on a mission; but every Christian is a disciple of Christ; every man living has a mission; every human soul is another savior; for every one who is baptized is a son of God. That is God's wondrous intimacy and your terrific responsibility. You cannot give an insulting answer

to a tramp without insulting the Man who tramped Judean hills; you cannot refuse a beggar without refusing the Divine Beggar who was born for us; you do injury to no man without doing injury to the God-Man who died for us.

Yes, it is a hard saying, but woe to the ones who will not hear it! "And the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." — For the life of the world! — Do you see why we are surrounded by the dying and the dead? They have found His saying hard. They have walked away. They will not take His flesh. And that is why the world is dying!

Now, Christ spoke those words directly of the Eucharist. He was promising His real presence beneath a wafer of wheat. But who will say that He was not also speaking of His Mystical Presence? who will say that He did not also mean His presence beneath the folds of flesh? Is not that, too, the life of the world? If Japan could see in China another self, another member of the one same Body; if Germany could see in France and England branches of the one same Vine; if Capital could see in Labor the Image of God, and the proletariat recognize in the bourgeoisie Jesus Christ, would we not be living instead of dying, enjoying love in place of hate, be at peace instead of at murderous war? Is not this His flesh for the life of the world? Of course it is. And if we would live, we must listen, and no longer walk away.

You know that the Physical Jesus all but bribed the crowd at Capharnaum to accept His word. He dazzled them with wonders, almost blinded them with miracles, and when He had clearly shown that He was more than man, He fired their imaginations with breathtaking promises. "He that cometh to me," He said, "shall not hunger. He that believeth in me shall never thirst. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life ever-

lasting." What more could He offer? What else would entice? — Everlasting life without hunger or thirst! — Was it not enough to give them the **will** to believe? But they would not.

He makes the same promises today. To those who believe and **live** the doctrine of the Mystical Body, everlasting life is assured. To those who serve Christ in the person of their fellow-man, to those who work the works of mercy, Heaven is guaranteed. Is it not enough to give one the **will** to believe? In His description of the Last Judgment when the elect asked why they were saved and when had they done anything **to** Him, Christ made answer, "As long as you did it to these, the least of my brethren, you did it unto me."

That is the text that thrills and terrifies. It makes Heaven so easily accessible and Hell so very near. **What we do to our neighbor we do to Christ!** Do you see now why I ask: What are you doing to Jesus Christ?

This doctrine of the Mystical Body spells our exaltation or our ruination. If we accept it and live it, we shall hear: "Come, ye blessed of my Father. . . ." But if we do what the crowd at Capharnaum did, we can expect only what He promised them:

"And thou, Capharnaum, which art exalted unto heaven, thou shalt be thrust down to hell." He gave His reason by saying, "For if the mighty works had been done in Sodom, that have been done in thee, perhaps it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of Judgment, than for thee."

Are **you** doing to Christ what the crowds did? Are you turning your back on Him and walking away?

CAN IT BE THIS?

I must stop. I become affrighted. I had planned to ask you many more pertinent, personal, parallel questions, the answers to which I already know too heart-sickeningly well. I had planned to trip-hammer home the realization of what you are doing to our poor, abandoned, outraged Christ as you find Him in the flesh of humanity. But my spirit fails as my vision clears.

Why ask you if you are doing what the ten lepers did when I know full well that not one in ten people ever thank God for life and love and health and happiness, for friendship in the eyes of man, worship in the eyes of woman and heaven in the eyes of child? Why ask you if you are doing what the lepers did, the ungrateful lepers, they who forgot who made them clean, when I know that not ten percent of healthy men ever thank God for the power to stand, that not ten percent of living women ever thank Him for the steady heartbeat that is their own or for the rhythmic pulse that is their child's? Why ask you if you are treating Christ as did the lepers, when I know that not one-half of one percent know how to say "Thank You" to God for God! for Christ! for Mary! for the Sacraments! for the Mystical Body! Why parallel you with the lepers when a more fearful parallel looms?

I was going to ask you if you were a modern Gerasene, one of those people who ask Christ to depart from their coasts, who prefer swine to the Lamb of God, who are seized with a great fear when profit in pork goes headlong into the sea, and equivalently tell Christ that they would rather have men possessed with devils and pigs grazing along their shores than to have the Master of men, the Conqueror of Satan and the God of the universe in their midst. But why ask you that when our whole world is filled with modern Gerasenes? Why ask you if you are

asking Christ to depart from your coasts when something more awful appears?

I was going to ask and develop these questions, but it was here exactly that my breath grew shorter and my pulse beat faster as realization after realization beat in on me. I realized that Christ acceded to the wish of the Gerasenes and left their coasts. I realized that Christ practically cursed the Capharnaum that walked away. I realized that Corozain and Bethsaida, because of their incredulity, heard woes pronounced against them that make even strong men blanch. I realized that after their refusals to accept Him little Nazareth was left utterly and absolutely alone. With an awful ache in my heart I realized that He never went back to the town of the crowded inns and closed doors. And with a catch in my breath I realized that the Jerusalem that rejected Him was razed to the ground and the Chosen People made the world's wanderers.

So I stop. Why ask any more questions when this tremendous one is written large: Can it be that we, His Chosen People of the Twentieth Century, are going to do what His Chosen Ones of the First Century did? Can it be that St. John's heartbreaking line is to be lived again? Can it be that of the Mystical Christ, as well as of the Physical Christ, some evangelist must write: "He came unto His own, and His own received him not"?

No wonder I become affrighted. Christ is before Pilate again. And as of old, a few hating high priests, a handful of snarling Scribes and Pharisees are herding the people into deicide. I can hear the murmur and almost the cries. The Mystical Christ is placed beside a Barabbas. Christ stands close to Communism. The Savior of men and man's murderer are put up for choice, and from Europe, Asia, Africa and the land "down under" I hear the cry, "Give unto us Barab-

bas!" Every wind that blows carries the blood-freezing echoes, "Give unto us Barabbas!" Will it again be written, "And their voices prevailed"?

Do you see the frightful parallel? It was a weak man in a powerful office who delivered Christ to be crucified. Pilate pronounced the sentence, but it was the howling mob who forced him. And who was behind that mob? — Caiphas and a few associates. . . . The mob is howling again today. A bloodthirsty, hating, howling mob of atheistic communists (and when I say communists, I include black shirts, red shirts and brown shirts; I include every shade and every color of those who madly shout, "We have no king but Caesar!" — the totalitarian state!) — this mob is shouting and it will sway any weak-kneed man in a powerful office. But the thing for the thinker and the man of vision to learn is, who is behind the mob? Who is the modern Caiphas? Can it be Satan? Can it be the Antichrist has risen in the person of atheistic communism? Our late Holy Father, Pius XI, thought so.

Can it be that modern man, despite the Roman Catholic Church, that miracle of the Twentieth Century, and of twenty centuries, is digging the hole on Calvary's hill for the Cross of the Mystical Christ? Can it be that Jesus is to be abandoned and Barabbas embraced?

Yes, there is only one question. It is not: Communism or Christ? for there is no choice! It is: Are you with Christ or against Him? That is the one question alone that classifies men. What they think of art or science or literature matters little; it does not reveal men. The searching test of the mind and the heart, the one infallible acid test, is the simple question: What think ye of Christ? And lest that sound like a mere speculative query, I have put it in the practical by asking,

What are you doing to Jesus Christ?

To answer it honestly, look at the Ten Commandments, the Six Precepts and the Three Counsels; look at the confessional, the Mass and the altar rail; look at the Seven Capital Sins, the Seven Corporal Works of Mercy and the Seven Spiritual ones; but most especially, look at your neighbor. If you believe in Jesus Christ, if with Peter you say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," then you must believe that every man you meet is a breath of God, every woman you see is an expression of Divinity, every baptized child is a temple of the Holy Ghost. If you believe in Jesus Christ, then you must believe that white man, red man, black man, yellow man, brown man, every man is your brother, is a being for whom your Elder Brother lived and died, is a member of your own body, actually or potentially. If you believe in Jesus Christ, then you must believe that Heaven is to be gained by radiating Christ at all times, in all places, with all peoples; and it is said of Him that "He went about doing good." If you believe in Jesus Christ, then a walk in a crowded city street becomes a pilgrimage of adoration; for in every passer-by you recognize the Almighty. Every meeting with a fellow-human is a rendezvous with your Lover. If you really believe in Jesus Christ, then your life must be what Emile Mersch, S.J., equivalently says life should be — one continual act of loving adoration, one uninterrupted caring for the Body of Christ. In his truly masterful book, **Morality and the Mystical Body**, Fr. Mersch proves that life is one "indestructible relation to God." That is why St. Paul can say, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God." That is why I can say, as long as you live, move and have being, you are doing something to Jesus Christ — what is it?

Remember, those who rejected Him were rejected.

I started this little work because my heart was aching for Jesus Christ. I stop it because my heart is breaking for you. Equivalently I am saying the same thing. But there is this one tremendous difference — branches can be cut off and burned; branches can be broken and wither away; branches can be torn off and left to die, while the vine still goes on. Christ said, "I am the Vine, you the branches." Are you firmly attached to Jesus Christ? If not, how do you expect to live?

BE WISE

My parting word is: Be wise. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do ALL for the glory of God."

You know the man who wrote that line is the man who so forcefully preached the solidarity of mankind, the incorporation of men in Christ Jesus; he is the man from whom we have received the proof incontrovertible of the identity of Jesus with His Christians, for it was Saul, the fiery persecutor of the Christians, who heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And when Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" the answer came back, "I am Jesus Christ whom thou persecutest." Saul was persecuting the Christians.

If that is not strikingly clear, then let me parallel the two questions of Christ: the one to the soldier who smashed a brutal fist into His face at that travesty of a trial before Annas, and the question He put to Saul. Of the soldier He asked, "Why strikest thou me?" Of Saul, "Why persecutest thou me?" The soldier struck the Physical Body; Saul, the Mystical Body. They both struck Jesus Christ.

Hence, to answer my opening query, "What are you doing to Jesus Christ?" enter your soul and see what you are doing to your fellow-man; for "whatsoever you do to these, the least of my brethren, you do it unto me."

Be wise. Remember that, while the Physical Jesus lived He had a few friends, a few followers, a few homes He could visit. The Mystical Christ has the same. Are you a friend and a very close follower? Is your home one that He can visit? If not, what are you doing to Jesus Christ?

Do be very wise and allow me to point your wisdom by closing this booklet with two quotations from Hilaire Belloc. They are quotations I want you to ponder.

1. "Religion is at the root of all political movements." Communism, Fascism, Nazism are religions. Anti-Christian religions. They are hounding the Mystical Christ to death.

2. "Cultures spring from religions." Ours is a pagan culture, because it has sprung from those who walked away from Christ. And the modern men and women of culture are walking still farther away.

Be very, very wise. Life is a wind, and when the silence of death comes, you shall hear:

What did you do to Jesus Christ?

Love Him. Love Him NOW. Tomorrow may be too late. Love Him, for He is the only one worthy of all your love. Love Him in the men, women and children all around you; for them He lived and died; in them He lives again. Love Jesus Christ in His Mystical Body, and I promise you Heaven. Could you ask for more?

And to be hard-headedly practical, let me say that love demands an embrace, it yearns for intimate union, it craves close presence. Hence, if your love for the Mystical Christ would be real love, you must take advantage of the Real Presence of the Physical Christ, you must effect the most intimate of unions by Holy Communion, you must enjoy the closest embrace that love can find, that of

body with Body and soul with Soul. You must live St. Ignatius' prayer:

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification.

Body of Christ, be my salvation.

Blood of Christ, fill all my veins.

Water from Christ's side, wash out my stains.

Passion of Christ, my comfort be.

O Good Jesus, listen to me.

Within Thy wounds I fain would hide,

Ne'er to be parted from Thy side;

Guard me should the foe assail me,

Call me when my life shall fail me;

Bid me come to Thee above,

With Thy saints to sing Thy love,

World without end. Amen.

Somewhere in this booklet I quoted what I consider the saddest line in all literature. It is taken from St. John. It runs, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Let me put an end to this little work with what I claim is the most encouraging line in all literature. It comes from the same pen. He wrote, "But as many as received Him, He gave them the power to be made the **sons of God.**" That is the only power worth our striving. That is the only position worth gaining and maintaining. So, receive Him. Receive Him Eucharistically. Receive Him Mystically. Then life will be what it should be — a preparation for death; and death will be what it is meant to be — a gateway to glory.

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