



Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

After a picture by Hoffman.



Little Treatise on Confession

(Continued.)

CONTRITION.

WHENEVER we go to confession, we ought carefully to excite ourselves to repentance for our sins, that is, for *mortal* sins, note that well. God cannot pardon some sins without pardoning others. Mortal sins are pardoned by means of the infusion of sanctifying grace. Now this infusion is impossible if there remains in the soul one sin of which it has not repented, and for which it preserves an attachment; consequently, no sin is forgiven if all are not pardoned.

Venial sins, on the contrary, may be remitted one without the other; for instance, slight falsehoods may be pardoned while sins of impatience are not, if we repent of the first and not of the second. If we accuse ourselves of mortal sins in confession, we must repent of all such sins without exception. If, on the contrary, we have only venial sins to confess, we must repent of, at least, one of these sins.

Now, let us understand this well. There is no obligation to confess venial sins; nevertheless, if we approach the tribunal of Penance with only venial sins, it is positively necessary to repent of at least one of these sins, in order that there may be matter for absolution. If we act otherwise, that is to say, if confessing only venial sins,

we have contrition for none of them, the absolution produces no effect, and the Sacrament is null. If we should knowingly make such a confession, it would with regard to the Sacrament be even an irreverence and a profanation.

We repeat, then : Every time that we go to confession, we must repent of the sins of which we accuse ourselves, of *all* if they are mortal sins, and of at least *one* if they are venial sins.

Let us here make an observation very important for persons who often approach the Sacrament, and who have only light faults of which to accuse themselves. It may easily happen that for these faults they have not the sorrow necessary in order to receive absolution with fruit, and that thus they receive it badly. To prevent this disorder, theologians teach that, in such cases, these persons ought to confess one or more sins of their past life for which they are truly sorry. They ought to confess, as follows : After telling the slight faults committed since their last confession, they should add, "*I accuse myself, also, of the sins of my past life, and especially of the sins that I have committed against charity, or against patience, or against holy purity,*" &c.

These sins having already been confessed, there is no need to indicate the number and the circumstances which change their species. It suffices to say : "I accuse myself of the sins that I have committed against such or such a virtue."

It is needless to say that, when we repeat the confession of such faults, in order to make matter for our confession, we ought to repent of them afresh, as if we were accusing ourselves of them for the first time. In effect, the accusation of such sins made without contrition, would be an accusation wanting in the second condition, necessary for every good confession, namely, contrition.

Some will, perhaps, say : But sins once confessed, ought not to be confessed again. And yet you would have us accuse ourselves of them hundreds and thousands of times, that is, every time that we go to confession.

It is very true, we reply, that sins well confessed, ought no longer to exist, nor do I say that you are obliged to confess them a second, and still less a tenth and a hundredth, time, as if they had been imperfectly pardoned

the first time. If we exhort you to accuse yourself of them anew, without mentioning either their number or their circumstances, it is in order that your confession may not be null for want of sufficient matter, and that you may receive the fruit of the Sacrament.

When you have to confess only light faults, which are not even real sins, or which, if real sins, do not inspire sufficient sorrow, omit confession, and go to Holy Communion as did the first Christians. They confessed only mortal sins and contented themselves, to obtain pardon of venial sins, with reciting the *Pater Noster*, as St. Augustine tells us (1) and after him St. Alphonsus di Liguori (2).

In communicating in the state of grace, although with venial sins upon the conscience and without previous confession, you will make a good Communion.

If you prefer to follow the custom of Christians of our own day, that is, if you wish to confess before approaching the Holy Table, it is absolutely necessary that you confess well, and therefore, that you confess with sorrow for your sins. If, then, you have not new sins for which you may prudently judge that you have true sorrow, confess the old ones for which you certainly have repented.

We do not teach this doctrine in order to give you to understand that sins ought to be confessed more than once, which would be a manifest error; but we put it forth that you may be able to assure yourself of the fruit of the Sacrament of Penance. This fruit for Christians exempt from mortal sin, is an increase of sanctifying grace. In effect, sacramental confession gives grace to those deprived of it by mortal sin, and it increases that grace in those that, guilty only of venial sin, already possess it.

Many authors do not approve accusations made in the following or similar terms: *I accuse myself of sins of thought, of word, of deed, and of omission committed in the past.* Such an accusation appears to them too general, and is equivalent to this: *I accuse myself of being a sinner,* since whoever sins, offends God either by thought word, action, or omission. So vague an accusation is, according to them, insufficient. They demand the mention of some

(1) Tract. 26 in Io.

(2) Dir. des confess., ch. 22 p. 2, § 32.

special sin, for example, a theft committed in the past, or, at least, as we have said, some sin opposed to a definite virtue, namely, justice, chastity, or the love of the neighbor. Other authors, however, think differently, as may be seen in Gury's *Theology with notes by Ballerini* (1).

HOW TO EXCITE CONTRITION.

We ought to excite ourselves to sorrow for our sins by some motive suggested by faith, that is, on account of the offence offered to God infinitely good and worthy to be loved above all things, or, again, on account of paradise lost and hell deserved; or lastly, on account of the horror of sin considered in the light of Revelation.

If, after our examination, we find ourselves guilty of mortal sin, we must consider the eternal recompense of which it has deprived us, and the horrible chastisement of hell that it has merited for us. In this way we excite ourselves to the sorrow called *attrition*.

We should next cast a glance on the Crucifix, considering that, by mortal sin, we have offended God infinitely good, worthy in Himself of infinite love, and who has shown Himself so full of love for us by becoming man, and by immolating Himself on the cross for our salvation. Thus is excited in our heart the sorrow of *contrition*. Though not necessary to a good confession, this sorrow is much more meritorious and more efficacious. It effaces sin even before absolution.

We ought to excite ourselves at least to attrition, even if we have only venial sins of which to accuse ourselves. For this end, we may represent to ourselves the torments of purgatory. The thought of having merited them by venial faults, will suffice to excite in us the repentance requisite to obtain their pardon.

We would do well, also, to consider the deformity of sin, which is always an offence offered to the Divine Majesty, a black ingratitude, after so many benefits re-

(1) Gury, Vol. II. n. 424. Whatever may be the divergence of opinion, the accusation of sins committed in the past against such or such a determinate virtue, is so easy that we would counsel it to all pious persons who have any doubt as to whether they have ever repented of the light faults of which they accuse themselves.

(The Translator).

ceived and, in the eyes of God, the only real evil.

Devout souls who commit no mortal sins, ought to be well persuaded that nothing is more easy than to excite themselves to contrition. Living in the grace of God, they have in themselves as an habitual state, the hatred and detestation of sin, and consequently, they pass very easily from the habit to the act. Let us by an example illustrate this truth so consoling for them.

Suppose a man wants to draw water from a reservoir, but he finds it empty. What must he do? Why, he must take the trouble to fill it, then open the faucet, and let the water run out. If, on the contrary, the reservoir is already full, it is necessary only to open the faucet for the water to flow out. Now, the heart of the sinner is a heart empty of the hatred and detestation of sin. If he wishes to make an act of contrition, he ought to force himself first to excite in his heart this hatred and detestation. But as for the just man, since his heart is already filled with that hatred, nothing is more easy for him than to make an act of contrition.

THE GOOD PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

We shall say very little of the good purpose that necessarily accompanies repentance when it is true. It is impossible to repent sincerely of our sins whether mortal or venial, without having the will to commit them no more. Now, the good purpose is nothing else than the will to renounce sin.

This will, if sincere, necessarily comprises the resolution to shun the occasions of sin, and put in practice the counsels given by the confessor to render the amendment lasting.

OF CONFESSION.

It is a truth known to all Christians, that they who conceal a single mortal sin in confession, not only do not obtain pardon for the sins that they have confessed, but that they burden their conscience with a sacrilege. It is, then, a less evil to communicate in mortal sin without having confessed, than to do so after a confession in which a grave sin has been concealed. The sinner communicating without having confessed, does so with one

sacrilege less than if he were to approach the Holy Table after a bad confession. Even at the moment of death, it is better not to confess at all rather than to confess badly. By confessing not at all, the sinner does, indeed, go to hell, but he goes with one sacrilege less upon his soul; consequently, he will have less to suffer for all eternity. (1)

He who is ashamed to confess any mortal sin whatever, ought to make an effort to conquer himself and confess it, cost what it may. He will easily triumph over his shame if he observes the counsels that we are going to give him. Let him supplicate the Lord to grant him the necessary courage, and for that end, let him beg the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, invoke his angel guardian, and then without more reflection, present himself to his confessor, and begin at once: "*Father, I have something that troubles me.*" These words uttered, all is done. The confessor knows very well how to reach that of which there is question, and he will help you as he is in duty bound to do.

Dear Reader, if you are ashamed to confess one or more sins, say these few words and, we repeat, all will come right. The demon who makes use of that shame to tempt you, will retire confounded. You will be restored to God's grace, and you will taste a joy and a peace such as you never before experienced.

We wish to teach you here what St. Alphonsus taught even to religious, namely, that certain sins of immodesty, gravely culpable in themselves, ought not to be mentioned in confession if, at the time of their commission, the penitent knew not their malice. "This applies," says the holy Doctor, "to certain acts of levity, to certain unseemly jesting or sports, to which one may have delivered himself in childhood without suspecting their malice. Even had these things been done in secret, yet it would not be a certain proof of guilt, for there are some natural acts that children do in private, but which, however, are not sins. We are not obliged to confess such things in particular, unless we recall having committed them with the consciousness of committing a grave sin, or, at least, with

(1) We should not, however, under this pretext, neglect to procure for even the most hardened sinner a priest who, by the grace of God, may convert him. (*The Translator.*)

the doubt that the sin might be grave. It suffices that we say in our own mind : " Lord, if I knew myself bound to confess these things, I would do so without hesitation, whatever pain it might cost me. (1) "

St. Alphonsus teaches this doctrine to religious, and we do not scruple to teach it to you. St. Alphonsus became a saint in teaching it, and we can certainly save our soul by putting it in practice. St. Alphonsus was not an imprudent or lax theologian.

But, you will say, what advantage can we derive from this teaching ?

What advantage ? — We answer, the following :

Some souls naturally timid and fearful, apprehending that certain indecent actions, committed by them in early childhood without consciousness of their malice, are truly sins in themselves, think themselves obliged to accuse themselves of them in confession. But conquered by shame, they keep silence and, as their erroneous conscience makes them believe themselves obliged to confess them, by not confessing them, they continually make sacrilegious confessions and Communions. If they knew that there is no obligation for them to confess such acts, they would not scruple to pass them over in silence, and they would not commit a sacrilege. Now, is it a little thing to save these souls so many bad confessions ? Behold, then, the advantage that the teaching of this doctrine procures, and that St. Alphonsus had in view when giving it to religious.

A second advice that we shall give to persons that accuse themselves of sins of this kind is, to confine themselves to what is strictly necessary in order to make known the nature of the sin to the confessor. In certain matters, it is necessary to be as brief as possible. All theologians agree on this point. In Cardinal Gousset, we read (1) : The most rigorous theologians, they even who exact the accusation of circumstances merely aggravating, make an exception to this rule for what regards sins contrary to holy purity.

When, therefore, they who have had the misfortune to fall into such sins, perceive that the confessor unders-

(1) The Holy Nun. ch. 18. § 1. n. 4.

tands at the first word the nature of the sin confessed, they should take care not to add another.

This is a point upon which, if they meet a confessor given through scrupulosity to question too closely into such matters, they should leave him and go to another ; for such a confessor would not be for them a good one.

Doubtless, all sins ought to be confessed ; but such as we are now speaking of should be confessed as briefly as possible, without entering into the details permitted in other matters less delicate.

SACRAMENTAL PENANCE.

As to the sacramental penance, we shall merely exhort you to perform it exactly and at the time prescribed, that is, if the confessor had fixed a time for it. If he fixed no time, perform it at once, that is, on the day upon which it was enjoined, for fear of forgetting it, or of putting it off too long. In case it should have been forgotten or deferred, you ought always to perform it as soon as it recurs to the memory.

If the penance should seem to you too hard, ask your confessor to change it, but do not change it yourself.

N. B. — Since the penance is one of the parts of the Sacrament, it is very important that it should be said as soon as possible after confession and in the manner the confessor directs. If we defer it from day to day, we are apt to omit it altogether. To wilfully omit the penance imposed by the priest is a sin, the gravity of which depends upon the nature of the sins confessed at the time it was given.

Another reason why the penance should be said promptly is that a person exposes himself to the risk of sinning mortally before saying it. When one performs the penance in a state of mortal sin it is true that one fulfills the obligation imposed by the minister of God, but one does not obtain the end for which the obligation was imposed, viz., a certain remission of the punishment due the sins.



THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Josephine Marie



SUNLIGHT floods the road leading to the town of Emmaus as though with visible glory.

Majestic mountains rising on every side as "God's protecting care is round about His people," so the inspired Psalmist tells us. But nature though robed in her fairest vesture fails even in her religious symbolism to breathe joy or peace to the disconsolate pilgrims who slowly wend their way on foot to the town "sixty furlongs from the great City over which their Master had yearned in the moment of its darkest treachery a few days before.

They will feel brighter, so they persuade themselves, when away from the familiar streets every corner of which haunts them with memories of the Friend whom they deserted in the hour of need.

Full of remorse, disheartened and ashamed, they are too restless to keep silent and "talk together of all these things which had happened!"

"What are these discourses which you hold one with another and are sad?"

The sudden appearance of a third person, the unexpected voice, astonished them less than the evident ignorance of the Speaker.

"Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem" asks Cleophas "and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?" What things? is the quiet question.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in word and work before all the people." And eager to unburden their hearts they tell the "Stranger" of the miracles, the goodness of the Nazarene and how the chief priests put him to death on the infamous gibbet of the cross.

"We had hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel," they wistfully add: "and besides to-day, the

third day since these things were done, certain women affrighted us saying that they had been to the sepulchre and seen a vision of angels who told that he was alive."

"O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things the Prophets have spoken."

Is there not something familiar, in the grave, tender, rebuke? Something that indeed makes their hearts "burn within them" as clearly, patiently, their Companion proves from Moses to the last seer of Israel the Mesias was to be a man "acquainted with infirmity" led to death "dumb as a lamb before his shearer."

So absorbed are they in the wonderful words, so comforted by the nameless influence of this "Friend" that they scarcely note the shadows of twilight deepening about them.

Only when Emmaus is reached and he "Makes as though he would go farther" do they realize the lateness of the hour.

"Stay with us because it is toward evening and the day is far spent," they plead.

And entering the poor abode — fishermen cannot afford sumptuous lodgings — "He went in with them."

Silently they cross the threshold of the tavern-room and the three gather around the plain wooden table just as the town-clock strikes the sunset hour.

See! One rises and takes bread in his hands. Does the veil lift Cleophas? has the supper-room of the Thursday before come back? a moment of bewilderment then unutterable joy. Unconsciously they kneel and the rays of the setting sun stream through the lattice upon the glorified countenance of the Master as He blesses the bread, "breaks it and gives it to them."

They know Him now.

And we too know our Redeemer in the "breaking of the bread." Beneath the stress of our daily sojourn through earth's uneven paths, we like the Disciples, are often disheartened, tired, faithless alas! to the divine friend who never yet has been unfaithful to us.

Worldly occupations and amusements however necessary or innocent distract us.

Amid the glare and bustle of the world our spiritual sight grows dim. But if the Savior draws near all is

changed. Joy, courage, purity, flood our hearts. His light dispels the darkest cloud, his tender touch soothes the most aching wound, his blood cleanses deepest defilement.

Why then do we not long for the coming of the Master? As a mother nurishes her child with her own substance certain that no other life than her own, can so well nurture his, so the Creator deigns to feed his creatures with the stainless flesh and blood he stooped to assume, and thus imbues them with his own divine vigor and peace.

Why then do we not hunger for the Living Bread of eternal life, as necessary to our spiritual growth as material nourishment is to our physical existence? Why are we slower than were the Disciples to recognize the Redeemer disguised in lowliest garb that we may not be repelled by the bewildering splendor of his risen beauty?

Because we do not receive Him often enough into our own hearts.

It is in the "Breaking of Bread" that we fully recognize the Master.

It is in those moments of ineffable union that

"His lovely presence shines so clear
Through every sense and way."

that faith at last seems to merge almost into vision.

Oh, let us no longer be "foolish and slow of heart to believe," but acknowledging our unworthiness come with great confidence to our Divine Friend and beg Him in spite of their poverty to enter the dwelling place of our earthstained souls. With "desire" which we cannot fathom will he deign to "enter," and transform them by the magic of his grace, and transcontent to win little by little, the fulness of our love and loyalty. The Redeemer wooing his redeemed.

Ah, let us respond all the more ardently because in the past we have been so cold; and when the day of our mortal pilgrimage is far spent he will draw near in Viaticum to be with us as we pass through the dark valley, which his friendship alone can render glorious.

What a consolation it will be when at the Judgment-seat which his own holiness, despite his mercy, must render just, we shall see no stranger waiting to judge

our cause, but the same Lord and Master whom on earth was our frequent Guest, our well beloved Friend.

Apostles and Saints, Angels and Martyrs, the myriad courts of the heavenly Jerusalem, will echo the alleluia of the Savior's own Sacred Heart as with triumphant love he bids his redeemed abide with Him for all eternity in the Kingdom which no shadow of evening shall ever dim, but Dawn everlasting reveal in the full splendor of his risen beauty the King whom veiled in the Host of earthly tabernacles we acknowledged to be our God.



His Choosing.

IF He had let me take the pleasant way
 Whereto my steps were bent,
 The path where birds sing in the boughs all day
 Shaded and well content,
 I had not found beyond the leagues of sand,
 Toil-worn the mountain crest
 From which my eyes look over to that land
 Wherein shall be my rest.

If He had let me slumber as I craved,
 Pillowed in grasses deep
 Beside the stream whose murmuring water laved
 The silver coasts of sleep,
 I had not heard His footsteps drawing nigh
 Across the lonely place ;
 Unknown, unloved, they would have passed me by,
 Nor I have seen His face.

MABEL EARLE



SUBJECT OF ADORATION

FOR THE

Associates of the Congregation of the Most Blessed
Sacrament.

The Eucharistic Veil

I. — Adoration

ADORE Our Lord in the state in which He has chosen to remain among us in the Blessed Sacrament.

It is a state veiled, hidden, annihilated.

What, in effect, does the Eucharist present to our view ?

Obscurity. — The Sacred Host has no splendor.

Simplicity. — The Sacred Host has no movement, no action, no words. It is incapable of resistance.

Lastly, a *state of complete death*, — for the Sacred Host has no relation with the exterior world.

Could there be a thicker veil, a retreat more profound than this state chosen by Our Lord, and consisting of obscurity, silence, inaction, impotence, and simplicity ? Is not that veil equivalent to the winding-sheet of the dead, to the stone of the sepulchre ?

And this state, freely chosen by Our Lord, is to endure till the end. Nothing can make Him come forth from it. He has chosen it, fashioned it, willed it. He has espoused it, and He loves it.

Let not that state diminish your faith, your respect, your love toward the hidden God of the Eucharist. On the contrary, adore Him, confess Him, venerate Him, praise Him, and say to Him with firm faith and with all the love of which you are capable : “ Verily, Thou art a hidden God ! ” — But I recognise Thee, and I proclaim Thee my God. Under this *obscurity*, I adore Thy glory and majesty. Under this *simple* and *ordinary* appearance, I adore the beauty of the most beautiful of the children

of men, the countenance that ravishes the angels. Under this *inaction*, I adore the activity of my God Himself and of the Saviour High-Priest. Under this *impotence*, I adore the power of the Word Himself, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. Under this aspect of death, I adore the full and perfect life of the Divinity, of the Three Divine Persons, of the Soul, the Body and the Heart of Jesus.

I believe ! I adore ! I adore Thee there in the Host. Thou art there really present. I believe that it is Thou, O Jesus, that art there. Yes, it is Thou, the Son of God, the Eternal, the Almighty, and it is for my love that Thou dost hide Thyself under the appearance of the Host.

II. — Thanksgiving.

“Why that Eucharistic veil, O Jesus ?”

For thee, for thy love.

I wish to be *with thee*, to permit thee to address Me, to speak to Me. I wish thee to have confidence in Me, in spite of thy misery and thy defects. How could that be were I to appear to thee in the splendor of My majesty, with the dazzling aspect of My sanctity, and the thunders of My justice ? — I have embraced this state, therefore, in order to dwell with thee.

“O hidden God, I thank Thee !”

I wish to be the victim of thy sins, to be immolated every day and in every place, because every day and in every place thou dost sin, thou dost deserve to be chastised by My Father.

But what priest would dare to immolate Me had he visibly to renew My cruel Passion in a *bloody* manner ?

Who would assist at those terrible scenes in which My flesh would be scourged, and torn, and nailed, in which My blood would flow over the altar and its sacred precincts ?

I assume this state, therefore, to be the Victim in the Holy Sacrifice.

“O hidden God, I thank Thee !”

I wish to be thy *nourishment*. To preserve supernatural life, thou must eat the Principle of life, I Myself, My flesh, My blood, My soul, My Divinity.

Wouldst thou dare to bite into My bleeding flesh, to drink My blood running warm and purple from My veins? Thou wouldst flee in horror, exclaiming with the incredulous throug of Capharnaum : "*Durus est hic sermo*"! — *This is a hard saying!*"

I take, therefore, this state of bread, this taste, this appearance of a material thing, that thou mayest receive Me, eat Me, and thus live of My life, the Divine life.

"O hidden God, Thou dost not count the difficulties, the sacrifices that this state imposes on Thee. Thy love urges Thee to dwell with us, to die for us that Thou mayest nourish me ; and at once dost Thou follow the impulse in spite of the incredible abasement that it cost Thee. Thy love demanded it, and that sufficed. I thank Thee. I thank Thee !

"I thank Thee for all the sacrifices that this state of annihilation imposes on Thee, the sacrifice of Thy glory, Thy honor, Thy rights, for wert Thou to show Thyself in Thy glory, Thy churches would be deserted. I thank Thee for accepting, for choosing these sacrifices for me, because Thou dost love me, because Thou dost will to give Thyself to me. I thank Thee, my God, I thank Thee, for I deserve not that a God should think of me."

III. — Propitiation

Consider what humiliations the Eucharistic state causes Jesus, our hidden God.

Because it is *obscure*, without *show* or *splendor*, He is neglected, He is treated with neither respect nor attention. We yawn, we sleep, we think of every thing but Him. We allow our thoughts, our gaze to wander among creatures. Sometimes even we offend Him seriously at the very moment in which we ought most truly to adore Him. O were He to show Himself resplendent with glory ! If His angel were to appear at His side !—

But no. He trusts Himself to our love, and our love despises Him, because He is veiled. Because He is without action, without words to call for help, because He can neither defend Himself nor escape, He becomes the sport of the elements and of the wicked.

Fire, water, dampness, dust, decay, attack and sully Him. Spiders, worms, the vilest insects may prey upon Him.

The impious, free-masons, robbers may take Him, carry Him to their diabolical reunions, insult Him, wound Him, cast Him on the ground, tread Him under foot ! He utters not a word ! He is bound ! He remains immovable !

And it is the God of majesty whom they treat in this way ! The God thrice holy ! the all-powerful God terrible in His anger ! His love, alas ! daily subjects Him to such outrages.

Ask pardon for all these sins against the Eucharist, for your tepidity in church and in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Offer yourself, your labor, your time, all that you do, in reparation for all the outrages that the Blessed Sacrament receives.

"*Parce, Domine ; Parce populo tuo !*" — "*Spare, O Lord ! Spare Thy people !*" — Go in spirit into all the places of the world in which Jesus is offended, and make Him reparation.

IV. — Petition

Beg Jesus, supplicate Him to reproduce in you His Eucharistic state, to give you the virtues belonging to that state, to make it act upon you.

Humility. — humility with the virtues that accompany it, preserve it, and nourish themselves with its substance.

Veil yourself by *silence* regarding yourself, your actions, your merits.

Veil yourself by *modesty* of demeanor, walking, behaviour.

Veil yourself performing your duty simply and quietly, by unostentatiously rendering service, by unaffectedly sacrificing yourself.

Annihilate yourself by lowly thoughts of self, by cutting off every idea, every vain complacency regarding your own excellence of mind, of heart, of qualities more or less remarkable. Despise yourself.

Annihilate self by obeying, by making yourself known to your spiritual guides by allowing yourself to be in everything, and everywhere, known, judged, directed like the Sacred Host, the Hidden God Himself.

HENRIETTA MARIA OF FRANCE

Queen of Charles I of England

MRS. MCAULIFFE.



N these days when the fires of persecution are again lighted in Christian lands, and the faithful children and consecrated virgins of the Church are driven from their homes by edicts as cruel and unjustifiable as those of Diocletian or of Nero, it is timely to look back at the noble lives which, under the guidance of pure religion, adorned and illuminated the history of France.

Let us turn over the pages of Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England", and study one, reared in France; the daughter of the great Henry the Fourth and his Queen, Marie de Medicis; a life so blameless, so pure and self-sacrificing, so full of sorrows and bitter disappointments heroically borne, and equally full of good works, that we who read feel ourselves better for the reading.

Marie de Medicis is one of the pet aversions of all Protestant writers; why? because she belonged to a great Catholic family — her name has been loaded with obliquy, a pyramid of lies has been raised over her as a monument, blotting out the truth from the careless reader. Alas, how many such there are, knowing nothing but what they learn in the polluted streams of school histories! They leave school; the exigencies of life with some, business, with others pleasure, absorb their time, they never seek the pure founts, the sources of history, the evil seed has been sown, and many even Catholics believe the slanders which they have imbibed with their first lessons.

The writer above mentioned is a Protestant historian, but an honest one — she gives us the truth as she found it, without any veil of falsehood or prejudice. From her pages I quote the following letter written by Marie de

Médecis and placed in her daughter's hand, when, at the age of sixteen she left France to become Queen consort of Charles I, King of England. The sublime sentiments expressed therein are alone sufficient to refute all the calumnies against the writer :

The Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis To the young Queen of England, Henriette Marie, 1525 June 25th.

" My daughter,

You separate from me, I cannot separate from you. I retain you in heart and memory, and would that this paper could serve for an eternal Memorial to you of what I am ; it would then supply my place and speak for me to you, when I can no longer speak for myself. I give you it with my last adieu in quitting you, to impress it the more on your mind, and give it to you written with my own hand, in order that it may be the more dear to you, and in order that it may have more authority with you in all that regards your conduct towards God, the King your husband, his subjects, your domestics, and yourself.

" I tell you here sincerely as in the last hour of our converse, all I should say to you in the last hour of my existence, if you should be near me then.

" I consider to my great regret that such can never be, and that the separation now taking place between you and me for a long time, is too probably an anticipation of that which is to be forever in this world.

" On this earth you have only God for a father : but, as he is eternal, you can never lose him. It is he who sustains your existence and life ; it is he who, at this time, places a crown on your brow, and will establish you in England, where you ought to believe that he requires your service, and there he means to effect your salvation."

" Remember, my child, every day of your life, that he is your God, who has put you on earth intending you for Heaven, who has created you for himself and for his glory."

" The late King, your father, has already passed away ; there remains no more of him but a little dust and ashes, hidden from our eyes. One of your brothers has already been taken from us, even in his infancy ; God withdrew

him at his own good pleasure. He has retained you in the world in order to load you with his benefits ; but as he gives you the utmost felicity, it behoves you to render him, the utmost gratitude. It is but just that your duties are augmented in proportion as the benefits and favors you receive are signal. Take heed of abusing them. Think well that the grandeur, goodness and justice of God are infinite, and employ all the strength of your mind in adoring his supreme puissance, in loving his inviolable goodness ; and fear his rigorous equity, which will make all responsible who are unworthy of his benefits."

"Receive, my child, these instructions of my lips, begin and finish every day in your oratory, with good thoughts, and in your prayers, ask resolution to conduct your life according to the laws of God, and not according to the vanities of the world, which is for all of us but a moment, in which we are suspended over eternity, which we shall pass either in the Paradise of God, or in hell with the malign spirits who work evil."

"Remember that you are a daughter of the Church by baptism, and that this is, indeed, the first and highest rank which you have, or ever will have since it this which will give you entrance into Heaven ; your other dignities, coming as they do from the earth, will not go further than the earth ; but those which you derive from Heaven will ascend again to their source, and carry you with them there. Render thanks to Heaven each day, to God who has made you a Christian ; estimate this first of benefits as it deserves, and consider all that you owe to the labors and precious blood of Jesus our Saviour ; it ought to be paid for by our sufferings and even by our blood if he requires it. Offer your soul and your life to him who has created you by his power, and redeemed you by his goodness and mercy. Pray to him and pray incessantly to preserve you by the inestimable gift of his grace, and that it may please him that you sooner lose your life than renounce him."

"You are the descendant of St. Louis. I would recall to you in this very last adieu, the same instruction that he received from his mother, Queen Blanche, who said to him often that she would rather see him die than to

live so as to offend God, in whom we move, and who is the end of our being. It was with such precepts that he commenced his holy career ; it was this that rendered him worthy of employing his life and reign for the good of the faith and the exaltation of the Church. We, after his example, firm and zealous for religion, which you have been taught, for the defence of which he, your royal and holy ancestor, exposed his life, and died faithful among the infidels. Never listen to nor suffer to be said in your presence ought in contradiction to your belief in God and in his only son, your Lord and Redeemer. I entreat the Holy Virgin, whose name you bear, to deign to be the Mother of your soul ; and in honor of her who is Mother of our Lord and Saviour, I bid you adieu again and many times. ”

“ I now devote you to God for ever and ever ; it is what I desire for you from the very depth of my heart. ”

Your very good and affectionate mother

Maria.

The original letter written in French is still in existence in the secret archives of France, Hotel Toulouse. It is much worn from having been many times read.

When Henrietta Maria arrived in England she found court and people absolutely without religion. The Church of England, of which the King her husband was nominal head, was sunk in vice and profligacy, the opposite faction of Puritanism was a monstrous hypocrisy. Both agreed on one point hatred of Catholics !

Although perfect freedom in the practice of her own religion had been guaranteed by treaty before the young Queen left France, unlooked-for difficulties and obstacles presented themselves when she demanded its fulfilment. The King had no real power, no moral courage ; although kind and naturally good, he feared his people, and thought it would be an easy matter to wean his wife from her Faith, not dreaming that one so young would offer resistance. The breach of treaty sat very lightly on the conscience of Charles. Henriette, however, was immovable, she declared that she would go back to her brother, the King of France, as she could not live without her religion !

There are some letters extant which describe the personal appearance of the Queen : " She is most sweet lovely creature, and hath a countenance that opens a window into the heart, where man may see all nobleness and goodness. "

" Charles the First loved her with passion, and well she reciprocated his tenderness, as he found in the hour of peril and misfortune. "

(to be continued.)



On the Mountains

BY DOROTHY GRESHAM.

HERE was a large house party at Dunningham, the shooting was in full swing, and we all had been bidden to the old Hall. Those who did not shoot, came to meet those who did. The weather had been delightful, the Irish rain for once had been respectable and sunshine was on the woods and uplands. We were very merry, in consequence, and ready for every excursion proposed. I had been up and off in the early morning, across country, to the village Mass, at the foot of the mountains, and came full tilt on the dogs, and the shooting party, starting forth for the day. There was only time for brief salutations and the news, that we were all to meet for luncheon on the mountains. It was a day of days-warm, soft, languorous, not so rare in Ireland as one imagines. A day that as a child, I often sighed for a bag on my back, to tramp the country, from door to door, like the professional beggars. A day when one feels that houses were made to sleep, not to live in, and one longs to be a gypsy. We drawled over the late breakfast, gossiped, got through our letters and were only gathered at the last moment, for the long drive of eight Irish miles. There was the drag, a wagonette, the dog cart, all standing at the door for those who wished

to drive — the more adventurous spirits preferred their wheels. We were off at last, through some of the most beautiful bits of "the garden of Ireland." The Wicklow mountains loomed above us, Dublin Bay lay blue and placid far down below — up and down hill, by village spire and ruined abbey, past Convent and Monastery, buried in the trees at the end of long avenues, bordered by a wilderness of evergreens. What wonderful roads we have in Ireland! — made for a bicycle, hard and smooth and perfectly kept; one skims along like a bird and one's spirits mount and exult in the exercise. It grew wilder as we entered the mountains, great woods clothed their rugged sides, and sky above, and sea below, vied with each other in color and beauty. We all became poetic, and if you can believe it in Ireland — silent! It was three o'clock when we reached our trysting spot, and the hungry hunters were awaiting our arrival. The baskets unpacked we arranged our viands in a shady nook of the plateau sheltered by the woods, and commanding one of the most beautiful panoramas I have ever seen in Ireland or out of it. Half way down the mountain, a village church rose above the woods, we discussed our locality and found that we were in the neighborhood of Lisheen — one of our professional beauties — a picture, indeed, smiling below us in the sunshine. I remembered instantly a letter I had received some days before from my cousin Fergus S. J. who expected to give a mission there this very week. I determined to have a look at him, I might chance to catch him leaving the confessional for his four o'clock dinner. I proposed the expedition, which was scouted by the lazy, and hailed with rapture by the juveniles. Our hostess declared we should have tea on our return and we were off in an instant.

Over stiles and gates, by short cuts, across the stubbles, over foot logs and brawling torrents, we reached the chapel yard, gay with the Mission booths, or "stands" as we have it in Ireland. Going to the chapel to look for his reverence, what was my delight and surprise, to see him at the altar, the tabernacle open and an old woman kneeling for Holy Communion. It was four o'clock! When all was over, I went around to the sacr-

ty, and in my torrent of words, telling him my pleasure at seeing him and how I had found him, I forgot to say how strange his giving Holy Communion at such an hour. While we talked an old woman came to ask his blessing. It was a long road home, she said, and she would like his reverence to raise his hands over her before she set out. She was on her knees, in an instant, and as I raised my eyes, I caught Fergus' expression, which was very sweet, and solemn, and almost apologetic. The old woman was bent down reverently, and without knowing it, I was kneeling on the stone beside her. When the words were over he put his hands on her head impressively, and his, "God bless you," almost thrilled me. When she had gone, he gazed after the poor, bent figure earnestly, and said — "I feel, as if I should have asked her blessing, the dear faithful, saintly soul. This is the third day she has been fasting for Holy Communion. "I gasped —" You don't mean she has had nothing to eat for three days?"

"I mean, that she left her home, five miles away up among those mountains, last Monday morning; she arrived here to find the confessional thronged. She remained all day without a chance of being heard. She set off that morning-or night-and got home after twelve o'clock too late to break her fast. She started out again Tuesday morning and spent the day at the confessional with the non success of Monday. Returned home after mid-night and set forth this morning with the result you have just this moment witnessed." "And are such cases rare?" I asked. "Not at all. I never really understood the Irish faith until I was sent to give those missions." Fergus answered, profoundly touched as if he could tell me strange experiences. "Meanwhile the good old soul is fasting, and must until she arrives home," I cried. "Yes of course, can you help her?" I shall certainly try." He gave me the direction she had taken and I hurried back to our hostess, and Protestant though she was, simply told her the story. She was full of sympathy, and in a few moments arranged some sandwiches in a basket strung on my bicycle. The tea was being made, this I carried in a bottle, and I was down the mountain road flying as if for a wager. I had not very far to go-

the old weary feet, the bent broken body, exhausted from her long fast, could make but slow progress, on the homeward way. I pulled up beside her as she entered the fields, to climb the mountains. Whether she thought I was the Angel Gabriel, or the Blessed Virgin herself I know not, but the benedictions she poured on me, and on my relations for ten generations were marvelous. How had I known? From whence had I come? Under a hawthorn bush by the wayside she had her breakfast, and I sat by enjoying it all intensely. When I expressed admiration at her fortitude she protested vigorously, that was nothing for an old body at her age. Young people felt the hunger but what did the like of her want but the cup of "tay." There was young Katie Moran, walked in from Carrick the First Friday morning, last week, the craythur, and had to fast till two o'clock. The priest's mother died over at Tulleen, and the Missioners and all went to the funeral. The Mass was said at seven, instead of eight and when Katie came Mass was all over, and the priests gone. And sure if she did'nt wait till they came back, and if they war'nt surprised when the craythur knocked at the door for Holy Communion, at that hour of the day. It was dark night when she got home. But sure asthore, who is worth waiting for if it is'nt the good God, and 'tis a wonder He comes to us at all, and the way we trate Him." The simplicity, faith and fervor of her words, were more touching than the most eloquent of sermons. We had but an interval for conversation. She had a long journey before her. She said goodbye reluctantly, to meet no doubt on the Last Day. May I be as near her when the great sentence is passed, as I was that memorable October afternoon by the wayside.



SPECIAL NOTICE FOR ALL OUR READERS

THE kind words of encouragement that have come to us from time to time regarding the *Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament* warrants us in believing that there are many of its subscribers whose interest in the periodical is not limited to the mere reading of its pages. They desire to see its influence grow and expand, and perhaps are waiting for a few words from the editor to stimulate their zeal into action by becoming apostles of good catholic literature. The *Sentinel* is the only periodical in America devoted to the great Mystery of our Faith. We, therefore, call upon our subscribers, both of the clergy and laity, to advance its interest by soliciting new subscribers. Sometimes the mere lending of the *Sentinel* to a friend with a commendatory word will secure a subscription. Our subscribers who will take the pains to do this will perform an act, meritorious in itself, and will no doubt gain the twofold blessing of him who gives and him who takes.

Every Catholic home ought to be supplied with good literature, and surely that literature which tends to cultivate in the hearts of the members of a family a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament must be of priceless worth. The Blessed Sacrament is the fountain of every blessing, temporal as well as spiritual. Happy, indeed, is the home that is watered by Its graces, and refreshed and sustained by Its strengthening powers.

We hope to see the *Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament* entering thousands of Catholic homes all over the land bringing every month its tidings of peace and good will. Subscribers, we ask you to rise and help us in this apostolate! We ask you to speak of the merits of the *Sentinel* to your friends! We ask you to send us their names that we may send them sample copies.

We have adopted plans by which we intend to improve the reading matter of the *Sentinel*, and we intend to leave nothing undone that will make it a first class Catholic periodical.



Non-Catholic Testimony
 Logical Reasons for Believing the Catholic Church
 To Be the Church of Christ



FROM Dr. James Martineau's "Seats of Authority in Religion."

"If somewhere among the communities of Christendom there is a sovereign prescription for securing salvation, the Roman Catholic Church has obvious advantages over its competing claimants for possession of the secret. Regarded merely as an agent for the transmission of an historical treasure, she has, at least, a ready answer for all her Western rivals and a *prima facie* case of her own. They have to all appearance quite a recent genesis, their whole tradition and literature lying within the last three centuries and a half; and in order to make good their title deeds as servitors of Christ, they must carry it over a period four times as long during which it was *lost*, and identify it at the other end with the original instrument of bequest. Her plea, on the other hand, is that she has been there all through; that there has been no suspension of her life, no break in her history, no term of silence in her teaching; and, that having been always in possession, she is the vehicle of every claim and must be presumed, until conclusive evidence of forfeiture is produced, to be the rightful holder of what has rested in her custody. If you would trace a divine legacy from the age of the Caesars, would you set out to meet it on the Protestant tracks which soon lose themselves in the forests of Germany or on the Alps of Switzerland, or on the great Roman road of history, which runs through all the centuries and sets you down in Greece or Asia Minor at the very doors of the churches to which the apostles wrote? But it is not only to its superiority as a human carrier of a divine tradition that Catholicism successfully appeals. It is not content to hide away its signs and wonders in the past, and merely tell them to the present, but will take you to see them now and here. It

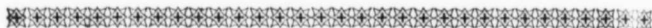
speaks to you not as the repeater of an old message, but as the bearer of a living inspiration ; not as archaeological rebuilder of a vanished sacred scene, but as an apostolic age prolonged with unabated powers. It tells you, indeed, whence it comes ; but for the evidence even of this it chiefly asks you to look at what it is, and undertakes to show you as you pass through its interior all the divine gifts, be they miraculous gifts or heavenly graces, by which the primitive Church was distinguished from the unconsecrated world. This quiet confidence in its own divine commission and interior sanctity simplifies the problem which it presents to inquirers and dispensing with the precarious pleas of learning, carries it into the court of sentiment and conscience, addressing to each candidate for discipleship only such preliminaries as Peter or Philip might have addressed to their converts— as if there had been no history between. No Protestant can assume this position ; yet he can hardly assail the Roman Catholic without resorting to weapons or argument which may wound himself. Does he slight and deny the supernatural pretensions of to-day the divisions, the healings, the saintly gifts of insight and guidance more than human ? It is difficult to do so except on grounds more or less applicable to the reports of like phenomena in the first ages. Does he insist on the evident growth age after age of Catholic dogma as evidence of human corruption tainting the divine evidence of truth ? The rule tells with equal force against the scheme of belief retained by the churches of the Reformation ; there is a history no less explicit and prolonged of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Atonement, than the belief in Purgatory and Transubstantiation. Does he show that there are missing links in the chain of Church Tradition, especially at its upper end, where verification ceases to be possible ? He destroys his own credentials along with his opponent's, for his criticisms touch the very sources of Christian history. The answer of the Catholic Church to the question, " Where is the holy ground of the world, where is the real presence of the living God ?" " Here within my precincts, here alone," has, at least, the merit of simplicity, and is easier to test than the Protestant reply, which points to

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a field of divine revelation discoverable only by the telescope half way toward the horizon of history — It carries its supernatural character within it ; it has brought its authority down with it through time : it is the living organism of the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal dispensation among us still ; and if you ask about its evidence it offers the spectacle of itself."



AN ALTAR LAMP


 H shining meek and shining bright,
 An Altar Lamp, indeed !
 With ready, tender, helpful light
 For groping wanderer's need.

Without the temple walls he stands,
 His heart is sore with sin —
 Through pictured saints' outreaching hands
 Thou beckonest him within.

Into the house of Christ the Lord
 The wanderer's rest from roaming —
 Where robe and ring and festive board
 Await his long-for coming.

Sweet beacon light, what joy is thine !
 I breathe in far-off greeting —
 So near, so near the Heart Divine,
 Thou tremblest with its beating.

More joy to thee will yet be given,
 When comes the Eternal Rest —
 Christ's Altar Lamp on earth, in heaven
 A star upon its breast.

There, shining meeking and shining bright,
 Wilt know, O fair and dear !
 How many a heavenward, leading light,
 Thy flame enkindled here.

KATHERINE E. CONWAY.



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Mary Magdalen

BY A MISSIONARY

WHO and what was she ? Though not sunk to the very depths of degradation, though not seen "now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corners," yet to the world at large, to passers-by, she was a fallen creature, a thing of shame, a sinner publicly known and pointed out as such. To the corrupt world, to the lust of the eyes, to the lust of the flesh, to pride of life, she was a beautiful woman, enticing, ensnaring, fittest food to feed vile and base passions. But to the Saviour of mankind, to Him who came to call not the just, but sinners to repentance, who and what was Magdalen ? An ardent, craving, generous, though erring soul, thirsting for a love she could not get, seeking intensely for happiness where, alas ! she could never find it ; whose loving, passionate nature God alone could completely satisfy and ennoble. Jesus saw but the sinning soul, which He was one day to change into a perfect type and model of true repentance and love.

Jesus was of fame over all Judea. Who had not heard of the Carpenter's Son, the mighty miracle Worker, the Friend of sinners, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of His people ? His fame had reached the ears of even Mary of Magdala. One evening dressed in all her finery, perfumed and jewelled, Magdalen full of evil devices, leaves home in quest of prey, while close by the Son of Man is seeking to save that which was lost. He is surrounded by vast multitudes eagerly listening to His sublime teaching. He is speaking to the hearts of thousands of His children. He is speaking of love and mercy. Drawn by curiosity, perhaps by a lower motive, Magdalen joins the crowd, pushes her way forward, till she is near enough, to mark distinctly the features of the Son of Mary. She is struck by His manly beauty. The most beautiful of the children of men is under the gaze of the sinner. She looks and looks again. She cannot take her eyes

off Him. They are fixed on His lovely countenance. She is carried away by His calm, noble bearing. His heavenly modesty, His meekness, His humility shine forth. His sweet and gentle words of truth and love, His accents of mercy, act like a spell upon her. She is beyond herself. She is drawn closer and closer. With beating heart, with trembling hands clasped before her, with flushed cheeks and wide open eyes, Magdalen is rivetted on Jesus. A moment more and He who called her, He who attracted her, He who bound her to Himself, now "leads captivity captive." He modestly lifts up His loving eyes. They centre on Magdalen. They appeal to her. They touch her deep, deep to the very depths of her inmost soul. They change her nature. Ah ! a God looks on His creature poor, fallen, sinful. Jesus gazes on Magdalen. The sweet Saviour enters into the very heart of the sinner. Grace and mercy drop like gentle dew upon her, a bright light flashes through her intellect, the will is moved and the heart is won. Magdalen bends low her head. She is confused. She staggers for a moment. She looks up. He has gone. She turns back to her miserable home another being, and Angels above sing Praise, Glory, Alleluia ! Follow her as she hurries along, head bent, eyes sad and downcast, hands drooping, movements quick and sudden. She has reached her home. She enters, and rushes up to her room, her room of sin ; sends her maid away ; orders that she be not disturbed : tears away the jewels from her neck and hands, and throws herself on her bed of shame. The hand of God is upon her. She feels uneasy, restless ; she turns now on one side, now on the other. A dull, heavy, oppressive feeling of pain is upon her ; she tosses wildly to and fro. A gnawing has seized her heart ; she is in her agony, the agony of sin ; she writhes in cruel pangs. The worm that dieth not, remorse of conscience, is doing its awful work. Poor, stricken Magdalen ! not a moment of peace. Hours of agony roll over her, alone ! alone ! Not a soul to see her ; not a soul to feel for her ; not a soul to pity her ; not a tear, save, perhaps, the pattering rain ; not a sound, save the mournful howl of the night-dog to add to her misery, her utter wretchedness. That face is haunting her. Those eyes are piercing her. His sweet words of mercy are like molten

lead dropping, singeing, burning. Hear, Ah! hear the utterance of that crushed heart. "Woe, woe is me! mine eyes have drunk iniquity; my lips have drained the fatal cup of poison to the bitter dregs; my hands, these very hands, have been steeped in vice; nay, my body, my whole body, has pressed rottenness and corruption. Ah! who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to mine eyes, that I might weep night and day?" A prey to cruel grief and woe-be-gone, Magdalen dragged through that terrible night and morning dawned but to mock at her misery. The sun is rising. Her dark hours of anguish of sin are to give place to bright years of peace and calm for her Saviour had passed that eventful night in the Garden of Olives, — in prayer, in pleading, in atonement, before His heavenly Father.



SHALL WE IMITATE THEM ?

B. ELLEN BURKE.

WE are all inclined to imitate those whom we love. Some even go so far as to use the same tone of voice, the same manner of walking, and even the same little gestures. This habit of imitation is so great that good fathers and mothers strive to have their children associate with people whose manners, language, morals, and devotions are pleasing to Almighty God.

The books we read influence our lives as much, and sometimes even more than do our daily companions. No one knows this great truth as well as the priest who has the care of souls. He tries to have all the boys and young men of his parish read the life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga or of St. Stanislaus or of Blessed John Berchmans or of any one of the hundreds of young men who gave their lives wholly to God.

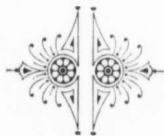
When the young Aloysius Gonzaga was first permitted to receive Holy Communion on Sundays, he was overjoyed. "To receive my Saviour every week! What a

happiness!" How much greater was his joy when he was allowed to receive Him more than once a week.

He had a beautiful practice which it would be well for us to imitate. Every thought, word, and deed of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he offered in thanksgiving to our dear Lord for His kindness in coming to visit him in Holy Communion. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were given to preparation for the reception of the great Guest who was coming the following Sunday.

What a holy and salutary method of distributing his time and making his life consist of acts of love towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We can easily imagine the great care he exercised in cleansing his heart of every worldly feeling and his mind of every earthly thought. How many times he gathered sweet bouquets for the dear Guest, bouquets of loving ejaculations, kind words, good deeds, holy thoughts, anything that would make his heart beat in closer union with the Heart of Jesus.

When this saintly young man made such careful preparation for Holy Communion and such fervent acts of Thanksgiving after, how should we conduct ourselves? How closely can we imitate him? Father Furniss gives us a wise suggestion when he tells us of the two children who went with cans, to the river, for water. One returned with much more water than the other. Why? Because his dish was much larger than the other. So it is when we receive Holy Communion; the better our preparation, the greater our devotion, the larger our hearts are to receive abundant graces to overflowing.



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Archangel St. Michael

After a picture by Raphael.



Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

After a picture by Hoffman.



Little Treatise on Confession

(Continued.)

CONTRITION.

WHENEVER we go to confession, we ought carefully to excite ourselves to repentance for our sins, that is, for *mortal* sins, note that well. God cannot pardon some sins without pardoning others. Mortal sins are pardoned by means of the infusion of sanctifying grace. Now this infusion is impossible if there remains in the soul one sin of which it has not repented, and for which it preserves an attachment; consequently, no sin is forgiven if all are not pardoned.

Venial sins, on the contrary, may be remitted one without the other; for instance, slight falsehoods may be pardoned while sins of impatience are not, if we repent of the first and not of the second. If we accuse ourselves of mortal sins in confession, we must repent of all such sins without exception. If, on the contrary, we have only venial sins to confess, we must repent of, at least, one of these sins.

Now, let us understand this well. There is no obligation to confess venial sins; nevertheless, if we approach the tribunal of Penance with only venial sins, it is positively necessary to repent of at least one of these sins, in order that there may be matter for absolution. If we act otherwise, that is to say, if confessing only venial sins,

we have contrition for none of them, the absolution produces no effect, and the Sacrament is null. If we should knowingly make such a confession, it would with regard to the Sacrament be even an irreverence and a profanation.

We repeat, then : Every time that we go to confession, we must repent of the sins of which we accuse ourselves, of *all* if they are mortal sins, and of at least *one* if they are venial sins.

Let us here make an observation very important for persons who often approach the Sacrament, and who have only light faults of which to accuse themselves. It may easily happen that for these faults they have not the sorrow necessary in order to receive absolution with fruit, and that thus they receive it badly. To prevent this disorder, theologians teach that, in such cases, these persons ought to confess one or more sins of their past life for which they are truly sorry. They ought to confess, as follows : After telling the slight faults committed since their last confession, they should add, "*I accuse myself, also, of the sins of my past life, and especially of the sins that I have committed against charity, or against patience, or against holy purity,*" &c.

These sins having already been confessed, there is no need to indicate the number and the circumstances which change their species. It suffices to say : "I accuse myself of the sins that I have committed against such or such a virtue."

It is needless to say that, when we repeat the confession of such faults, in order to make matter for our confession, we ought to repent of them afresh, as if we were accusing ourselves of them for the first time. In effect, the accusation of such sins made without contrition, would be an accusation wanting in the second condition, necessary for every good confession, namely, contrition.

Some will, perhaps, say : But sins once confessed, ought not to be confessed again. And yet you would have us accuse ourselves of them hundreds and thousands of times, that is, every time that we go to confession.

It is very true, we reply, that sins well confessed, ought no longer to exist, nor do I say that you are obliged to confess them a second, and still less a tenth and a hundredth, time, as if they had been imperfectly pardoned

the first time. If we exhort you to accuse yourself of them anew, without mentioning either their number or their circumstances, it is in order that your confession may not be null for want of sufficient matter, and that you may receive the fruit of the Sacrament.

When you have to confess only light faults, which are not even real sins, or which, if real sins, do not inspire sufficient sorrow, omit confession, and go to Holy Communion as did the first Christians. They confessed only mortal sins and contented themselves, to obtain pardon of venial sins, with reciting the *Pater Noster*, as St. Augustine tells us (1) and after him St. Alphonsus di Li- guori (2).

In communicating in the state of grace, although with venial sins upon the conscience and without previous confession, you will make a good Communion.

If you prefer to follow the custom of Christians of our own day, that is, if you wish to confess before approaching the Holy Table, it is absolutely necessary that you confess well, and therefore, that you confess with sorrow for your sins. If, then, you have not new sins for which you may prudently judge that you have true sorrow, confess the old ones for which you certainly have repented.

We do not teach this doctrine in order to give you to understand that sins ought to be confessed more than once, which would be a manifest error; but we put it forth that you may be able to assure yourself of the fruit of the Sacrament of Penance. This fruit for Christians exempt from mortal sin, is an increase of sanctifying grace. In effect, sacramental confession gives grace to those deprived of it by mortal sin, and it increases that grace in those that, guilty only of venial sin, already possess it.

Many authors do not approve accusations made in the following or similar terms: *I accuse myself of sins of thought, of word, of deed, and of omission committed in the past.* Such an accusation appears to them too general, and is equivalent to this: *I accuse myself of being a sinner,* since whoever sins, offends God either by thought word, action, or omission. So vague an accusation is, according to them, insufficient. They demand the mention of some

(1) Tract. 26 in Io.

(2) Dir. des confess., ch. 22 p. 2, § 32.

special sin, for example, a theft committed in the past, or, at least, as we have said, some sin opposed to a definite virtue, namely, justice, chastity, or the love of the neighbor. Other authors, however, think differently, as may be seen in Gury's *Theology* with notes by Ballerini (1).

HOW TO EXCITE CONTRITION.

We ought to excite ourselves to sorrow for our sins by some motive suggested by faith, that is, on account of the offence offered to God infinitely good and worthy to be loved above all things, or, again, on account of paradise lost and hell deserved; or lastly, on account of the horror of sin considered in the light of Revelation.

If, after our examination, we find ourselves guilty of mortal sin, we must consider the eternal recompense of which it has deprived us, and the horrible chastisement of hell that it has merited for us. In this way we excite ourselves to the sorrow called *attrition*.

We should next cast a glance on the Crucifix, considering that, by mortal sin, we have offended God infinitely good, worthy in Himself of infinite love, and who has shown Himself so full of love for us by becoming man, and by immolating Himself on the cross for our salvation. Thus is excited in our heart the sorrow of *contrition*. Though not necessary to a good confession, this sorrow is much more meritorious and more efficacious. It effaces sin even before absolution.

We ought to excite ourselves at least to attrition, even if we have only venial sins of which to accuse ourselves. For this end, we may represent to ourselves the torments of purgatory. The thought of having merited them by venial faults, will suffice to excite in us the repentance requisite to obtain their pardon.

We would do well, also, to consider the deformity of sin, which is always an offence offered to the Divine Majesty, a black ingratitude, after so many benefits re-

(1) Gury, Vol. II. n. 424. Whatever may be the divergence of opinion, the accusation of sins committed in the past against such or such a determinate virtue, is so easy that we would counsel it to all pious persons who have any doubt as to whether they have ever repented of the light faults of which they accuse themselves.

(The Translator).

ceived and, in the eyes of God, the only real evil.

Devout souls who commit no mortal sins, ought to be well persuaded that nothing is more easy than to excite themselves to contrition. Living in the grace of God, they have in themselves as an habitual state, the hatred and detestation of sin, and consequently, they pass very easily from the habit to the act. Let us by an example illustrate this truth so consoling for them.

Suppose a man wants to draw water from a reservoir, but he finds it empty. What must he do? Why, he must take the trouble to fill it, then open the faucet, and let the water run out. If, on the contrary, the reservoir is already full, it is necessary only to open the faucet for the water to flow out. Now, the heart of the sinner is a heart empty of the hatred and detestation of sin. If he wishes to make an act of contrition, he ought to force himself first to excite in his heart this hatred and detestation. But as for the just man, since his heart is already filled with that hatred, nothing is more easy for him than to make an act of contrition.

THE GOOD PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

We shall say very little of the good purpose that necessarily accompanies repentance when it is true. It is impossible to repent sincerely of our sins whether mortal or venial, without having the will to commit them no more. Now, the good purpose is nothing else than the will to renounce sin.

This will, if sincere, necessarily comprises the resolution to shun the occasions of sin, and put in practice the counsels given by the confessor to render the amendment lasting.

OF CONFESSION.

It is a truth known to all Christians, that they who conceal a single mortal sin in confession, not only do not obtain pardon for the sins that they have confessed, but that they burden their conscience with a sacrilege. It is, then, a less evil to communicate in mortal sin without having confessed, than to do so after a confession in which a grave sin has been concealed. The sinner communicating without having confessed, does so with one

sacrilege less than if he were to approach the Holy Table after a bad confession. Even at the moment of death, it is better not to confess at all rather than to confess badly. By confessing not at all, the sinner does, indeed, go to hell, but he goes with one sacrilege less upon his soul; consequently, he will have less to suffer for all eternity. (1)

He who is ashamed to confess any mortal sin whatever, ought to make an effort to conquer himself and confess it, cost what it may. He will easily triumph over his shame if he observes the counsels that we are going to give him. Let him supplicate the Lord to grant him the necessary courage, and for that end, let him beg the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, invoke his angel guardian, and then without more reflection, present himself to his confessor, and begin at once: "*Father, I have something that troubles me.*" These words uttered, all is done. The confessor knows very well how to reach that of which there is question, and he will help you as he is in duty bound to do.

Dear Reader, if you are ashamed to confess one or more sins, say these few words and, we repeat, all will come right. The demon who makes use of that shame to tempt you, will retire confounded. You will be restored to God's grace, and you will taste a joy and a peace such as you never before experienced.

We wish to teach you here what St. Alphonsus taught even to religious, namely, that certain sins of immodesty, gravely culpable in themselves, ought not to be mentioned in confession if, at the time of their commission, the penitent knew not their malice. "This applies," says the holy Doctor, "to certain acts of levity, to certain unseemly jesting or sports, to which one may have delivered himself in childhood without suspecting their malice. Even had these things been done in secret, yet it would not be a certain proof of guilt, for there are some natural acts that children do in private, but which, however, are not sins. We are not obliged to confess such things in particular, unless we recall having committed them with the consciousness of committing a grave sin, or, at least, with

(1) We should not, however, under this pretext, neglect to procure for even the most hardened sinner a priest who, by the grace of God, may convert him. (*The Translator.*)

the doubt that the sin might be grave. It suffices that we say in our own mind : " Lord, if I knew myself bound to confess these things, I would do so without hesitation, whatever pain it might cost me. (1) "

St. Alphonsus teaches this doctrine to religious, and we do not scruple to teach it to you. St. Alphonsus became a saint in teaching it, and we can certainly save our soul by putting it in practice. St. Alphonsus was not an imprudent or lax theologian.

But, you will say, what advantage can we derive from this teaching ?

What advantage ? — We answer, the following :

Some souls naturally timid and fearful, apprehending that certain indecent actions, committed by them in early childhood without consciousness of their malice, are truly sins in themselves, think themselves obliged to accuse themselves of them in confession. But conquered by shame, they keep silence and, as their erroneous conscience makes them believe themselves obliged to confess them, by not confessing them, they continually make sacrilegious confessions and Communions. If they knew that there is no obligation for them to confess such acts, they would not scruple to pass them over in silence, and they would not commit a sacrilege. Now, is it a little thing to save these souls so many bad confessions ? Behold, then, the advantage that the teaching of this doctrine procures, and that St. Alphonsus had in view when giving it to religious.

A second advice that we shall give to persons that accuse themselves of sins of this kind is, to confine themselves to what is strictly necessary in order to make known the nature of the sin to the confessor. In certain matters, it is necessary to be as brief as possible. All theologians agree on this point. In Cardinal Gousset, we read (1) : The most rigorous theologians, they even who exact the accusation of circumstances merely aggravating, make an exception to this rule for what regards sins contrary to holy purity.

When, therefore, they who have had the misfortune to fall into such sins, perceive that the confessor unders-

(1) The Holy Nun. ch. 18. § 1. n. 4.

tands at the first word the nature of the sin confessed, they should take care not to add another.

This is a point upon which, if they meet a confessor given through scrupulosity to question too closely into such matters, they should leave him and go to another ; for such a confessor would not be for them a good one.

Doubtless, all sins ought to be confessed ; but such as we are now speaking of should be confessed as briefly as possible, without entering into the details permitted in other matters less delicate.

SACRAMENTAL PENANCE.

As to the sacramental penance, we shall merely exhort you to perform it exactly and at the time prescribed, that is, if the confessor had fixed a time for it. If he fixed no time, perform it at once, that is, on the day upon which it was enjoined, for fear of forgetting it, or of putting it off too long. In case it should have been forgotten or deferred, you ought always to perform it as soon as it recurs to the memory.

If the penance should seem to you too hard, ask your confessor to change it, but do not change it yourself.

N. B. — Since the penance is one of the parts of the Sacrament, it is very important that it should be said as soon as possible after confession and in the manner the confessor directs. If we defer it from day to day, we are apt to omit it altogether. To wilfully omit the penance imposed by the priest is a sin, the gravity of which depends upon the nature of the sins confessed at the time it was given.

Another reason why the penance should be said promptly is that a person exposes himself to the risk of sinning mortally before saying it. When one performs the penance in a state of mortal sin it is true that one fulfills the obligation imposed by the minister of God, but one does not obtain the end for which the obligation was imposed, viz., a certain remission of the punishment due the sins.



THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Josephine Marie



SUNLIGHT floods the road leading to the town of Emmaus as though with visible glory.

Majestic mountains rising on every side as "God's protecting care is round about His people," so the inspired Psalmist tells us. But nature though robed in her fairest vesture fails even in her religious symbolism to breathe joy or peace to the disconsolate pilgrims who slowly wend their way on foot to the town "sixty furlongs from the great City over which their Master had yearned in the moment of its darkest treachery a few days before.

They will feel brighter, so they persuade themselves, when away from the familiar streets every corner of which haunts them with memories of the Friend whom they deserted in the hour of need.

Full of remorse, disheartened and ashamed, they are too restless to keep silent and "talk together of all these things which had happened!"

"What are these discourses which you hold one with another and are sad?"

The sudden appearance of a third person, the unexpected voice, astonished them less than the evident ignorance of the Speaker.

"Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem" asks Cleophas "and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days?" What things? is the quiet question.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a Prophet mighty in word and work before all the people." And eager to unburden their hearts they tell the "Stranger" of the miracles, the goodness of the Nazarene and how the chief priests put him to death on the infamous gibbet of the cross.

"We had hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel," they wistfully add: "and besides to-day, the

third day since these things were done, certain women affrighted us saying that they had been to the sepulchre and seen a vision of angels who told that he was alive."

"O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things the Prophets have spoken."

Is there not something familiar, in the grave, tender, rebuke? Something that indeed makes their hearts "burn within them" as clearly, patiently, their Companion proves from Moses to the last seer of Israel the Mesias was to be a man "acquainted with infirmity" led to death "dumb as a lamb before his shearer."

So absorbed are they in the wonderful words, so comforted by the nameless influence of this "Friend" that they scarcely note the shadows of twilight deepening about them.

Only when Emmaus is reached and he "Makes as though he would go farther" do they realize the lateness of the hour.

"Stay with us because it is toward evening and the day is far spent," they plead.

And entering the poor abode — fishermen cannot afford sumptuous lodgings — "He went in with them."

Silently they cross the threshold of the tavern-room and the three gather around the plain wooden table just as the town-clock strikes the sunset hour.

See! One rises and takes bread in his hands. Does the veil lift Cleophas? has the supper-room of the Thursday before come back? a moment of bewilderment then unutterable joy. Unconsciously they kneel and the rays of the setting sun stream through the lattice upon the glorified countenance of the Master as He blesses the bread, "breaks it and gives it to them."

They know Him now.

And we too know our Redeemer in the "breaking of the bread." Beneath the stress of our daily sojourn through earth's uneven paths, we like the Disciples, are often disheartened, tired, faithless alas! to the divine friend who never yet has been unfaithful to us.

Worldly occupations and amusements however necessary or innocent distract us.

Amid the glare and bustle of the world our spiritual sight grows dim. But if the Savior draws near all is

changed. Joy, courage, purity, flood our hearts. His light dispels the darkest cloud, his tender touch soothes the most aching wound, his blood cleanses deepest defilement.

Why then do we not long for the coming of the Master? As a mother nurishes her child with her own substance certain that no other life than her own, can so well nurture his, so the Creator deigns to feed his creatures with the stainless flesh and blood he stooped to assume, and thus imbues them with his own divine vigor and peace.

Why then do we not hunger for the Living Bread of eternal life, as necessary to our spiritual growth as material nourishment is to our physical existence? Why are we slower than were the Disciples to recognize the Redeemer disguised in lowliest garb that we may not be repelled by the bewildering splendor of his risen beauty?

Because we do not receive Him often enough into our own hearts.

It is in the "Breaking of Bread" that we fully recognize the Master.

It is in those moments of ineffable union that

"His lovely presence shines so clear
Through every sense and way."

that faith at last seems to merge almost into vision.

Oh, let us no longer be "foolish and slow of heart to believe," but acknowledging our unworthiness come with great confidence to our Divine Friend and beg Him in spite of their poverty to enter the dwelling place of our earthstained souls. With "desire" which we cannot fathom will he deign to "enter," and transform them by the magic of his grace, and transcontent to win little by little, the fulness of our love and loyalty. The Redeemer wooing his redeemed.

Ah, let us respond all the more ardently because in the past we have been so cold; and when the day of our mortal pilgrimage is far spent he will draw near in Viaticum to be with us as we pass through the dark valley, which his friendship alone can render glorious.

What a consolation it will be when at the Judgment-seat which his own holiness, despite his mercy, must render just, we shall see no stranger waiting to judge

our cause, but the same Lord and Master whom on earth was our frequent Guest, our well beloved Friend.

Apostles and Saints, Angels and Martyrs, the myriad courts of the heavenly Jerusalem, will echo the alleluia of the Savior's own Sacred Heart as with triumphant love he bids his redeemed abide with Him for all eternity in the Kingdom which no shadow of evening shall ever dim, but Dawn everlasting reveal in the full splendor of his risen beauty the King whom veiled in the Host of earthly tabernacles we acknowledged to be our God.



His Choosing.

IF He had let me take the pleasant way
 Whereto my steps were bent,
 The path where birds sing in the boughs all day
 Shaded and well content,
 I had not found beyond the leagues of sand,
 Toil-worn the mountain crest
 From which my eyes look over to that land
 Wherein shall be my rest.

If He had let me slumber as I craved,
 Pillowed in grasses deep
 Beside the stream whose murmuring water laved
 The silver coasts of sleep,
 I had not heard His footsteps drawing nigh
 Across the lonely place ;
 Unknown, unloved, they would have passed me by,
 Nor I have seen His face.

MABEL EARLE



SUBJECT OF ADORATION

FOR THE

Associates of the Congregation of the Most Blessed
Sacrament.

The Eucharistic Veil

I. — Adoration

ADORE Our Lord in the state in which He has chosen to remain among us in the Blessed Sacrament.

It is a state veiled, hidden, annihilated.

What, in effect, does the Eucharist present to our view ?

Obscurity. — The Sacred Host has no splendor.

Simplicity. — The Sacred Host has no movement, no action, no words. It is incapable of resistance.

Lastly, a *state of complete death*, — for the Sacred Host has no relation with the exterior world.

Could there be a thicker veil, a retreat more profound than this state chosen by Our Lord, and consisting of obscurity, silence, inaction, impotence, and simplicity ? Is not that veil equivalent to the winding-sheet of the dead, to the stone of the sepulchre ?

And this state, freely chosen by Our Lord, is to endure till the end. Nothing can make Him come forth from it. He has chosen it, fashioned it, willed it. He has espoused it, and He loves it.

Let not that state diminish your faith, your respect, your love toward the hidden God of the Eucharist. On the contrary, adore Him, confess Him, venerate Him, praise Him, and say to Him with firm faith and with all the love of which you are capable : “ Verily, Thou art a hidden God ! ” — But I recognise Thee, and I proclaim Thee my God. Under this *obscurity*, I adore Thy glory and majesty. Under this *simple* and *ordinary* appearance, I adore the beauty of the most beautiful of the children

of men, the countenance that ravishes the angels. Under this *inaction*, I adore the activity of my God Himself and of the Saviour High-Priest. Under this *impotence*, I adore the power of the Word Himself, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. Under this aspect of death, I adore the full and perfect life of the Divinity, of the Three Divine Persons, of the Soul, the Body and the Heart of Jesus.

I believe ! I adore ! I adore Thee there in the Host. Thou art there really present. I believe that it is Thou, O Jesus, that art there. Yes, it is Thou, the Son of God, the Eternal, the Almighty, and it is for my love that Thou dost hide Thyself under the appearance of the Host.

II. — Thanksgiving.

“Why that Eucharistic veil, O Jesus ?”

For thee, for thy love.

I wish to be *with thee*, to permit thee to address Me, to speak to Me. I wish thee to have confidence in Me, in spite of thy misery and thy defects. How could that be were I to appear to thee in the splendor of My majesty, with the dazzling aspect of My sanctity, and the thunders of My justice ? — I have embraced this state, therefore, in order to dwell with thee.

“O hidden God, I thank Thee !”

I wish to be the victim of thy sins, to be immolated every day and in every place, because every day and in every place thou dost sin, thou dost deserve to be chastised by My Father.

But what priest would dare to immolate Me had he visibly to renew My cruel Passion in a *bloody* manner ?

Who would assist at those terrible scenes in which My flesh would be scourged, and torn, and nailed, in which My blood would flow over the altar and its sacred precincts ?

I assume this state, therefore, to be the Victim in the Holy Sacrifice.

“O hidden God, I thank Thee !”

I wish to be thy *nourishment*. To preserve supernatural life, thou must eat the Principle of life, I Myself, My flesh, My blood, My soul, My Divinity.

Wouldst thou dare to bite into My bleeding flesh, to drink My blood running warm and purple from My veins? Thou wouldst flee in horror, exclaiming with the incredulous throug of Capharnaum : "*Durus est hic sermo*"! — *This is a hard saying!*"

I take, therefore, this state of bread, this taste, this appearance of a material thing, that thou mayest receive Me, eat Me, and thus live of My life, the Divine life.

"O hidden God, Thou dost not count the difficulties, the sacrifices that this state imposes on Thee. Thy love urges Thee to dwell with us, to die for us that Thou mayest nourish me ; and at once dost Thou follow the impulse in spite of the incredible abasement that it cost Thee. Thy love demanded it, and that sufficed. I thank Thee. I thank Thee !

"I thank Thee for all the sacrifices that this state of annihilation imposes on Thee, the sacrifice of Thy glory, Thy honor, Thy rights, for wert Thou to show Thyself in Thy glory, Thy churches would be deserted. I thank Thee for accepting, for choosing these sacrifices for me, because Thou dost love me, because Thou dost will to give Thyself to me. I thank Thee, my God, I thank Thee, for I deserve not that a God should think of me."

III. — Propitiation

Consider what humiliations the Eucharistic state causes Jesus, our hidden God.

Because it is *obscure*, without *show* or *splendor*, He is neglected, He is treated with neither respect nor attention. We yawn, we sleep, we think of every thing but Him. We allow our thoughts, our gaze to wander among creatures. Sometimes even we offend Him seriously at the very moment in which we ought most truly to adore Him. O were He to show Himself resplendent with glory ! If His angel were to appear at His side !—

But no. He trusts Himself to our love, and our love despises Him, because He is veiled. Because He is without action, without words to call for help, because He can neither defend Himself nor escape, He becomes the sport of the elements and of the wicked.

Fire, water, dampness, dust, decay, attack and sully Him. Spiders, worms, the vilest insects may prey upon Him.

The impious, free-masons, robbers may take Him, carry Him to their diabolical reunions, insult Him, wound Him, cast Him on the ground, tread Him under foot ! He utters not a word ! He is bound ! He remains immovable !

And it is the God of majesty whom they treat in this way ! The God thrice holy ! the all-powerful God terrible in His anger ! His love, alas ! daily subjects Him to such outrages.

Ask pardon for all these sins against the Eucharist, for your tepidity in church and in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Offer yourself, your labor, your time, all that you do, in reparation for all the outrages that the Blessed Sacrament receives.

"*Parce, Domine ; Parce populo tuo !*" — "*Spare, O Lord ! Spare Thy people !*" — Go in spirit into all the places of the world in which Jesus is offended, and make Him reparation.

IV. — Petition

Beg Jesus, supplicate Him to reproduce in you His Eucharistic state, to give you the virtues belonging to that state, to make it act upon you.

Humility. — humility with the virtues that accompany it, preserve it, and nourish themselves with its substance.

Veil yourself by *silence* regarding yourself, your actions, your merits.

Veil yourself by *modesty* of demeanor, walking, behaviour.

Veil yourself performing your duty simply and quietly, by unostentatiously rendering service, by unaffectedly sacrificing yourself.

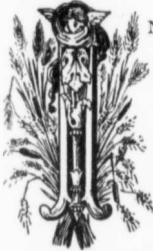
Annihilate yourself by lowly thoughts of self, by cutting off every idea, every vain complacency regarding your own excellence of mind, of heart, of qualities more or less remarkable. Despise yourself.

Annihilate self by obeying, by making yourself known to your spiritual guides by allowing yourself to be in everything, and everywhere, known, judged, directed like the Sacred Host, the Hidden God Himself.

HENRIETTA MARIA OF FRANCE

Queen of Charles I of England

MRS. MCAULIFFE.



N these days when the fires of persecution are again lighted in Christian lands, and the faithful children and consecrated virgins of the Church are driven from their homes by edicts as cruel and unjustifiable as those of Diocletian or of Nero, it is timely to look back at the noble lives which, under the guidance of pure religion, adorned and illuminated the history of France.

Let us turn over the pages of Strickland's "Lives of the Queens of England", and study one, reared in France; the daughter of the great Henry the Fourth and his Queen, Marie de Medicis; a life so blameless, so pure and self-sacrificing, so full of sorrows and bitter disappointments heroically borne, and equally full of good works, that we who read feel ourselves better for the reading.

Marie de Medicis is one of the pet aversions of all Protestant writers; why? because she belonged to a great Catholic family — her name has been loaded with obliquy, a pyramid of lies has been raised over her as a monument, blotting out the truth from the careless reader. Alas, how many such there are, knowing nothing but what they learn in the polluted streams of school histories! They leave school; the exigencies of life with some, business, with others pleasure, absorb their time, they never seek the pure founts, the sources of history, the evil seed has been sown, and many even Catholics believe the slanders which they have imbibed with their first lessons.

The writer above mentioned is a Protestant historian, but an honest one — she gives us the truth as she found it, without any veil of falsehood or prejudice. From her pages I quote the following letter written by Marie de

Médicis and placed in her daughter's hand, when, at the age of sixteen she left France to become Queen consort of Charles I, King of England. The sublime sentiments expressed therein are alone sufficient to refute all the calumnies against the writer :

The Queen Mother, Marie de Medicis To the young Queen of England, Henriette Marie, 1525 June 25th.

" My daughter,

You separate from me, I cannot separate from you. I retain you in heart and memory, and would that this paper could serve for an eternal Memorial to you of what I am ; it would then supply my place and speak for me to you, when I can no longer speak for myself. I give you it with my last adieu in quitting you, to impress it the more on your mind, and give it to you written with my own hand, in order that it may be the more dear to you, and in order that it may have more authority with you in all that regards your conduct towards God, the King your husband, his subjects, your domestics, and yourself.

" I tell you here sincerely as in the last hour of our converse, all I should say to you in the last hour of my existence, if you should be near me then.

" I consider to my great regret that such can never be, and that the separation now taking place between you and me for a long time, is too probably an anticipation of that which is to be forever in this world.

" On this earth you have only God for a father : but, as he is eternal, you can never lose him. It is he who sustains your existence and life ; it is he who, at this time, places a crown on your brow, and will establish you in England, where you ought to believe that he requires your service, and there he means to effect your salvation."

" Remember, my child, every day of your life, that he is your God, who has put you on earth intending you for Heaven, who has created you for himself and for his glory."

" The late King, your father, has already passed away; there remains no more of him but a little dust and ashes, hidden from our eyes. One of your brothers has already been taken from us, even in his infancy ; God withdrew

him at his own good pleasure. He has retained you in the world in order to load you with his benefits ; but as he gives you the utmost felicity, it behoves you to render him, the utmost gratitude. It is but just that your duties are augmented in proportion as the benefits and favors you receive are signal. Take heed of abusing them. Think well that the grandeur, goodness and justice of God are infinite, and employ all the strength of your mind in adoring his supreme puissance, in loving his inviolable goodness ; and fear his rigorous equity, which will make all responsible who are unworthy of his benefits."

"Receive, my child, these instructions of my lips, begin and finish every day in your oratory, with good thoughts, and in your prayers, ask resolution to conduct your life according to the laws of God, and not according to the vanities of the world, which is for all of us but a moment, in which we are suspended over eternity, which we shall pass either in the Paradise of God, or in hell with the malign spirits who work evil."

"Remember that you are a daughter of the Church by baptism, and that this is, indeed, the first and highest rank which you have, or ever will have since it this which will give you entrance into Heaven ; your other dignities, coming as they do from the earth, will not go further than the earth ; but those which you derive from Heaven will ascend again to their source, and carry you with them there. Render thanks to Heaven each day, to God who has made you a Christian ; estimate this first of benefits as it deserves, and consider all that you owe to the labors and precious blood of Jesus our Saviour ; it ought to be paid for by our sufferings and even by our blood if he requires it. Offer your soul and your life to him who has created you by his power, and redeemed you by his goodness and mercy. Pray to him and pray incessantly to preserve you by the inestimable gift of his grace, and that it may please him that you sooner lose your life than renounce him."

"You are the descendant of St. Louis. I would recall to you in this very last adieu, the same instruction that he received from his mother, Queen Blanche, who said to him often that she would rather see him die than to

live so as to offend God, in whom we move, and who is the end of our being. It was with such precepts that he commenced his holy career ; it was this that rendered him worthy of employing his life and reign for the good of the faith and the exaltation of the Church. We, after his example, firm and zealous for religion, which you have been taught, for the defence of which he, your royal and holy ancestor, exposed his life, and died faithful among the infidels. Never listen to nor suffer to be said in your presence ought in contradiction to your belief in God and in his only son, your Lord and Redeemer. I entreat the Holy Virgin, whose name you bear, to deign to be the Mother of your soul ; and in honor of her who is Mother of our Lord and Saviour, I bid you adieu again and many times. ”

“ I now devote you to God for ever and ever ; it is what I desire for you from the very depth of my heart. ”

Your very good and affectionate mother

Maria.

The original letter written in French is still in existence in the secret archives of France, Hotel Toulouse. It is much worn from having been many times read.

When Henrietta Maria arrived in England she found court and people absolutely without religion. The Church of England, of which the King her husband was nominal head, was sunk in vice and profligacy, the opposite faction of Puritanism was a monstrous hypocrisy. Both agreed on one point hatred of Catholics !

Although perfect freedom in the practice of her own religion had been guaranteed by treaty before the young Queen left France, unlooked-for difficulties and obstacles presented themselves when she demanded its fulfilment. The King had no real power, no moral courage ; although kind and naturally good, he feared his people, and thought it would be an easy matter to wean his wife from her Faith, not dreaming that one so young would offer resistance. The breach of treaty sat very lightly on the conscience of Charles. Henriette, however, was immovable, she declared that she would go back to her brother, the King of France, as she could not live without her religion !

There are some letters extant which describe the personal appearance of the Queen : " She is most sweet lovely creature, and hath a countenance that opens a window into the heart, where man may see all nobleness and goodness. "

" Charles the First loved her with passion, and well she reciprocated his tenderness, as he found in the hour of peril and misfortune. "

(to be continued.)



On the Mountains

BY DOROTHY GRESHAM.

HERE was a large house party at Dunningham, the shooting was in full swing, and we all had been bidden to the old Hall. Those who did not shoot, came to meet those who did. The weather had been delightful, the Irish rain for once had been respectable and sunshine was on the woods and uplands. We were very merry, in consequence, and ready for every excursion proposed. I had been up and off in the early morning, across country, to the village Mass, at the foot of the mountains, and came full tilt on the dogs, and the shooting party, starting forth for the day. There was only time for brief salutations and the news, that we were all to meet for luncheon on the mountains. It was a day of days-warm, soft, languorous, not so rare in Ireland as one imagines. A day that as a child, I often sighed for a bag on my back, to tramp the country, from door to door, like the professional beggars. A day when one feels that houses were made to sleep, not to live in, and one longs to be a gypsy. We drawled over the late breakfast, gossiped, got through our letters and were only gathered at the last moment, for the long drive of eight Irish miles. There was the drag, a wagonette, the dog cart, all standing at the door for those who wished

to drive — the more adventurous spirits preferred their wheels. We were off at last, through some of the most beautiful bits of "the garden of Ireland." The Wicklow mountains loomed above us, Dublin Bay lay blue and placid far down below — up and down hill, by village spire and ruined abbey, past Convent and Monastery, buried in the trees at the end of long avenues, bordered by a wilderness of evergreens. What wonderful roads we have in Ireland! — made for a bicycle, hard and smooth and perfectly kept; one skims along like a bird and one's spirits mount and exult in the exercise. It grew wilder as we entered the mountains, great woods clothed their rugged sides, and sky above, and sea below, vied with each other in color and beauty. We all became poetic, and if you can believe it in Ireland — silent! It was three o'clock when we reached our trysting spot, and the hungry hunters were awaiting our arrival. The baskets unpacked we arranged our viands in a shady nook of the plateau sheltered by the woods, and commanding one of the most beautiful panoramas I have ever seen in Ireland or out of it. Half way down the mountain, a village church rose above the woods, we discussed our locality and found that we were in the neighborhood of Lisheen — one of our professional beauties — a picture, indeed, smiling below us in the sunshine. I remembered instantly a letter I had received some days before from my cousin Fergus S. J. who expected to give a mission there this very week. I determined to have a look at him, I might chance to catch him leaving the confessional for his four o'clock dinner. I proposed the expedition, which was scouted by the lazy, and hailed with rapture by the juveniles. Our hostess declared we should have tea on our return and we were off in an instant.

Over stiles and gates, by short cuts, across the stubbles, over foot logs and brawling torrents, we reached the chapel yard, gay with the Mission booths, or "stands" as we have it in Ireland. Going to the chapel to look for his reverence, what was my delight and surprise, to see him at the altar, the tabernacle open and an old woman kneeling for Holy Communion. It was four o'clock! When all was over, I went around to the sacr-

ty, and in my torrent of words, telling him my pleasure at seeing him and how I had found him, I forgot to say how strange his giving Holy Communion at such an hour. While we talked an old woman came to ask his blessing. It was a long road home, she said, and she would like his reverence to raise his hands over her before she set out. She was on her knees, in an instant, and as I raised my eyes, I caught Fergus' expression, which was very sweet, and solemn, and almost apologetic. The old woman was bent down reverently, and without knowing it, I was kneeling on the stone beside her. When the words were over he put his hands on her head impressively, and his, "God bless you," almost thrilled me. When she had gone, he gazed after the poor, bent figure earnestly, and said — "I feel, as if I should have asked her blessing, the dear faithful, saintly soul. This is the third day she has been fasting for Holy Communion. "I gasped —" You don't mean she has had nothing to eat for three days?"

"I mean, that she left her home, five miles away up among those mountains, last Monday morning; she arrived here to find the confessional thronged. She remained all day without a chance of being heard. She set off that morning-or night-and got home after twelve o'clock too late to break her fast. She started out again Tuesday morning and spent the day at the confessional with the non success of Monday. Returned home after mid-night and set forth this morning with the result you have just this moment witnessed." "And are such cases rare?" I asked. "Not at all. I never really understood the Irish faith until I was sent to give those missions." Fergus answered, profoundly touched as if he could tell me strange experiences. "Meanwhile the good old soul is fasting, and must until she arrives home," I cried. "Yes of course, can you help her?" I shall certainly try." He gave me the direction she had taken and I hurried back to our hostess, and Protestant though she was, simply told her the story. She was full of sympathy, and in a few moments arranged some sandwiches in a basket strung on my bicycle. The tea was being made, this I carried in a bottle, and I was down the mountain road flying as if for a wager. I had not very far to go-

the old weary feet, the bent broken body, exhausted from her long fast, could make but slow progress, on the homeward way. I pulled up beside her as she entered the fields, to climb the mountains. Whether she thought I was the Angel Gabriel, or the Blessed Virgin herself I know not, but the benedictions she poured on me, and on my relations for ten generations were marvelous. How had I known? From whence had I come? Under a hawthorn bush by the wayside she had her breakfast, and I sat by enjoying it all intensely. When I expressed admiration at her fortitude she protested vigorously, that was nothing for an old body at her age. Young people felt the hunger but what did the like of her want but the cup of "tay." There was young Katie Moran, walked in from Carrick the First Friday morning, last week, the craythur, and had to fast till two o'clock. The priest's mother died over at Tulleen, and the Missioners and all went to the funeral. The Mass was said at seven, instead of eight and when Katie came Mass was all over, and the priests gone. And sure if she did'nt wait till they came back, and if they war'nt surprised when the craythur knocked at the door for Holy Communion, at that hour of the day. It was dark night when she got home. But sure asthore, who is worth waiting for if it is'nt the good God, and 'tis a wonder He comes to us at all, and the way we trate Him." The simplicity, faith and fervor of her words, were more touching than the most eloquent of sermons. We had but an interval for conversation. She had a long journey before her. She said goodbye reluctantly, to meet no doubt on the Last Day. May I be as near her when the great sentence is passed, as I was that memorable October afternoon by the wayside.



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SPECIAL NOTICE FOR ALL OUR READERS

THE kind words of encouragement that have come to us from time to time regarding the *Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament* warrants us in believing that there are many of its subscribers whose interest in the periodical is not limited to the mere reading of its pages. They desire to see its influence grow and expand, and perhaps are waiting for a few words from the editor to stimulate their zeal into action by becoming apostles of good catholic literature. The *Sentinel* is the only periodical in America devoted to the great Mystery of our Faith. We, therefore, call upon our subscribers, both of the clergy and laity, to advance its interest by soliciting new subscribers. Sometimes the mere lending of the *Sentinel* to a friend with a commendatory word will secure a subscription. Our subscribers who will take the pains to do this will perform an act, meritorious in itself, and will no doubt gain the twofold blessing of him who gives and him who takes.

Every Catholic home ought to be supplied with good literature, and surely that literature which tends to cultivate in the hearts of the members of a family a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament must be of priceless worth. The Blessed Sacrament is the fountain of every blessing, temporal as well as spiritual. Happy, indeed, is the home that is watered by Its graces, and refreshed and sustained by Its strengthening powers.

We hope to see the *Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament* entering thousands of Catholic homes all over the land bringing every month its tidings of peace and good will. Subscribers, we ask you to rise and help us in this apostolate! We ask you to speak of the merits of the *Sentinel* to your friends! We ask you to send us their names that we may send them sample copies.

We have adopted plans by which we intend to improve the reading matter of the *Sentinel*, and we intend to leave nothing undone that will make it a first class Catholic periodical.



Non-Catholic Testimony
 Logical Reasons for Believing the Catholic Church
 To Be the Church of Christ



FROM Dr. James Martineau's "Seats of Authority in Religion."

"If somewhere among the communities of Christendom there is a sovereign prescription for securing salvation, the Roman Catholic Church has obvious advantages over its competing claimants for possession of the secret. Regarded merely as an agent for the transmission of an historical treasure, she has, at least, a ready answer for all her Western rivals and a *prima facie* case of her own. They have to all appearance quite a recent genesis, their whole tradition and literature lying within the last three centuries and a half; and in order to make good their title deeds as servitors of Christ, they must carry it over a period four times as long during which it was *lost*, and identify it at the other end with the original instrument of bequest. Her plea, on the other hand, is that she has been there all through; that there has been no suspension of her life, no break in her history, no term of silence in her teaching; and, that having been always in possession, she is the vehicle of every claim and must be presumed, until conclusive evidence of forfeiture is produced, to be the rightful holder of what has rested in her custody. If you would trace a divine legacy from the age of the Caesars, would you set out to meet it on the Protestant tracks which soon lose themselves in the forests of Germany or on the Alps of Switzerland, or on the great Roman road of history, which runs through all the centuries and sets you down in Greece or Asia Minor at the very doors of the churches to which the apostles wrote? But it is not only to its superiority as a human carrier of a divine tradition that Catholicism successfully appeals. It is not content to hide away its signs and wonders in the past, and merely tell them to the present, but will take you to see them now and here. It

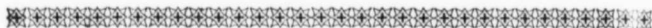
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speaks to you not as the repeater of an old message, but as the bearer of a living inspiration ; not as archaeological rebuilder of a vanished sacred scene, but as an apostolic age prolonged with unabated powers. It tells you, indeed, whence it comes ; but for the evidence even of this it chiefly asks you to look at what it is, and undertakes to show you as you pass through its interior all the divine gifts, be they miraculous gifts or heavenly graces, by which the primitive Church was distinguished from the unconsecrated world. This quiet confidence in its own divine commission and interior sanctity simplifies the problem which it presents to inquirers and dispensing with the precarious pleas of learning, carries it into the court of sentiment and conscience, addressing to each candidate for discipleship only such preliminaries as Peter or Philip might have addressed to their converts— as if there had been no history between. No Protestant can assume this position ; yet he can hardly assail the Roman Catholic without resorting to weapons or argument which may wound himself. Does he slight and deny the supernatural pretensions of to-day the divisions, the healings, the saintly gifts of insight and guidance more than human ? It is difficult to do so except on grounds more or less applicable to the reports of like phenomena in the first ages. Does he insist on the evident growth age after age of Catholic dogma as evidence of human corruption tainting the divine evidence of truth ? The rule tells with equal force against the scheme of belief retained by the churches of the Reformation ; there is a history no less explicit and prolonged of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Atonement, than the belief in Purgatory and Transubstantiation. Does he show that there are missing links in the chain of Church Tradition, especially at its upper end, where verification ceases to be possible ? He destroys his own credentials along with his opponent's, for his criticisms touch the very sources of Christian history. The answer of the Catholic Church to the question, " Where is the holy ground of the world, where is the real presence of the living God ?" " Here within my precincts, here alone," has, at least, the merit of simplicity, and is easier to test than the Protestant reply, which points to


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a field of divine revelation discoverable only by the telescope half way toward the horizon of history — It carries its supernatural character within it ; it has brought its authority down with it through time : it is the living organism of the Holy Spirit, the Pentecostal dispensation among us still ; and if you ask about its evidence it offers the spectacle of itself."



AN ALTAR LAMP


 H shining meek and shining bright,
 An Altar Lamp, indeed !
 With ready, tender, helpful light
 For groping wanderer's need.

Without the temple walls he stands,
 His heart is sore with sin —
 Through pictured saints' outreaching hands
 Thou beckonest him within.

Into the house of Christ the Lord
 The wanderer's rest from roaming —
 Where robe and ring and festive board
 Await his long-for coming.

Sweet beacon light, what joy is thine !
 I breathe in far-off greeting —
 So near, so near the Heart Divine,
 Thou tremblest with its beating.

More joy to thee will yet be given,
 When comes the Eternal Rest —
 Christ's Altar Lamp on earth, in heaven
 A star upon its breast.

There, shining meeking and shining bright,
 Wilt know, O fair and dear !
 How many a heavenward, leading light,
 Thy flame enkindled here.

KATHERINE E. CONWAY.



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Mary Magdalen

BY A MISSIONARY

WHO and what was she ? Though not sunk to the very depths of degradation, though not seen "now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corners," yet to the world at large, to passers-by, she was a fallen creature, a thing of shame, a sinner publicly known and pointed out as such. To the corrupt world, to the lust of the eyes, to the lust of the flesh, to pride of life, she was a beautiful woman, enticing, ensnaring, fittest food to feed vile and base passions. But to the Saviour of mankind, to Him who came to call not the just, but sinners to repentance, who and what was Magdalen ? An ardent, craving, generous, though erring soul, thirsting for a love she could not get, seeking intensely for happiness where, alas ! she could never find it ; whose loving, passionate nature God alone could completely satisfy and ennoble. Jesus saw but the sinning soul, which He was one day to change into a perfect type and model of true repentance and love.

Jesus was of fame over all Judea. Who had not heard of the Carpenter's Son, the mighty miracle Worker, the Friend of sinners, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of His people ? His fame had reached the ears of even Mary of Magdala. One evening dressed in all her finery, perfumed and jewelled, Magdalen full of evil devices, leaves home in quest of prey, while close by the Son of Man is seeking to save that which was lost. He is surrounded by vast multitudes eagerly listening to His sublime teaching. He is speaking to the hearts of thousands of His children. He is speaking of love and mercy. Drawn by curiosity, perhaps by a lower motive, Magdalen joins the crowd, pushes her way forward, till she is near enough, to mark distinctly the features of the Son of Mary. She is struck by His manly beauty. The most beautiful of the children of men is under the gaze of the sinner. She looks and looks again. She cannot take her eyes

off Him. They are fixed on His lovely countenance. She is carried away by His calm, noble bearing. His heavenly modesty, His meekness, His humility shine forth. His sweet and gentle words of truth and love, His accents of mercy, act like a spell upon her. She is beyond herself. She is drawn closer and closer. With beating heart, with trembling hands clasped before her, with flushed cheeks and wide open eyes, Magdalen is rivetted on Jesus. A moment more and He who called her, He who attracted her, He who bound her to Himself, now "leads captivity captive." He modestly lifts up His loving eyes. They centre on Magdalen. They appeal to her. They touch her deep, deep to the very depths of her inmost soul. They change her nature. Ah ! a God looks on His creature poor, fallen, sinful. Jesus gazes on Magdalen. The sweet Saviour enters into the very heart of the sinner. Grace and mercy drop like gentle dew upon her, a bright light flashes through her intellect, the will is moved and the heart is won. Magdalen bends low her head. She is confused. She staggers for a moment. She looks up. He has gone. She turns back to her miserable home another being, and Angels above sing Praise, Glory, Alleluia ! Follow her as she hurries along, head bent, eyes sad and downcast, hands drooping, movements quick and sudden. She has reached her home. She enters, and rushes up to her room, her room of sin ; sends her maid away ; orders that she be not disturbed : tears away the jewels from her neck and hands, and throws herself on her bed of shame. The hand of God is upon her. She feels uneasy, restless ; she turns now on one side, now on the other. A dull, heavy, oppressive feeling of pain is upon her ; she tosses wildly to and fro. A gnawing has seized her heart ; she is in her agony, the agony of sin ; she writhes in cruel pangs. The worm that dieth not, remorse of conscience, is doing its awful work. Poor, stricken Magdalen ! not a moment of peace. Hours of agony roll over her, alone ! alone ! Not a soul to see her ; not a soul to feel for her ; not a soul to pity her ; not a tear, save, perhaps, the pattering rain ; not a sound, save the mournful howl of the night-dog to add to her misery, her utter wretchedness. That face is haunting her. Those eyes are piercing her. His sweet words of mercy are like molten

lead dropping, singeing, burning. Hear, Ah! hear the utterance of that crushed heart. "Woe, woe is me! mine eyes have drunk iniquity; my lips have drained the fatal cup of poison to the bitter dregs; my hands, these very hands, have been steeped in vice; nay, my body, my whole body, has pressed rottenness and corruption. Ah! who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to mine eyes, that I might weep night and day?" A prey to cruel grief and woe-be-gone, Magdalen dragged through that terrible night and morning dawned but to mock at her misery. The sun is rising. Her dark hours of anguish of sin are to give place to bright years of peace and calm for her Saviour had passed that eventful night in the Garden of Olives, — in prayer, in pleading, in atonement, before His heavenly Father.



SHALL WE IMITATE THEM ?

B. ELLEN BURKE.

WE are all inclined to imitate those whom we love. Some even go so far as to use the same tone of voice, the same manner of walking, and even the same little gestures. This habit of imitation is so great that good fathers and mothers strive to have their children associate with people whose manners, language, morals, and devotions are pleasing to Almighty God.

The books we read influence our lives as much, and sometimes even more than do our daily companions. No one knows this great truth as well as the priest who has the care of souls. He tries to have all the boys and young men of his parish read the life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga or of St. Stanislaus or of Blessed John Berchmans or of any one of the hundreds of young men who gave their lives wholly to God.

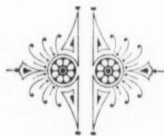
When the young Aloysius Gonzaga was first permitted to receive Holy Communion on Sundays, he was overjoyed. "To receive my Saviour every week! What a

happiness!" How much greater was his joy when he was allowed to receive Him more than once a week.

He had a beautiful practice which it would be well for us to imitate. Every thought, word, and deed of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he offered in thanksgiving to our dear Lord for His kindness in coming to visit him in Holy Communion. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were given to preparation for the reception of the great Guest who was coming the following Sunday.

What a holy and salutary method of distributing his time and making his life consist of acts of love towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. We can easily imagine the great care he exercised in cleansing his heart of every worldly feeling and his mind of every earthly thought. How many times he gathered sweet bouquets for the dear Guest, bouquets of loving ejaculations, kind words, good deeds, holy thoughts, anything that would make his heart beat in closer union with the Heart of Jesus.

When this saintly young man made such careful preparation for Holy Communion and such fervent acts of Thanksgiving after, how should we conduct ourselves? How closely can we imitate him? Father Furniss gives us a wise suggestion when he tells us of the two children who went with cans, to the river, for water. One returned with much more water than the other. Why? Because his dish was much larger than the other. So it is when we receive Holy Communion; the better our preparation, the greater our devotion, the larger our hearts are to receive abundant graces to overflowing.



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Archangel St. Michael

After a picture by Raphael.