

DEATH.

(John Henry Cardinal Newman.)

When'er goes forth
Thy dread command
And my last hour is nigh,
Lord, grant me in a Christian land,
As I was born, to die.

I pray not, Lord, that friends may be,
Or kindred, standing by;
Choice blessing which I leave to Thee
To give me, or deny.

But let my failing limbs beneath
My Mother's (*) smile recline;
My name in sickness and in death
Heard in her sacred shrine.

And may the Cross beside my bed
In its meet **) emblems rest;
And may the absolving words he said
To ease a laden breast.

Thou, Lord! where'er we lie,
Canst aid;
But He, who taught His own
To live as one, will not upbraid
The dead to die alone.

*) "Mother," used here to signify
the Catholic Church.
**) "meet," appropriate; suitable.

THE HOLY SOULS.

There is no peace to be compared with that of the souls in Purgatory, save that of the saints in Paradise; and this peace is ever augmented by the inflowing of God into these souls, which increases in proportion as the impediments to it are removed. The rust of sin is the impediment, and this the fire continually consumes, so that the soul in this state is continually opening itself to admit the Divine communication. As a covered surface can never reflect the sun, not through any defect in that orb, but simply from the resistance offered by the covering, so, if the covering be gradually removed, the surface will by little and little be opened to the sun, and will more and more reflect his rays.

So is it with the rust of sin, which is the covering of the soul. In Purgatory the flames incessantly consume it, and, as it disappears, the soul reflects more and more perfectly the true sun, who is God. Its contentment increases as this rust wears away, and the soul is laid bare to the Divine ray, and thus one increases and the other decreases until the time is accomplished. The pain never diminishes, although the time does; but as to the will, so united is it to God by pure charity, and so satisfied to be under His Divine appointment, that these souls can never say their pains are pains.

On the other hand, it is true that they suffer torments which no tongue can describe nor any intelligence comprehend, unless it be revealed by such a special grace as that which God has vouchsafed to me, but which I am unable to explain. And this vision which God revealed to me has never departed from my memory. I will describe it as far as I am able, and they whose intellects our Lord will deign to open will understand me.

The source of all suffering is either original or actual sin. God created the soul pure, simple, free from every stain, and with a certain beatific instinct toward Himself. It is drawn aside from Him by original sin, and when actual sin is afterwards added, this withdraws it still farther, and ever as it removes from Him its sinfulness increases, because its communication with God grows less and less.

And because there is no good except by participation with God, who to the irrational creatures imparts Himself as He wills, and in accordance with His Divine decree, and never withdraws from them, but to the rational soul imparts Himself more or less, according as He finds her more or less freed from the hindrances of sin, it follows that, when he finds a soul returning to the purity and simplicity

ty in which she was created, He increases in her the beatific instinct, and kindles in her a fire of charity so powerful and vehement, that it is insupportable to the soul to find any obstacle between her and her final end; and the clearer vision she has of these obstacles the greater is her pain.

Since the souls in Purgatory are freed from the guilt of sin, there is no barrier between them and God save only the pains they suffer, which delay the satisfaction of their desire. And when they see how serious is even the slightest hindrance which the necessity of justice causes to check them, a vehement flame kindles within them which is like that of hell. They feel no guilt, however, and it is guilt which is the cause of the malignant will of the condemned in hell, to whom God does not communicate His goodness—so that they remain in despair, and with a will forever opposed to the good will of God.

It is evident that the revolt of man's will from that of God constitutes sin, and so long as that revolt continues, man's guilt remains. Those, therefore, that are in hell have passed from this life with perverse wills, and their guilt is not remitted, nor can it be, since they are not longer capable of change. When this life is ended, the soul remains forever confirmed either in good or evil, according as she has here determined. As it is written: *Where I shall find thee, that is, at the hour of death, with the will either fixed on sin or repenting of it, there I will judge thee.*

From this judgment there is no appeal, for after death the freedom of the will can never return, but the will is confirmed in that state in which it is found at death. The souls in hell, having been found at that hour with the will to sin, have the guilt and the punishment always with them, and although this punishment is not so great as they deserve, yet it is eternal. Those in Purgatory, on the other hand, suffer the penalty only, for their guilt was canceled at death, when they were found hating their sins and penitent for having offended the Divine goodness. And this punishment has an end, and the term of it is ever approaching. O misery beyond all misery, and the greater because man in his blindness regards it not!

The punishment of the damned is not, it is true, infinite in degree, for the all-lovely goodness of God shines even into hell. He who dies in mortal sin merits infinite woe for an infinite duration; but the mercy of God has made only the time infinite, and mitigated the intensity of the pain. In justice He might have inflicted much greater punishment than He has done. Oh, what peril attaches to sin willfully committed! For it is very difficult for man to bring himself to penance, and without penance guilt remains and will ever remain, so long as man retains unchanged the will to sin, or is intent upon committing it.

The souls in Purgatory are entirely conformed to the will of God; therefore they correspond with His goodness, are contented with all that He ordains, and are entirely purified from the guilt of their sins. They are pure from sins, because they have in this life abhorred them and confessed them with true contrition, and for this reason God remits their guilt, so that only the stains of sin remain, and these must be devoured by fire. Thus freed from guilt, and united to the will of God, they see Him clearly according to that degree of light which He allows them, and comprehend how great a good is the fruition of God for which all souls were created. Moreover, these souls are in such close conformity to God, and are drawn so

powerfully toward Him by reason of the natural attraction between Him and the soul, that no illustration or comparison could make this impetuosity understood in the way my spirit conceives it by its interior sense. Nevertheless, I will use one which occurs to me.

Let us suppose that in the whole world there were but one loaf to appease the hunger of every creature, and that the bare sight of it would satisfy them. Now man, when in health, has by nature the instinct for food; but if we can suppose him to abstain from it, and neither die nor yet lose health and strength, his hunger would clearly become increasingly urgent. In this case, if he knew that nothing but this loaf would satisfy him, and that until he reached it his hunger could not be appeased, he would suffer intolerable pains, which would increase as his distance from the loaf diminished; but if he were sure that he would never see it, his hell would be as complete as that of the lost souls, who, hungering after God, have no hope of ever seeing the Bread of Life. But the souls in Purgatory have an assured hope of seeing Him and of being entirely satisfied; and therefore they endure all hunger and suffer all pain until that moment when they enter into eternal possession of this Bread, which is Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Saviour, and our Love.

St. Catharine of Genoa.

THE RIGHTS OF OUR LITTLE ONES (CONTINUED.)

PARENTS AND EDUCATION

14. Whence arises the obligation on the part of parents to educate their offspring?

a) From the natural law; for by the very fact of procreation they incur the responsibility for the education of their children.

b) From the positive law of God, who in the Old Dispensation established marriage as a sacred institution, and in the New raised it to the dignity of a sacrament of His Church, thus instituting the domestic society, or family, to secure the education of the human race. Whence by the indissoluble alliance of marriage parents incur the obligation of educating the offspring with which God may please to bless them.

15. How far does this obligation of parents extend?

a) To the necessary physical education—i.e., parents are bound to watch over the infancy of their children; to provide them with sufficient food, clothing, and housing; and to give them such bodily training as may fit them, under ordinary circumstances, to earn their own living.

b) To such a degree of mental education, at least, as to enable the child to fulfil the ordinary duties of civilized social life.

c) To that moral education which may effectually preserve the child from vicious habits, shield his innocence, and, as far as possible, secure him against moral contagion.

d) And, above all, to a religious education which will impart to the child a thorough knowledge of God and His holy law, direct him on the way of Christian virtue, and facilitate for him the attainment of his last end.

16. Are all parents bound to give the same amount of education to their children?

No; while all without exception are bound to give their children the essential education, that is, what is barely sufficient to enable them to succeed in the ordinary pursuits of this life, and to gain their last end; those whom God has blessed with sufficient means

have the further obligation to give their children an education suited to their station in life.

17. Are all parents without exception bound to have their children taught to read, write, and reckon?

Though the general obligation is not so evident, yet such is the inconvenience of illiteracy in our day that the parent who, under ordinary circumstances, brought up his children illiterate, though he taught them all things else needful for this life and the life to come, could hardly be pronounced free from grave neglect of duty.

18. Are parents bound personally to superintend the early physical, moral, and religious training of their children?

They certainly are, under ordinary circumstances, since this is the will of the Creator, declared by the natural law as well as by the positive law of God; consequently, they cannot without very grave reasons wholly abandon this duty to others.

19. How does the natural law declare the divine will in regard to this obligation on the part of parents?

By the intense love for their offspring, which the Creator has infused into the hearts of all parents who are not depraved by vice, and by the filial love and reverence towards their parents implanted in the hearts of children; both of which manifestly show that the parent is the God intended tutor of the child, and the child the God-given pupil of the parent.

20. What does the positive law of God prescribe on this point?

The positive law of God sanctions the dictates of the natural law, and ordains that parents should love their children, and that children should honor and obey their parents; and this love of parents principally consists in the fulfilment of the duties of education, as the honor due to them from their children consists chiefly in the docility of the latter in submitting to that discipline which Christian education requires.

To be continued.

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