

**CARDINAL MANNING**  
ON THE  
**LESSON FROM OUR LADY'S LIFE.**

CONTINUED.

Three hundred years ago in every church throughout this land there was the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. All in a day the Blessed Sacrament was removed. Those who had lived to man's estate, or to the age of reason, while the Blessed Sacrament was upon the altar, no doubt, were trained to realise the divine presence in the supernatural mystery, and to the end of their lives they retained some recollection of it, fading perpetually, for they were carried away, as the great majority were, in the tumult and the riot of that spiritual revolt. Nevertheless they retained some sort of consciousness to their dying day, that in the Most Holy Sacrament there was the real presence of Jesus Christ, and that if it were upon the altar they would bend the knee. But their children—the next generation who were born afterwards, and had never seen a tabernacle, nor the light hanging before it, had never seen the presence of Our Lord in the Holy Sacrament at all, who had been reared up in the empty churches of England, in the desolate untenanted sepulchres where once the Lord had lain—what consciousness had they? It is no surprise to me to see true Christians who believe in Jesus Christ coming to our churches without so much as bowing in passing to and fro before the high altar, gazing at pictures, making observations on the architecture, as unconscious that they are standing in the presence of our Divine Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament as if He did not exist. I don't find fault with them. Some people are impatient; I am not impatient with them. Who has ever trained them? They believe in Jesus Christ, and I hope and trust they love Him in their hearts, but they don't know His presence in the Holy Sacrament. Let me apply what I have said only as an illustration. Those who lived at the time of the Reformation, and had been taught from their infancy to say the "Hail Mary," continued to the end of their lives, no doubt, believing and loving her; but those who were born in the next generation—who had never been taught to say the "Hail Mary," nor to know who Mary is; had never been instructed to understand that He is God Incarnate, and she is the Mother of God, because she bore Him as a Divine Infant, they who had grown up in the utter unconsciousness of these truths—I can quite understand them never saying a prayer in honor, or affection, or love of a person of whom they knew so little; I can quite understand that they, having never been taught that through the Incarnation she is as much our mother in the order of grace as the First Eve in the order of nature, and that our relations to her are living relations, carrying duties and affections; I can perfectly understand those who have been deprived of this influence—growing up in a perfect unconsciousness of their duties to the Mother of the Divine Redeemer, and yet knowing and loving Him. Therefore, understand me, when I say I cannot understand any man loving the Son and consciously refusing love to His Blessed Mother; I mean this, that they that are unconscious of the relations in which they stand to her and she stands to them, I cannot understand; but as to those who know this influence, I must charge upon them an impiety of heart, a hardness and unfeeling coldness—I must say more, a spiritual insolence to venture to think her Divine Son will accept the love of hearts which consciously, deliberately, and explicitly withhold the love which for His sake is due to His Mother. In order to give a further proof of the assertion I made in the beginning, that the greatest saints had loved her most, and that in the measure in which we are sanctified we shall love her more, I will give the example of the saints of the Church. I would ask you to take the literature of the Church, and to tell me where you find the love of Our Divine Lord, the love of His Name, the love of His Sacred Heart, of His Five Sacred Wounds, of His Incarnation, of His person, in the greatest degree of fervour both of conception and of expression, if you do not find it in St. Anselm, whose whole mind was pervaded with the light of the Incarnation, and the love of Our Lord; St. Bernard, who had given the name of Jesus his own devotion; St. Bernardine, who is called the Seraphic Doctor; and St. Alphonsus, whose works are filled with the love of Jesus. All these writers are the most profound in their love and veneration of the Blessed Mother of our Lord. St. Bernard has received a special title for the love that he bore to her; St. Bonaventure preached all over central Italy of Mary, St. Bernard is reproached for writings in which

he has adopted the words "O God" to express the dignity of His Blessed Mother; St. Alphonsus is crowned with a diadem of reproach and of rebuke for the "Glories of Mary." Thirdly, this devotion perfects the filial spirit. By our baptism, we are made sons of God and sons of the Church; and when we are made sons of God we are made the sons of Mary. And when the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son is sent forth into our hearts, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father," and when we receive power to become the sons of God, it means this, and the filial spirit which is implanted in us by gift must be trained in us by discipline. Now, we can only serve God in one of three ways. We must either serve Him as slaves, in trembling like the devils that believe and fear; or, secondly, we may serve Him as hirelings and mercenaries, looking only for our pay; or, thirdly, we may serve Him as sons, by love, obedience, freedom, and generosity. Now, I ask how is this spirit to be trained by us? There are two gifts of the Holy Ghost out of which that spirit arises. There is a gift of holy fear, which is the gift, not of slaves, or of hirelings, but of sons who fear to offend the love and holiness of their Father; there is a gift of piety, which means especially the natural affection of children for a father, raised and elevated, by the Holy Ghost, with sanctity and charity. How is this character trained? I should ask you, How is the filial love of your children trained? Who forms the first character of the child? Who impresses upon the boy in his infancy the outline and the qualities of the character which he will have when he grows up a man? Whom does the law of England call the guardian of nurture until the age of discretion is reached? The mother. Into whose hands does nature commit the child to be fashioned and formed and trained and disciplined before, as yet, the father exercises authority? You know how the love of a mother is the first formation of the whole character of the boy and of the future man; you know the words of a mother will follow a man through life; how to the end of life the affection of a mother will hang over the head of a son even in the riot and disorder of his life, for his rebuke and guidance; how the memory of a mother's love will soften a flinty and hard man in the midst of iniquity; how there is a creative power, I may say, in a mother's heart. Is there anything like this in the order of grace? Certainly. The First Eve was our mother to sin and death, the Second Eve is the Mother of our Redeemer, the perfection of purity, humility, charity; that divine example hangs before us all our days, as Catholics, and also her known and conscious love, for if we once love her be sure of it she loves us first, and her prayers are ever offered up for us; and it is from the contemplation of her perfect love that men learn first manly tenderness. Men are proud of their hardness, and hardness is a departure from perfection. There is a manly tenderness which belongs to a soldier's character. The Sacred heart of Jesus is a divine heart, the spotless heart of Mary is a human heart like ours, and from the example alone we learn a meaning. We learn a chivalrous fidelity to her Divine Son, to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The martyrs learned it from the Queen of Martyrs, who stood at the foot of the Cross when men fled. A chivalrous spirit will not endure to hear a word of reproach or shame or dishonor against Jesus Christ, or His mother, or the Faith. The life it lives is a life above the mere literal commandments, and shows a promptness to make self-sacrifice, as she at the foot of the Cross united herself, united her heart, united her will to the heart and will of her Divine Son in the moment of his self-oblation when He redeemed the world. In His infinite merits she by a conscious act like His, as the priest when he raises the Holy Sacrament of the altar, she made oblation gladly and willingly of her Divine Son for the redemption of mankind. If our children be taught to contemplate her from their earliest history, to ask her prayers, study her life, follow her footsteps, can there be a discipline by which the filial character of a child can be better formed so as to love our Heavenly Father more surely and more perfectly: I have affirmed that those who love and venerate her must have most of the character of true disciples of Jesus Christ; that they have the most conformity to their Divine Master; that their love and veneration is only a conformity to His; only an approximation to that love and veneration which he bore. He, a perfect Son, is our example; His example is our pattern. His life is our law. If in some musical instrument of great compass, richness, and power, one single stop were untuned the whole harmony would be marred; if in some beautiful

human countenance one feature only was effaced, the whole beauty would be marred; if whilst the love of His Blessed Mother was in His heart, the love of His Blessed Mother is not found in ours. I ask what perfection can there be in conformity to Him. In that measure there is a defect and a deformity. The love of the Blessed Virgin was taught first of all by Jesus Christ; He was the founder of that devotion. It was preached to the world by the apostles, and the evangelists of the Incarnation, and has come down as a living stream of love and veneration in the heart of the Church from that day to this. The supernatural instinct which we call devotion rises from the supernatural intuitions of the faith, and what we do now they did then; and what we do now is what we shall do in eternity, and therefore devotion to the Blessed Virgin is not only no hindrance in the way of submission to the divine authority of the Catholic Church—it is a sign and proof of the true Church of Jesus Christ, and a reason for that submission. Lastly, what are our duties? The duty of love stands to reason; the duty of veneration is abundantly proved; but there are duties of invocation and the duty of imitation. Having touched briefly on the first of these duties, his Eminence proceeded as to the duty of imitation:—I will say to men, imitate the example of the Blessed Virgin. Imitate her in courage. I don't mean that burly, noisy, boisterous overbearing which men call courage; I mean the calm, passive, silent, enduring, self-mastering patience, which was the courage of the martyrs. That is true courage. The courage of a soldier who can stand under fire is greater than the courage of a soldier who can rush because his blood is hot. Another lesson to learn is a lesson of compassion; compassion with the crucifixion in our nature; compassion to every soul about us; compassion to every penitent; compassion to everyone that is afflicted; compassion to everyone that is in sin—hating the sin, have compassion on the sinner; compassion to the dumb creatures that are the creation of God; to those innocent and beautiful works of his hands made for our use, over which we have dominion, but not for tyranny. I will say to women, imitate the Blessed Virgin; and if you love and venerate her, her image will pass unconsciously into the very substance of your life and heart. Imitate her true dignity, which does not consist in clamouring for rights and in running a race in the intellectual culture of men. Man and woman have a diverse perfection, and the union of these perfections, which are diverse, make up one perfection which is indissoluble. Women have a dignity and perfection of their own which no man can imitate without lowering himself. An effeminate man is an abomination, a masculine self-asserting woman is a monster. The pattern of our Blessed Mother is a pattern of womanly dignity. Woman has her sovereignty, and her kingdom is her own hearth; and in the house over which she rules no man can dispute that sovereignty; if he rises against it he is mutilating that divine law by which he reigns supreme. Such was the state when God created man and woman in Paradise, and the world has wrecked the recollection and is striving to efface the image of that two-fold perfection which rises into one. Man is the image of God; man is the head of woman, and the head of man is God. These are the words of the Holy Ghost. In Jesus and His Blessed Mother the first creation is not only restored but elevated to a divine perfection, and you are called to be children of the Incarnation. The highest creature in the new creation of God is a woman, and the second Adam is God Himself. Therefore, dear brethren, let the humility and the charity and the tenderness and courage and compassion and piety of the Blessed Mother of God be your example; and if that does not make you perfect, I know of no means by which you can obtain perfection. The greatest saints have loved her most, and in the measure in which you are sanctified you will love her more; in the measure in which you love her more, you will be like her Son.

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