

III. — Reparation.

We ought to obey God rather than men. — *Acts*, v, 29.

By His eagerness to follow the call of His Father, Jesus repairs all the sins committed with regard to vocation. How numerous they are, and how grave !

Although not rigorously bound, under pain of sin, to follow a vocation through the mere fact that one is called, nevertheless, when it is clearly manifested, either by inward conviction, or by the decision of a spiritual director, it is difficult to turn a deaf ear to it without sin : in the first place, on account of the contempt of divine authority which such conduct appears to imply ; and again, and above all, by reason of the fatal consequences of such infidelity. — For how many souls is not the religious life a necessary bulwark, an indispensable refuge, outside of which they will certainly succumb, either on account of their passions, or of the surroundings in which they live ! — Now, is it not a grave fault to neglect the means which we know to be absolutely necessary to salvation ?

Again, what ingratitude toward a love which offers a privileged existence, which calls to an honor as precious as it is unmerited, and which has prepared help most powerful, most ample, most wisely proportioned to the needs of the soul ! Jesus calls His religious and His priests His friends. All that His Heart holds the most delicate, the most tender, the most loving, He calls them, and He longs to give them.

What rashness, what folly for a soul to refuse to conform to the eternal designs of God over her ! not to embrace the state for which He has created special aptitudes, and to engage in one in which she can hope for neither angels to guide her, nor assistance to sustain her, because she is not in the way marked out for her !

It is a crime for parents to oppose by violence or constraint the vocation of their children. The Council of Trent pronounces anathema against such parents. They are blind and cruel. They are in illusion, and that may perhaps excuse them ; but their love is none the less cruel, their prudence blind.

They themselves generally prepare the unhappiness of their children, for vocation is the perfection of the soul, and no being finds peace or happiness outside of its own end, its own perfection. What follows from the opposition of parents ? — Misguided existences, unhappy marriages, endless tears, souls lost by reason of parents' usurpation of the rights of God ! They think themselves the masters, the proprietors of their children, when they are only their tutors, their guardians, bound to restore them to God as soon as He demands them. — How many Christian parents alas ! be-