

even at that hour to foresee the manner in which his love for his Master was to be sealed with his blood. It was a charity manifested by deeds and not by boastful words; a charity wherein self-will had no share: he was to walk where others chose, he was to be girded by others and led whither he would not. (John, xxi, 15-19.)

"God is charity," wrote St. John, "and he that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in him" (I. John, iv, 16). These words are surely applicable to the Heart of our Lord, which is the living emblem of His love. The spirit of charity, is the spirit of St. John, the first bosom friend of the Heart of Jesus; it is the very essence of the devotion to this Sacred Heart.

But what we must bear in mind is, that the spirit of charity is not an isolated act of charity, but the every-day practice of it, in other words, it is the habit of this virtue; it is that charity which animates, as much as it is possible here below, all our actions, all our sentiments, all our thoughts. Now it is precisely this habit we should endeavour to acquire. It is a necessity for the heart of man to love. Our lifetime must needs be spent loving God or loving the world according to the choice we have made. And whence comes it that the heart, with a strange shortsightedness, tends more persistently towards the world than towards God? This proceeds without doubt from our having so slight a knowledge of the sublimity and excellence of divine charity. A little reflection would convince us that of all virtues it is the most to be prized.

The consequences of the pitiable condition of man, since the fall, are so far-reaching that everything, even his very virtues are a sad reminder of his misery. His faith emphasizes the darkness of his understanding; his hope recalls his spiritual penury; his penance, his crimes; his patience, his afflictions; his humility, his degradation; his mortification, his sensual covetousness; his chastity, his proneness to evil. But charity, transcending these and all other virtues,