

The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus

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ORIGINAL.

ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Jesus, Redemptor Omnium!

Jesus, Redeemer of mankind!
Ere Nature yet had sprung to light,
Born in thy Sire's eternal mind,
His match in glory, as in might!
His bright effulgence: author sure
Of all our hope, and only end:
Now to the prayers thy supplicants pour,
Thy willing ear propitious bend!
The rolling Sun renews the day,
When thou, Life's Author, for our sake
From Virgin's womb did'st not refuse
On thee a mortal's form to take.
Forth from thy Father's bosom led
By wondrous love to humankind,
Thou to his justice, in our stead,
Did'st in thyself a victim find.
Let heav'n and earth their chorus join,
And creatures all his praise resound;
Who in his wisdom's depth divine
A way to save lost man has found!
And now to thee, whose blood was shed,
To wash our sinful stains away,
This tribute of our praise we glad
Present on this, thy natal day.
To Jesus, from a Virgin sprung,
Father and Spirit, mystic three;
Be glory giv'n, and praises sung,
Now, and for all eternity!

ON THE MANY TITLES, BY WHICH WE BELONG TO GOD.

Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's.

THE Pharisees, those mortal enemies of our Lord, who sought every opportunity of undoing him in the esteem of the people; and of bringing about his death; after consulting together, imagine that now at last they have found out a way of compassing his ruin. They resolve to propose to him a question, so artfully devised, that whether he answered it in the negative or in the affirmative, must prove equally fatal to him. That you may fully comprehend the cunning and malice of those hypocrites, you must recollect that the Jews at our Saviour's time were no longer a free people, governed by their own laws; but that having been subdued by the Romans, they, like most of the other nations, were become tributary to Cæsar. This tribute therefore which they were obliged to pay to a heathen prince, was in their eyes a most odious exaction, contrary to the spirit of their laws, by which they were constituted a free and independent people, subject only to their own native sovereign. No Jew therefore durst affirm it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, without being looked upon as an enemy to his country; while the Romans on the other hand would have deemed it treason in any one to refuse tribute to Cæsar, in a land, which they considered as a province of their empire. Hence the Pharisees imagined it impossible for our Saviour to answer their

question, without rendering himself obnoxious either to the Jews or to the Romans. For had he granted it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, the Jews would have abhorred him as a traitor to his country a blasphemer of their law, a friend to strangers and idolaters; and, as such, they no doubt would have stoned him. But had he, on the contrary, denied tribute to be due to Cæsar, the Romans would have condemned him to death, as a factious person and a stirrer up of sedition. Even had he declined answering the question at all, the pharisees then would have held him out as one they had puzzled, or as a mean temporizer. But *there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.* Prov. xxi. 30. *Shew me, says he, the tribute money. And they brought to him a penny.— Then Jesus says to them: whose image and superscription is this? They say to him Cæsar's.— Then he said to them: render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: and to God the things that are God's.* By this admirable sentence he at once defeated the malice of his enemies, and solved their question in a manner equally satisfactory to the Jews and Romans. Who, but wisdom itself could have so readily answered a question so captious and cunningly devised?

But by this reply our Saviour not only confounded his enemies, and shewed them how much the wisdom of God surpasses the wisdom of men; but he also gives us a most important lesson, by reminding us that at the same time that we must do justice to man, and render to the world what belongs to it; we must also do justice to God; and render to him what he claims as his own. *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.* Give to the world and your fellow-creatures that care and attention, which they necessarily require: but give them not what belongs to God. Give not yourselves wholly up to them, for you are the property of God. You are stamped with his image, not with the image of Cæsar. To God therefore you exclusively belong, and not to Cæsar or the world. Do not therefore make yourselves over to the world, as if you chiefly belonged to it. Let not your main endeavour be to please the world, to serve the world. It may indeed claim, and it necessarily requires a secondary attention, according to the station you hold in it: but your principal attention and endeavour must always be to love and serve your God. *Render to God the things that are God's.*

What then are the things that are Cæsar's; and what are the things that are God's? The things that are Cæsar's are the riches, honours, pleasures, and the good things of this life; which a Cæsar can either bestow or take away. Render such to Cæ-

sar. Make them over to the worldling, as his property. Part with them at least in affection; for these transitory and perishable goods are not the portion of the Christian; who must be *poor in spirit* here, if he would enjoy the good things in the life to come. *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. viii. The things that are Cæsar's, are also, as I said, the care and attention which we must give to our worldly affairs, the labours and fatigues we must undergo, in order to secure to ourselves and families a decent and comfortable subsistence. They are besides the obligations we owe to our superiors; the duties of respect and attention we owe to our fellow-creatures. These may be called the things that are Cæsar's. This much the world can demand of us as its own; but nothing more, for in every other sense we belong wholly to God. He claims us as his inalienable property, and will not suffer it with impunity to be made over to any but himself. *Render to God the things that are God's.*

Let us then at present consider the many titles by which we belong to God, that we may be properly convinced of the greatness of our obligations to give ourselves wholly to him; and the heinousness of their guilt, who, regardless of his inalienable rights, make over to Cæsar, or the world, what belongs to him alone.

We belong to God by the title of our creation. We belong to him by that of our redemption. We belong to him in consequence of the supreme dominion he necessarily has over all his creatures; and of the necessary dependence they have all on him. In fine, we belong to him by the title of gratitude due to him for all the good he has ever bestowed, is daily bestowing, and intends to bestow upon us for time and eternity.

1o. We belong to God by our creation. He has made us what we are; and consequently we are wholly his. The vessel is the potter's, who formed it, though he created not the matter of which he formed it. We must then in a much stricter sense belong to God, since he has not only made our bodies, but created the substance, out of which he made them; and breathed into them the breath of life. Our bodies then and our souls are his: therefore our whole being is his. And as the motions of the machine, which the artist makes, are truly the artist's work; so our thoughts, words, and actions, when good, are properly speaking his work, who made us good, though by abusing our free-will, we have become evil: and therefore, while all the good that is in us, is from God; all the evil that is in us, is from ourselves: so that we have nothing of our own, but what is evil; and all we can boast