

eyes, can learn that the fact that Christ lived the Hidden Life has marvellously and deeply influenced the Catholic Church. Must we not then conclude that the Catholic Church is in this most Christian? that she most closely imitates Christ? And must it not be admitted that in this she has no equal?

If the reader is, unhappily, one of those who have been trained to view the religious orders with suspicion and dislike, let him try to be impartial and ask himself the following question—

Is it right or wrong to live a life modelled upon that lived by Christ for eighteen years? or, is it right or wrong that men and women should strive to live lives like those of Joseph and Mary? It seems to us that there can be but one answer to these questions; and it also seems to us that the Church which has answered them in so faithful and practical a manner, is thereby shown to be the most truly Christian of all churches, and therefore the most likely to be the right Church.

Thus much has been written to indicate the attitude of the Catholic Church towards Christ as He is set before us in the Gospels. It would seem, from what has been said, that with regard to the Public Life of Christ all the churches are more or less agreed in spirit; with reference to the Hidden Life, however, there is a striking difference, a difference which, as we contend, tells strongly in favor of the Catholic Church.

We are now prepared to consider the attitude of the churches towards the Infancy and Boyhood of Christ, or, as we call it, the Holy Childhood.

A glance at the Catholic calendar will prove how the Church meditates on the Infancy and Boyhood of Christ. The fact, for instance, that we keep with great devotion such days as the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin, points to the Catholic doctrine that Christ was truly God from the moment of His conception. There is no stammering or hesitation on the part of the Catholic Church as to this dogma: if there were, such festivals could not be celebrated. All feasts of the Blessed Virgin are kept for the honor of Christ: in those feasts, as in all things religious, Christ is ever the centre and reason. All Mary's glories are for the sake of her Divine Son. But our object in alluding to the above-named feasts, is to bring out clearly that no part of the life of Christ is without teaching and influence for the Catholic Church.

Of Christmas Day and the Birth of Christ we wrote last month and we need only repeat here that it is her recognition of the real Divinity of Christ that leads the Catholic Church to celebrate Christmas with such marked distinction. The same idea is conspicuous in our keeping of the feasts of the Circumcision, the Holy Innocents, the Epiphany, or the Manifestation of Christ to the gentiles through the Magi. These festivals are not limited to the celebration of a single day, but each are commemorated throughout eight days. Again the record of the Flight into Egypt has given the Catholic Church occasion for a feast in honor of Christ. So likewise has the account of the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple; and once more we have the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple. It appears from all this then that the Catholic Church celebrates the events of Christ's Infancy with the same honors and distinction as she does the events of the Divine Manhood. For her the Transfiguration, the Resurrection and Ascension are mysteries to be highly honored, mysteries full of profound teaching, mysteries able to impel the believer to the practice of all and every virtue. But so also are mysteries of the Holy Childhood. In a sense all mysteries are equal inasmuch as they all concern the same Christ. Christ was very God in His Resurrection and Ascension; and he was one and the same God in the arms of His Mother Mary: He was one and the same God who was catechised by the Jewish doctors in the Temple.

Hence for the Catholic the Child Jesus is not merely a charming theme for the artist and the poet, not merely a lovable creature like

the other children of men, not merely a striking model to put before the little ones for their admiration and imitation. The Child Jesus is all this and more. The Child Jesus is God teaching all men by example; He is God proving His love for all men; He is a mystery, a revelation, the contemplation of which has raised up great saints and religious orders for which the world can never be thankful enough.

It is needful to say yet more to show that the Holy Childhood has incalculably influenced and moulded the Catholic Church and her alone? The lives of her saints in all ages, her treasures of art and literature, her orders and her labors all serve to prove beyond question that with reference to the Holy Childhood she is the most Christian of all the churches.

In conclusion let us touch briefly upon a few of the ways in which the Holy Childhood appeals to and influences individual Catholics. Realizing as he firmly does realize that all things are written for his instruction, and that Christ is his appointed model in all things, he sees in spirit the Child Jesus in all the recorded events of Infancy and Boyhood; he beholds a submission, obedience and humility which it is impossible to exaggerate, because He who submits, who obeys and who humbles Himself, is not merely a Child but very God. He notes how Christ is subject to His Mother Mary and to His reputed Father Joseph, and seeing, he learns to submit himself to authority, to prize obedience and to love humility. He observes that Christ was exact in fulfilling all the ordinances of the Temple, and he resolves that he himself will be exact in fulfilling the ordinances of the Church. He argues that if God-made-Man loved, obscurity, poverty and labor, these things cannot but be good for himself. He marvels at the details of the flight into Egypt, and grows resigned at the inscrutable decrees of Providence as they are manifested in his own life. The Catholic parent reads that on the appointed day the Child Jesus was circumcised, and he resolves that his own children shall be baptized as soon as possible; he will not delay or trifle with so important a matter. He takes notice of the very naming of the Divine Child, and like his fellow Catholics who are thoroughly practical he gives his children names suggestive of the saints and things heavenly. While he wonders that the Child Jesus should submit to be catechised by the Jewish doctors, he remembers that his own children should be strictly instructed in the teachings of their faith. If he meditate at all on the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple he will probably breathe a prayer that he too may present a son to the altar. To give a son to the service of the Catholic Church calls for whole-hearted devotion on the part of the parents; it involves self-denial of almost every sort. But many a father and mother have of their poverty presented a son to the Temple of God's Church; they know that it is good to have a child living in the Father's House and devoted to the Father's Business. The thought of the Holy Childhood is to them a source of resignation, hope, faith and great gladness.

These are but a tithe of the teachings and promptings that come from the consideration of the Holy Childhood; but we think them quite sufficient to prove the assertion with which we began this paper, namely, that the Catholic Church is the most Christian of churches. She alone makes the Christ of the gospel her own; she alone imitates to the full the shepherds and the Magi who adored Mary's Babe for what He was and is, God. For the Catholic Church alone is every event recorded of Christ a mystery and a revelation, a treasure house from which she is for ever drawing forth treasures new and old. God does all things well; it was not in itself absolutely necessary that He should be born of a Virgin Mother; it might have been that He would come into the world as did Adam, in the full stature of manhood. But in the all-wise decrees of God there was to be a Holy Childhood; there was to be that marvellous and special manifestation of Himself to the world. This far-reaching truth

is constantly proclaimed to the world by one voice only, the voice of the Catholic Church.

Chats with Young Men

In order that the series of Chats on the cultivation of force of character may not survive the time during which my suggestions should be put to proof; and again, to epitomize the rather comprehensive range of subjects we have discussed together, I shall endeavor in this article to resume the leading thoughts which have figured in the Chats. That the subject is important to every young reader need not be emphasized. That it might have been discussed at more length, with more order and with more instructive detail is known to no one better than to its writer. But enough has been said to indicate the relative positions of the qualities and virtues that make the framework of character. Around them it is hoped that the judgment of the reader, aided by experience, will fill in a strong and complete body for a character natural to himself.

When a man designs a house which is to be secure against the ordinary attacks of the elements, he considers as the first essential, a foundation as deep as experience or science has proved to be suitable for the superstructure. For the building up of character much greater caution is necessary, for the superstructure—a human life—will have eternal consequences and the elements which are at work to undermine it, weaknesses within and temptations from without, can make a more pitiable wreck of the humblest human soul than all the elements of nature could visit upon the proudest earthly pile. Hence, as the broad and deep foundation for a strong character, I have set forth honesty, truth and honor. That the former two are enjoined in the laws given on Mount Sinai should speak their eternal value. But even human experience, in the interests of earthly success, is embodied in the truisms "Honesty is the best policy," and "Truth will right itself." Truly honesty is the best policy. It gives a man weight. He feels the instinct of self-preservation and concedes every man's right to the benefits of that same first law of nature. He realizes the necessity and advantage of society and recognizes the fact that men are not equal: that some have talents which enable them to stride to fortune while others must be content to walk. Yet every man has a right to that which his labor procures for him, the rich having no right to steal from the poor nor the poor from the rich. So man must be honest. He must depend for his living and for execution of his plans on the fruits of his own labor. Thus, feeling that what he has is his own and having no intention of taking what another has by right, he relies on his own resources and his self-dependence calls forth his energy, develops his latent powers, making him a man of strength. In a somewhat different way truth contributes to strength. Men mingling in society must depend one on the other for the harmonious conduct of their various enterprises. No one man can know all things. Accordingly each masters certain facts, communicates them to his brethren and receives, in turn, the fruits of their researches; the employer depends on the employee, the student on the historian, the public on the journalist. A virtue so essential to the smooth working of society should find a shrine in each soul. It makes man feel the responsibility of his words, compels him to sacrifice advantage for truth, each sacrifice rendering him stronger and better qualified to teach his fellow-men. So the world needs the truthful and exacts as an essential attribute in those who lead it, truth. Nor will truth and honesty alone effect the happiest relations between man and man. As the spirit of a law obligates where the letter of a law may fail to bind, so the voice of honor supplements the rigid calls of honesty and truth. Conscience fails not to suggest how we should deal with our fellow-men, even when we

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might act otherwise and still regard the principles of truth and honesty. Honor is a fine sense of nature which prompts us to noble thought and action, and, as reason lifts man above the dumb animal, so conformity with the calls of honor places degrees between man and man. It is evident therefore, that honesty, truth and honor stand out as the groundwork of lofty and noble thought and action and must underlie force of character.

If my readers agree with me that the above is a good basis for character, I shall not delay longer to design a superstructure for each, especially as I have devoted much space in recent articles to suggestions along lines which I regarded as the finishing touches to a strong character. Generosity, amiability and tact are graces which facilitate the happy mingling of men and which insure the meeting of the strong with the weak. What I have said regarding them is only what everyone knows; I wrote of them only to lodge a suggestion that each of my readers would zealously and perseveringly cultivate them. I hope that the sincerity which prompted my remarks on the subject of character has communicated itself to my readers and that something I have said will give the world at least a few strong souls and a great many successful men.

FINEM RESPICE.

A QUEER DISEASE.

A very queer epidemic is reported to be devastating Uganda. It is known as the "sleeping sickness." Though it was discovered only a few years ago, it is computed that the disease has already killed from 20,000 to 30,000 people, and is spreading to new areas with increasing virulence. Its extension to the north will be of the greatest menace to Egypt. Scientific reports made on the spot describe the sleeping sickness as a complaint something like that group of diseases known as meningitis, or inflammation of the brain. It begins insidiously with changes in the mental attitude of the patient. From that time the disease progresses and the patient becomes stupid and restless, and after other symptoms have passed enters into a state of coma and dies. The duration of the complaint varies from a month in acute cases to six months or more in others. The disease is almost invariably fatal, and although taking longer to cause death than hydrophobia, may be classed with the latter as one of the most fatal illnesses known to mankind. It is contagious, and its spread is assured by over-crowding of many individuals in the same huts. The depopulation of many large and thickly populated areas is making itself felt, and the outlook is very gloomy. The only scheme yet devised for the prevention of the spread of the disease is the isolation of new cases.—S. H. Review.

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