

isms from the living, fighting at every point, for justice with bravery and perseverance. This is the religion pure and undefiled. This is the religion that will win the age of God's Church.

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

General Intention for July. THE RIGHT USE OF LIBERTY.

American Messenger Sacred Heart. We are all free agents. We are masters of our own actions, and can determine our own conduct; we can act in a given case, or choose one course of action in preference to another; we can act on such decision of choice and adhere to it in spite of every solicitation to the contrary.

This does not mean that we are independent of all law, relieved of every restraint. We are subject to laws divine and human, and liable to restraint physical and moral; we are bound to obey just laws and submit to reasonable restraint; but we can disobey the one and resist the other; no despot can force the consent of our wills, no chain can fetter our power to choose between right and wrong.

This is so clearly the testimony of our consciousness that one, at our first thought, wonders why an explicit revelation has been made of it. With surprise as well as delight one reads in the fifth chapter of Ecclesiastics: "God made man, from the beginning, and left him in the hands of his own counsel. He added his commandments and precepts: If thou wilt keep the commandments, perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. He hath set fire and water before thee; stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him; for the wisdom of God is great, and He is strong in power, seeing all men without ceasing. The eyes of the Lord are towards them that fear Him, and He knoweth all the work of man. He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and He hath given no man license to sin; for He desireth not a multitude of faithless and unprofitable children." Yet we shall not be surprised if we go back to the text preceding this passage, and read: "Say not: He hath caused me to sin; for He hath no need of wicked men. The Lord hateth all abominations of error, and they that fear Him shall not love it." Among the worst abominations of errors are the blindness and obstinacy with which men have from the first refused to admit the testimony of their own consciousness to free-will, and attributed to God the evil of their ways. Instead of being surprised at this explicit revelation, we should be amazed at the perversity with which false teachers have denied this fact, at the failure of men, even of Christians generally to recognize it in its true light, and their disposition to pay more attention, if not more respect also, to the unfounded theories of those who deny it than to the testimony of consciousness, the universal judgment of mankind and God's own repeated revelation of it.

If it does not startle us to consider that we dwell in a world which denies the freedom of the human will, and which, therefore, denies any such thing as obligation, merit, retribution, repentance, remorse, and all moral responsibility, it is because we have to some extent, either wittingly or unwittingly, suffered the baneful influence of this doctrine. It is impossible to escape it. Entire nations of men live and die believing in fatalism, in some external cause or combination of causes which determine or necessitate their actions, and their literature helps to spread their fatalistic belief. A number of religious sects, notably the Lutherans and Calvinists, profess to believe either that human nature is so corrupt and perverse that it could not exercise freedom rightly if endowed with it, or that God so predetermines our actions as to make it impossible for us to determine them freely.

School after school of so-called philosophers and political economists, pantheists, materialists and utilitarians, have been busy, the past century more than ever before, proclaiming that some hidden and unknown cause regulates our actions, that a self-determining will is inconceivable, a contradiction in terms, that the strongest motive, desire, the character, or peculiar physical temperament, determines it in every case. The books and lectures of these schools spread their pernicious doctrines broadcast. A glance at the books commonly recommended for psychological study or reading in our own universities, colleges, and particularly in our teachers' colleges and normal schools will be enough to convince one that we are training a generation of young men and women, many of them teachers of the future, to deny the existence of this greatest of God's gifts, the one which all the others, reason, imagination, sense—nay, the very soul and body, life itself—need for their preservation and protection, without which there can be no solid progress, material or spiritual, no hope, no human satisfaction here, no reward hereafter.

It is not very reassuring, truly, to know that the only motive which prevents my most respectable neighbor from damaging my life, reputation, virtue, or property, is dread of the penalty of the criminal law, and that the courts which judge him are only too ready to accept pleas of temporary insanity, momentary aberration; irresponsibility, irresistible impulse, lack of moral sense, and the like. It may be true that all do not act on their

principles, that an innate sense of right and wrong saves most of them from acting on the principles they affect to believe. Still it is shocking to consider that the society one is forced to cultivate is made up of men and women who are convinced that human nature is a creature of impulse, the victim of circumstances, of heredity, previous training, present associations, climatic influences, and who credit no one with believing or acting differently from themselves. To keep this in mind may help us to account for the crimes and revelations of crimes that happen daily in our midst; but what an abominable error it is that makes men ignore or suppress their most honorable faculty and reduce themselves to the level of the beasts of the field. "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them."

THE BLESSEDNESS OF A HAPPY DEATH.

As soon as we are born we begin to die. The seeds of death are planted in our mortal bodies, and it is only a question of time when sooner or later, they shall crumble into dust and be buried out of sight.

But our death is, really, only the beginning of our life. This world is not our home—we are made for eternity. At death our state will be forever fixed, and, what is of infinite importance to us, our condition in eternity will be irrevocably decided by our conduct in this world. What infinite interests, then, hang upon our death—eternal bliss or eternal misery! The mass of men try to shut their eyes to the awful thought, but there it is and there it will remain—they can not shut it out. Christianity is true; You might as well shut your eyes at noonday and deny the shining of the sun, as to deny the truth of our holy religion. But the responsibility of man for his actions, and the fact that we shall have to give account for our conduct in this world at the day of final judgment and be rewarded or punished according to our deserts, lies at the very foundation of the Christian system. The New Testament bristles all over with the most solemn warnings, the most awful threatenings, and we know that God, though merciful, is a just God. The awful manifestations

of His judgments, even in this world, should be enough to dissipate at once all levity, all indifference, all trust in a happy go lucky concurrence of circumstances to set us right; at last and give us a happy entrance into the mansion of eternal bliss.

EVIDENCE AND REASON.

Every church claiming infallibility, whether of a Pope or of a book, is hampered by this fatal logical defect—this 'vicious circle, as the logicians call it—that it has to employ reason and conscience to set up the very authority which is to override reason and conscience.

This does not correctly present the real process. If it did, it would follow that no infallible authority, not even that of God Himself, could affirm itself to man and be recognized by him. The real process is this: The Church presents herself, affirms her divine mission and infallible authority and submits the evidence to man's reason. Man examines the evidence just as he should that of any other claim presented to him. It convinces him of the truth of the claim, or it does not. If the former, he recognizes it and submits to the authority which his reason tells him cannot mislead him. If the evidence does not convince him he rejects the claim and the case is closed. There is no vicious circle here. It is a plain, logical, common sense proceeding. It is like that which is observed by governments when a man presents himself and claims to be the appointed ambassador of a foreign nation. He presents his credentials. They are examined and found to be authentic. He is identified as the person referred to in the documents. Does the government that recognizes and receives him gyrate in a fatal, logical, vicious circle? Suppose a man introduces himself to the writer and states that he is about to arrest him. He will ask, "Who are you and what is your authority?" The stranger presents his commission as sheriff. He examines it, finds it all correct and submits to arrest. In doing this does he circulate viciously? Certainly not. Nor does the man who, on being convinced by satisfactory evidence of the divine commission of the Church, submits to her authority and direction.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

If people knew how infinitely pleasing to the Heart of Jesus is the devotion to His Divine Heart, there is no Christian with any so little love for that amiable Redeemer who would not practice it.

The life that is lived hidden in the Sacred Heart is free from turmoil and distractions. The storms may rage, the winds blow, the tempest devastate, but in the Sacred Heart all is peace and contentment. Nothing more is desired because it gratifies every desire. No fears ever assail the dwellers in the Sacred Heart, as they know they are safe from every danger. And when at last that dread summons comes to prepare to meet death, the very thought of which fills with fear the stoutest heart, then the Sacred Heart encompasses the soul with strengthening grace and so fills it with joy that there is no room for fears.

"I will give them the graces necessary for their state." (First promise of our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary.) This promise is in favor of those who practice and promote devotion to His Sacred Heart. If this were the only promise He made, ought not it be sufficient to induce everyone to practice this devotion? If they have the graces necessary for their state, they are well supplied with the means of salvation, and they are well provided for the trials of this world, and assured of their eternal happiness in the next.

A picture of the Sacred Heart should be in every Catholic home. Our Lord says: "I will bless the house in which the image of my Sacred Heart will be exposed and honored." There are a great variety of these pictures, some very nice ones, suitable for framing, can be had as low as 25 cents. If you have none get one at once, and hang it in your living room; teach your children the beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart. Teach them that the love of that Heart is, in truth, the beginning of wisdom. The child that loves the Sacred Heart will grow to be an honor to the Church and a comfort to the parents that inculcated the devotion.

The devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord has assumed new importance in the present age says Father Preston. We behold on every side the evidence of an awakening in the Church of God; and piety and zeal are all directed to the tabernacles of the Most Holy, to Jesus on His Eucharistic throne, to the Sacred Heart of the Man God, filled with love and tenderness for our race and for all its miseries.

From the Supreme Pontiff in his prison, looking to his crucified Master and begging mercy for the Church committed to his care: from prisons, exiled or in prison; from the religious, driven from their homes for the faith of Christ and the confession of His truth; from holy souls all the world over, who are yearning for God and the life eternal, cometh now the cry: "Sacred Heart of Jesus be our refuge in the hour of our distress!" When all human help seemeth to be vain; when there is no arm to save, no power to uphold; when the Church of Christ begins again, as it were, to repeat the story of her ancient persecutions, "Sacred Heart be our refuge: by Thy tenderness draw our hearts to Thee, and by Thy power disperse the enemies of Thy holy faith."

To reach the Tabor of God's permanent glory, the just and the good must carry their cross up the narrow, rugged heights of Calvary. — Bishop Magin.

NO MORE WEEDS.

The Protestants of France, taught, no doubt by sad experience, are not receiving so unrestrictedly and unconditionally the unfortunate priests who occasionally, through some reason or other (always unworthy) leave the Catholic Church. They voted at their last synod that no such "converted priest" should be ordained in the Reformed Church of France without having made for five years a public profession of Protestantism. In other words, he is placed on probation. They want to see if the weed from the Pope's garden will develop the quality of producing flowers. He mostly does nothing of the kind. They know this, and hence they are placing restrictions upon him. They are beginning to know the kind of men who leave the Catholic Church.

HINTS OF HEAVEN.

That is not an enviable nature that hears no strange melodies hinting of heaven through the marches of the year, that sees no glorious signs hung out in the earth and sky of an infinite love that is never forgetful and never unkind, that pauses not with reverent spirit to ponder the lesson that is told in grass and tree and flower and that feels no benediction in the bright air and palpitating sky. He may be just to his neighbor, industrious and virtuous, but he does not understand the meaning of Jesus in the fields of Galilee pointing to the birds and lilies and telling of our Father's care.

If you cannot be great, be willing to serve God in that which is small. If you cannot do great things for Him, cheerfully do little ones. If you cannot be an Aaron to serve the altar, or a Moses to guide the tribes, consent to be "a little maid" to Naaman the Syrian, for the honor of God's prophets, or a little child, for Christ's sake, to beset by Him in the midst of the people, as an illustration of the sweetness of humility.—S. P. Smith.

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