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Patron of Catholic Education

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*In essentia - Únitas. In dúbio - Libertas.
In ómnibus - Cáritas.*

EDUCATION

Bishop Giles Butler, O.F.M. D.D.

We, too often and too easily, tend to forget that children are entrusted to their parents by God. Many times we hear people say things that indicate that the children belong to them. Even the abortionist murders can justify the killing of babies, because it is nothing more than tissue and the tissue belongs to the woman and no one else. God, however, is the only one to hold true and absolute possession of our lives and bodies. Our bodies do not belong to us, they belong to God. We are His and not our own.

We see the perfect understanding of this in the Blessed Mother's *Fiat*. She says: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy Will." We must all come to that perfect understanding and acceptance, if we are to find any peace and happiness in this life or in the next.

If our own lives and bodies do not belong to us, so much less do the lives and bodies of our

children belong to us. The children are entrusted to us by God. He has very specific expectations of what He desires us to do with the souls of His children. It is principally for the children that He has made the sacrament of marriage, and made it indissoluble. Parents will have to give an account of what they have done with the souls and bodies of the children entrusted to them by God.

These children given by God, must be returned to Him as saints in Heaven. It is the duty of parents to do all they can to return these children to God in as perfect a state as they can. The world at one time knew and understood that it was the duty of parents to provide for the material needs of the children that they helped to bring into this world. Parents fed, sheltered, clothed and educated their children. This, however, was never enough, parents must also prepare these children for eternity through a good spiritual education and training.

The inversion of right order that began with the first sin of Adam, has progressively grown worse. Today, we find that parents have surrendered their rights and obligations of providing for and caring for their children to “the state.” A Communist style state is too eager to relieve parents of their duties and obligations, and parents are too ready to renounce them. Children are first children of God, then they are children of parents and the family, only lastly are they to be considered children of the State. However, this order has been turned upside down. Parents turn over the care and education of their children at younger and younger ages.

The public school education, at one time began with a child in the first grade, around the age of seven. Then, parents seeking to give an “advantage” to their children would send them to kindergarten before the first grade. Later, we see that they “needed” pre-school. And then, due to the parents’ selfish materialism and the “careers” of the parents, day-care was put into place, so that

the parents now have very little involvement in the development of their children. They are put into the “professional” hands of caregivers and instructors, rather than in the hands of the parents who have come to believe that they are incompetent to perform the duties that God has imposed upon them.

It is true, if the parents are not cooperating with the grace of their vocation they are incompetent. This by no means implies that mercenary “professionals” are any more competent. The key is not to seek out better mercenaries to instruct, or “baby-sit,” our children. The solution to many of the evils of our day is for parents to begin cooperating with the grace of their vocation. Parents need to take the Faith seriously and receive the Sacraments regularly. Then, they need to impress upon their children the need to live in the state of grace, and this is impossible if we do not receive God’s help through Sacramental grace.

After this, the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic,

history, and science, all need to be taught within the confines of the true Faith. They must all work in harmony, because God is the author of them all. To attempt to disassociate them is to teach falsehood and error. We best understand history and the sciences when we see them in reference to an all-powerful Creator and sustainer. The true study of these things strengthens and confirms the belief in God. Just as there are no atheists in foxholes, so there are no true scientists (observers and studiers of the visible world) who are atheists.

After faith and basic instructions are imparted, the formal instructions can be continued even with hirelings, but it is always best to find instructors who have at least some faith.

We should, however, always have a goal and purpose for our education. All too often, we take classes because we do not know what else to do with ourselves. Children go to school because this is what they have to do. There is no goal or motivation other than a piece of paper, called a

diploma, at the end.

Education is good and noble when it serves a higher goal or purpose. It becomes dangerous, however, when it is pursued for baser goals, or even to make it easier to sin and offend God. It seems that after an elementary education, it would be better for most children to go to work as apprentices in the various trades. In this manner, they would obtain all the education that is necessary for them to be useful and productive members of society; but not enough to encourage idleness, along with pride and vanity, which will only lead them to greater and more grievous crimes and sins.

We have perhaps presented the education field in a very negative light. There are many noble and very good instructors, even in our public school system. The problem is that most of these are frustrated in any attempts they make to improve the situation. Their efforts often make them the object of attack by the hirelings who only want to remain as hirelings. Very often, even the parents who

should be grateful, resent that someone has taken an interest in their children and are attempting to teach them discipline along with the other noble virtues, of integrity, honesty, hard work, etc.,

Even Catholics who had the advantage of the parochial education given by religious, often came under the illusion that this freed them from their duties and obligation of educating their children. We have heard many times parents bemoan the way their children have turned out and ask what more could they have done for their children; after all, they gave them the best education possible and sent them to the Catholic schools.

While the instructions given by men and women dedicated to God and the Church by their vows in Religion are superior to a pagan or atheist instructor, these Religious still, are not the parents that God gave to these children for their education.

The schools need to be considered as aids to the parents in fulfilling the parents' obligations to God in

the matter of educating their children. Too often, schools are seen as replacements to the parents. Parents have not done their duty simply by sending their children off to school. Parents need to take an active part in the education of their children. Teachers are there to help and aid the parents, not replace them. The parents will have to answer to God before the teachers will.

We have also observed, that any good instruction that is instilled into children in the classroom, is often undermined by the parents when the children return home for the evening. The bad example of the parents scandalizes and leads to sin with much greater strength than any good that an instructor can impart in a classroom.

Ideally, we would like to see husbands and fathers with such gainful employment that they can support their families with their earnings and still have enough time to become involved and enjoy the mysteries of life with their families. Additionally, we would like to see wives and mothers content in their

vocation and willingly and humbly caring for their home and children as true home makers and home economists (making due with whatever her husband is able to provide). Lastly, we would like to see both mother and father take an active part in the education of their children both secular and religious. This can be done through home schooling and there are many programs to aid in this area.

Children must be not only instructed or educated but they must be trained. There must be an equal, if not greater, emphasis placed upon the formation of the will as there is in the formation of the intellect and memory. Character formation should take the highest place in the training/educating of our children. They must not only know, but be led to practice: obedience, humility, patience, charity, modesty, etc.

There is nothing more beautiful than a family with well-mannered and behaved pious children. Such a family is truly a reflection of the Most Holy Trinity.

Sadly, however, we are often informed that this ideal is not obtainable for one reason or another. In this case, we strongly urge families to draw as near as possible in their situation to the ideal that God has placed before them. We do not live in a perfect world, but we have been commissioned by God to do our part to make this world better. Blindly handing our children over to the State and neglecting our obligations to God does not help us obtain this goal. If we do not become part of the solution we are a part of the problem.

May God enlighten our hearts and minds to the truth and to His will for us; and then give us the strength and courage of conviction to live up to all that He asks of us. To borrow from a prayer of St. Augustine: "Lord, give me what You demand of me; then, demand whatever You will." In this manner, we can make the best of whatever situation we find ourselves in, but especially bring our families closer to the goal that God holds out for us.



STATUS QUO

Father Joseph Noonan, O.F.M.

The dictionary defines **status quo** as *the way things are now*. In other words, the phrase is a way to tell us this is how things are now or to describe the current state of affairs

This phrase is often used to describe the state of affairs in government or politics. This will not be the purpose of this article. The intention of this article will be to examine the state of one's soul and necessity of avoiding tepidity.

One of the more important duties of a good, practicing Catholic is to examine his conscience at least once each day. This practice brings to the forefront of one's mind those faults which may be a constant deterrent to the soul. If the reminders are noted and taken seriously, it should help the individual elevate the soul beyond what is quite often *status quo*.

Far too many Catholics become creatures of bad habits. The two main reasons (this statement is not meant to be all-encompassing) would seem to be a denial of the state of one's soul or laziness.

It is commonly known among spiritual directors that people think better of themselves than the reality. This is why they should not attempt to judge the state of their own soul. The person, with few exceptions, will elevate himself to a greater holiness than is rightly due.

Have you ever met a person who thought they had no need to go to Confession? This is tepidity on a dangerous level. Perhaps, sadly, it is being too satisfied with *status quo*. It is no wonder that so few Catholics reach only the lowest levels of sanctity!

One remembers years ago, the late Bishop Louis speaking about the "pre-Vatican II mediocrity." This may be strange to some simply because there seems to be an erroneous idea that all was just fine prior to Vatican II. Apparently, that was not the situation otherwise Catholics would have recognized the treachery and objected to their faith being undermined.

Satisfaction with spiritual *status quo* is more dangerous than one might realize. It puts the soul to sleep in such a way that the person rarely understands the subtle

poison which exists in the soul. This slumber may be of such a nature that the soul has no real desire to wake up.

Thankfully, Holy Mother Church provides a number of ways in which to either prevent *status quo* or catapult the soul out of it. Holy Mass, the Sacraments and one's prayer life are the core of the means to prevent tepidity. It is up to the Catholic as to how they will make use of these spiritual tools.

It is amazing how different siblings become over time although they have been raised by the same parents in a similar manner. The answer to such a question lies in their use of grace and desire not to be satisfied with *status quo*.

The Church has for many years borne the suffering of religious indifference among the masses, and now, among its own. Individual indifference has been with us since the Fall of Man. It all comes back to whether or not the individual soul is willing to elevate itself beyond the average state of spirituality.

The saints are the best example of those who refused to be satisfied with *status quo*. Their love of God would not allow a stagnant spiritual state of soul. The difference between the saint and

the sinner is quite often a refusal to accept mediocrity. In contrast, it is this mediocrity which condemns far too many souls.

If the Catholic says the simplest prayers on a daily basis with the greatest devotion and humility, it is quite unlikely that *status quo* will infect the soul. Short, fervent prayers, in contrast to long, distracted prayers said more out of routine rather than true zeal are of greater value to the soul.

This lack of devotion at prayer is commonly known as lip service. The serious Catholic ought to strive to avoid such a habitual routine. It does require a greater attention and effort, but the spiritual fruit which results from it is beneficial to the soul.

St. Francis of Assisi would spend entire nights saying the simple prayer "My Lord and My God." It was filled with the greatest fervor and brought many blessings to the *Poverello* and his Order.

Catholics have different names for this issue (*status quo*, tepidity, mediocrity, luke-warmness, etc.), but in the end it comes down to supernatural fervor and zeal to overcome these faults. By making use of the grace which is available to us, one is able to form a foundation which will greatly assist the serious soul.



FRANCISCAN SAINTS

February 9th
Blessed Antony
of Stroncone

Confessor, First Order

Anthony, scion of the ancient and noble family of the Vici, was presented to the world in the year 1381 at Stroncone, a small town in the province of Umbria. He was blessed with very devout parents, who provided their son with an excellent education. Both parents were members of the Third Order and great benefactors of the Franciscan convent at Stroncone; the Franciscan Friar John of Stroncone was the youth's uncle.

From his earliest years, Anthony cherished great love for St. Francis, and under the guidance of his devout parents he emulated him in his love of prayer, retirement, and mortification. Soon after his twelfth birthday, Anthony begged the superior of the Franciscan convent in his native town

for admission into the order. But the superior thought it fit to defer his reception to a later time, because of the boy's youth and delicate constitution. But Anthony was not to be discouraged. He repeated his pleas until the superior, who had refused him on three different occasions, relented at his tears, and gave him a postulant's garb.

Because the boy possessed great talents, it was the intention of the superiors to educate him for the priesthood. But Anthony's inclinations were toward a hidden life; he humbly begged to be received among the lay brothers.

When his year of probation was completed, he was sent to Fiesole, where he was thoroughly initiated in the

spiritual life under the excellent guidance of his uncle John, at that time guardian of the convent there. Later on, Father Thomas of Florence, an eminent director of souls, whom the Church has beatified, was appointed as his second master of perfection. Under his direction Anthony made such progress in virtue that the superiors assigned him, though only a lay brother, as assistant to Blessed Thomas in the education of the novices. He filled this position for three years. Because he himself was a model of all the virtues and was likewise especially inspired by God, he trained a great number of excellent religious in this time.

In the year 1428 he was sent by his superiors to the island of Corsica to assist in the establishment of new convents there. Here, too, he won the hearts of the rugged island folk with his meekness and humility, and he was highly venerated by them. After two years he was sent back to his native country to a quiet convent near Assisi. There he spent the remaining

thirty years of his life in prayer, work, vigils, and fasts, a source of edification and admiration to all the brethren. With the greatest humility and reserve he went out daily to gather alms for the convent; he was extremely happy whenever he could serve the priest at holy Mass.

He died on February 7, 1471, in the eightieth year of his life and his sixty-eighth as a religious. A year after his death, St. James of the Marches had his body removed from the common vault in order to bury it in a separate tomb. The corpse was found incorrupt and exhaling a sweet perfume. "This is a sign from God," exclaimed St. James. But this was only the first of such signs; many others followed by way of remarkable answers to prayer, the restoration of health to the sick, and numerous other graces.

The veneration of Blessed Anthony, which continually increased, was approved for all times by Pope Innocent XI in the year 1687. On

August 21, 1809, the body of the saint was transferred from the convent of St. Damian near Assisi to its native town of Stroncone. It is still incorrupt, and the confidence of the faithful in Anthony's powerful intercession has in no way decreased. His feast is observed on February seventh.

ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Consider how the fruits of a good training manifested themselves in Blessed Anthony. Trained to virtue by both of his parents who were Tertiaries, he rose to still greater heights of perfection under the guidance of his uncle and of Blessed Thomas, and became for many others a teacher and a leader to sanctity. Withal, he remained a model of humility even in his old age. — St. Basil says: "Just as a person may fashion whatever kind of figure his fancy suggests out of soft wax, so are human beings fashioned by education." True, he who has been reared well may still go astray, while a

person whose education has been deficient may turn out well, because God leaves every man his free will, and it is according to it that He will judge him in eternity. But in most instances it is a person's early rearing that determines his future development. — How great a responsibility rests on parents and educators!

Consider what constitutes a Christian education. It will, of course, take into consideration the body and the temporal welfare of the child, but it must above all be concerned with the soul of the child and its eternal salvation. It must be begun at an early age. In his Confessions, in which he tells of his return from an evil course, St. Augustine says: "From my mother's womb I was signed with the Sign of the Cross and strengthened with the salt of Christian doctrine." We must also frequently recommend our children to God and their guardian angels, instill in them a tender devotion to the Mother of God, and encourage them in all that is noble with our own good

example. To many parents, children are merely a kind of plaything to be used for their own gratification. Hence, many an evil inclination takes root in their tender souls: vanity, the desire to attract attention, hypocrisy, nipping sweets, and even graver faults. But our Divine Saviour pronounces a terrible woe on those parents who scandalize even one of His little ones, that is, lead them into evil ways. — As regards the training and education of children, have you always done your duty?

Consider that, as a result of original sin, the root of evil is present in every child. Correction, therefore, and punishment will often be necessary to keep it from following its evil inclinations and deter it from them. "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child," says Holy Writ, "and the rod of correction shall drive it away" (Prov. 22: 15). But punishment may not be inflicted in anger or rancor over the faults the child has committed; it must be meted out from a holy sense of

duty. Remember, too, that all efforts to root out faults in children will be ineffective unless we call on God for His assistance. A mother once complained to St. Francis de Sales that in spite of all the good admonitions she gave her daughter, the latter did not get any better. The saint answered: "It is well that you often speak to your daughter about God, but it is better to speak more frequently to God about your daughter." — With this purpose implore the help of Blessed Anthony, and rest assured that a child of tears and prayers cannot be lost.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

We beseech Thee, O Lord, protect Thy family through the intercession of Blessed Anthony, that it may through his mediation be spared from all adversities, and by the performance of good works be devoted to Thy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.





Saint Anthony Minor Seminary

Dear Young Men,

The world depends upon men to lead and guide it. Our society, in promoting women's equality, has proven to undermine the order established by God. In our world today, women are often, not equal to men, but given greater privileges and opportunities. Women can do just about anything they want to in society and often receive tremendous aid in the pursuit of their goals. Men, however, are expected to be able to make it on their own merit, and often with the deck stacked against them.

Sadly, most of our young men have passively submitted to the degraded and dehumanized role that society now portrays for them. Our men have lost the dignity that God had created them to fulfill. Husbands and fathers, have lost the honor that belongs to them in the divine order of things. Men are portrayed by the media as either: coarse and crude animals that are only concerned with food, sex, sports, and the cruder aspects of life; or as emasculated wimps.

The dignity, honor and respect that are due to them has been lost, as well as their position as head of the family and leader. It is time for men to rise up and reclaim their rightful position in the family and in society. This, however, cannot be obtained unless men begin to live up to their responsibilities. Respect is not just something that is given, but it is something that must be earned. True leadership is formed in noble

souls that are prepared to take up their cross and follow Christ. Unfortunately, most of our young men are not following Christ, but rather the demonic course laid out for them by the demonically inspired world.

The devils suggest to you that physical pleasure is all there is in this world that is worthy to be pursued. They would have you constantly chasing: food, women, and sports; so that you will not realize your obligations or potential to follow Christ. They entice you to remain a child as long as you can so that you do not mature and live the life that God has called you to. It is time to wake up! It is time to grow up! It is time to man up! Let us put off the things of the child and put on true manhood, in the image of Jesus Christ. The Latin word for man is "vir." This word is also the root of our English word "virtue." To be truly manly is to be truly virtuous. It is not weakness or cowardice to be virtuous. It takes a real man to not be ashamed to stand up and be virtuous in our society today. It is the weak and the immature who are filled with wickedness and vice.

The world is in dire need of true men today. Our minor seminary has been put on hold, due to a lack of interest. We think this is a terrible tragedy. We have started a small boarding school for young women, and see that this is truly necessary today, but we need good young men also. We are not looking for boys who are afraid to leave their momma's apron strings, or for those who are looking to run away from the world. Our minor seminary can only continue with young men who are able to man up and carry a daily cross. We need young men who are self-motivated to work and study to achieve true and noble goals that are inspired by God – not the world.

While we are principally eager to see young men, interested in perhaps becoming priests, or entering the religious life; we are also interested in helping good young men to advance themselves spiritually and morally in the world. We need not only good priests and religious, but also good husbands, fathers, business men, etc. in our world today.

If you think you are called by God to this type of formation, and are willing and able, please contact us so that we may explore what may be done with God's help.

*Please write to:
THE SERAPH, 3376 Mount Read Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14616*

DUTIES OF PARENTS

From MY CATHOLIC FAITH

by Louis LaRavoire Morrow

What duty have parents toward their children?

Parents must provide for the spiritual and bodily welfare of their children.

The fourth commandment requires parents to love their children, and care for them in body and soul. Their duties include provision for their children's religious and moral training, bodily needs, education, discipline, manners, etc.

1. Parents must provide a minor with food and clothing, guard him from sickness and accidents, and give him suitable play and exercise. It is the duty of parents to exercise personal supervision, and not leave everything to household help. God gave children to parents, not to nursemaids.

Likewise, those institutions (called nurseries) where even babies may be left all day, however good they may be, and even if they are under the supervision of Sisters, should be resorted to only for grave reasons.

2. It is the duty of Catholic parents to send their child to a Catholic school. Secular or non-Catholic schools where the Catholic religion is not taught may be tolerated only when the diocesan bishop gives permission on account of prevailing circumstances.

At home, the parents should supervise the child's studies. They should support the authority of the teacher, in order to teach the child proper respect for authority. It is not edifying for parents to criticize or ridicule the teacher in the child's presence. The evil effects of such conduct on the child can hardly be overestimated.

3. Parents must provide for a child's future by giving him an education that will develop his mind and character. They should also enable him to acquire some training, trade, or profession by which he may later become self-supporting.

Parents who give a child all the food, candy, toys, and clothing he asks for only indulge him, and show false love. Girls should be

made to dress with modesty. Parents have no obligation to support their grown-up children. It is a bad practice to continue supporting older children, for in that way they become lazy, depending on the parents.

How should parents provide moral and religious training?

Parents should begin early to give their child religious training.

As soon as the child can speak, he should be taught the ordinary prayers, and told of God and holy things. It is a very praiseworthy custom to have family prayers, in which all of the family participate.

1. A child should be made to say his morning and night prayers regularly. He should be taught his catechism and prepared for Confession and first Holy Communion; he should be made to attend Mass, and perform all his religious duties faithfully.

2. Parents must exercise continual vigilance, to guard the child from moral evil.

As the child grows older, he should not be allowed excessive liberty, especially with regard to the company he keeps, and to staying out at night. Parents should always know where the child is, who his com-

panions are, what he reads, what shows he sees.

3. Parents must correct the child's faults, taking care not to be either harsh or overindulgent. They must act with justice as well as mercy. They must treat all their children equally, and show no favoritism.

Parents who fly into a rage about a fault one day and laugh at the same fault another day can hardly expect their child to respect them. Parents who are too "good" to correct, chide, or punish a child who has committed grave faults are either stupid or lazy. They are bad parents, failing in their duties to God.

4. Parents must give good example to the child. Deeds are more powerful than words. If the parents neglect the sacraments, Mass, and other religious duties, they cannot well expect their child to be faithful.

Some parents think that just because they send their child to a good Catholic school, they have no further responsibility over his training. However good a school, God did not give a child into its independent care, but into that of parents. Parents must train their children not only by precept, but chiefly by example. By the fruit the tree is known.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution in England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

CHAPTER IX

BLESSED JOHN FOREST, O. F. M.

Continued

Before relating the details of the glorious martyrdom that crowned the beautiful life of Bl. John Forest, we must examine whether he verbally abjured the four articles and declared his willingness to do public penance at St. Paul's cross, as Camm seems inclined to believe.²⁵ The only authorities for this story are Hall and Wriothesley. Hall writes: "He was after sundry examinations, convinced and confuted, and gladly submitted himself to abide the punishment of the Church." Wriothesley's testimony reads: "John Forest, Friar Observant, Doctor of Divinity (was) adjured for heresie on the eighth day of the month of May, at Lambeth, before the most reverend father in God, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterburie, with other. . . The articles (were) subscribed with his own hand (and he) sworn and abjured on the same, and after sworn again to abide such injunction and penance as he should be enjoined by the said court."

This twofold testimony, so derogatory to the fair name of Forest exerts such a pressure on Camm that he is unable to believe the affair a "mere fabrication," since "all other chroniclers support it."

In the first place, it is not true that *all* other chroniclers support it. "Not only," says Stone, "are Sander and Bouchier silent as to the charge, but Foxe, always so ready to make much of any tale to the discredit of Catholics, makes no mention of any projected penance at St. Paul's Cross."²⁶ Neither does Collier seem to know anything of the affair. He simply says, "By what law they could stretch his (Forest's) crime to heresy is hard to discover, for he was tried only for dissuading his penitents in confession from owning the King's Supremacy."²⁷ Of more modern historians whose works

25 "Though the articles," Camm remarks, "were signed in writing, the 'abjuration' or 'submission' was by word of mouth only. If it (the written abjuration)," he adds, "could have been produced (by Latimer on the morning of Forest's martyrdom), it certainly would have been" (P. 310' footnote).

26. Stone, p. 64.

27. Gasquet, Vol. I, p. 197.

we have been able to consult, Leon, Guerin, Hope, Gasquet, Thaddeus, Domenichelli simply ignore the story, Parkinson and Spillmann discard it as incredible, while Dodd and Stone take it up and refute it.

But, who are Hall and Wriothesley whose testimony Camm dares not discard as a "mere fabrication"? Hall was a contemporary of Henry VIII; up till 1533, he wrote on passing events. When he ceased to write, Richard Grafton, a bitter Protestant, indiscriminately published what Hall had collected, whether authenticated or not.²⁸ "The part relative to Forest," as Camm himself remarks, "may have been based upon some political pamphlet of the time."²⁹ Hall, therefore, as Stone contends, "is not responsible for the statement referring to Forest," and since Grafton declares he "added nothing of his own," the supposed account of Hall "and the story told by Wriothesley four years later, have one and the same origin, the real author remaining incognito."³⁰ Why Wriothesley repeated the libel is obvious. "For he had no leaning towards the religious orders, but went entirely with Henry in his ruthless nationalism and greed."³¹ Thus the extrinsic evidence supporting the story of Forest's verbal abjuration is extremely weak. It is solely based on the assertion of men whose testimony is, to say the least, questionable for the very reason that they were contemporaries of the friar whom they basely maligned and of the

king whose cause they sought to further. Hence we fail to understand why Camm finds it so very hard to "escape the conclusion that, whatever Forest may have done or said on May the 8, he did not 'confess the faith' with credit to himself."³²

From intrinsic reasons it becomes still more evident that the story is in very deed "a mere fabrication," hatched in the biased mind of some obscure political agitator, then published as Hall's statement by a malicious bigot, and finally repeated by one who was anything but fair in matters that concerned the persecuted friars. How, we ask, can this supposed momentary weakness of the heroic martyr be reconciled with his characteristic constancy and attested learning? If four years before he steadfastly refused to admit the king's supremacy in matters spiritual, is it credible that he would have acted less firmly now when he saw that clear and express tenets of his holy faith were at stake, and when he realized what terrible consequences the least weakness on his part would necessarily entail on himself, on his brethren, and on the whole Church in England? Had he not been among the first openly to oppose the king in his beastly passion and towering pride? Had he not seen FF. Peyto and Elstow

28. See Stone, p. 50.

29. Camm, Vol. I, p. 325.

30. Stone, p. 50.

31. Stone, p. 63, footnote 5.

32. Camm, Vol. I, p. 309.

go into exile, and FF. Rich and Risby mount the scaffold for the sake of truth and justice? Had he not, like a solicitous father, warned Queen Catherine against "that pestilential teaching of the heretics?" Was not his intrepid zeal in her cause the ever-recurring refrain of Lyst's letters to Cromwell? And now we should believe that either puzzled by difficulties or baffled by fear he wavered and at last submitted, and that in a cause for which he himself had already suffered untold hardships. Indeed, he was advanced in years and broken in health, but none the less prudent and fearless. Even granting that, as Camm thinks, he was "puzzled by the difficulty of a problem before him," only a gross misconception of the friar's character can lead one to believe that because he was puzzled he gave in. No, in that case, he would evidently have demanded a written statement of the four articles together with sufficient leisure to study and weigh the fourth one, which on account of its studied ambiguity at first sight presented difficulties. Never, at least, would he have abjured them either singly or collectively in their proposed form.

That his imprisonment after May 8 was less severe than before, is by no means certain. In his letter to Cromwell, Latimer says only that he has heard this to be the case, and does not know "whether through the fault of the sheriff or the goaler, or both."³³

Then, if he did adjure, why did not his enemies make capital out of it for the purpose of discrediting him in the eyes of the people? Moreover, why was he sent back to Newgate at all? Would not the convent of the Grey Friars, quite subservient to the will of the king, have been a far more suitable place to bring him to a full submission? Finally, why did not Latimer on the morning of the martyrdom when Forest publicly branded him as an apostate, retaliate by adducing this supposed verbal abjuration of his fearless opponent? Such an exposure would certainly have gone far toward rehabilitating the confused bishop, and would have dealt the fair reputation of the heroic friar a telling blow in the eyes of the vast concourse of people. But Latimer made no mention of it whatever. In fact, as we shall see, the manner of his procedure during the disputation was entirely that of a man straining every nerve to wean his opponent from principles which he had never denied, and which he was not likely to deny now though the most dreadful tortures and death stared him in the face.

Confronted by this overwhelming evidence, we do not hesitate to maintain that the story of Forest's verbal abjuration of the four articles is wholly "a mere fabrica-

33. The letter is quoted by Camm, Vol. I, p. 312; also by Stone, p. 65.

tion" of his enemies, a base libel on his name and on the Order to which he belonged. Dodd must have had chroniclers like Hall and Wriothesley in mind when he wrote, "Now laying *all* circumstances together, what several (not *all*) historians have reported, concerning this religious man's behaviour, will, I presume, be judged rather calumnies than real fact."³⁴

Like one whose most cherished desire was about to be fulfilled, the valiant champion of truth and justice rejoiced on learning that in a few days he would be led forth to die for the faith. Early Wednesday morning, May 22, Cromwell's minions entered the martyr's dungeon. Binding his hands and feet, Fr. Marcos tells us, they fastened the aged friar to a hurdle and dragged him from Newgate through the streets of the city to the suburb Smithfield. What tortures must have racked his feeble and emaciated frame on this last painful journey. How he must have prayed for strength when arriving at the place of martyrdom he beheld from his bed of pain the singular spectacle before him and heard the murmurings of the surging multitude. From Garcias we learn that a proclamation had been issued in the city, inviting the people to attend Latimer's sermon, which would begin at eight o'clock. Wriothesley, an eyewitness of the

scene, tells us that above ten thousand citizens had assembled to see the final struggle of one whose fearless opposition to the king had attracted nation-wide attention.³⁵

Within sight of the convent and church of the Grey Friars, on a plot of ground closed in by a railing, stood two platforms; one of these was supplied with a chair for the martyr, while the other had a sort of pulpit, from which Latimer was to preach. Near the martyr's platform was seen a huge wooden statue of St. Dervel Gadarn (Darvell Gatheren). It was so large that eight men could scarcely carry it. The people of Llanderfel, in Wales, had held it in great veneration on account of the miracles said to have been wrought through the intercession of the Saint. An old prophecy had it that one day the statue would set fire to a forest. Hence, when Ellis Price after confiscating it wrote to Cromwell on April 6, 1538, for further instructions, the spiteful minister, anxious to ridicule the Catholic veneration of images, ordered the statue to be brought to London and to be used at the burning of Bl. John Forest. "It is a singular fact," Thaddeus

34. Dodd, *Church History of England* (Brussels, 1737), Vol. I, p. 237.

35. See Stone, p. 66, on the authority of Garcias, a Spanish chronicler and "undoubtedly an eye-witness of the martyrdom."

observes, "that those who laughed at the prophecy, ridiculed miracles, and denied the truth of the Catholic religion, now became, as it were, instruments in the hands of God to bring about at least the apparent, if not the true, fulfillment of the old prediction."³⁶ From the gibbet erected in another corner of the enclosure, dangled a heavy chain, while a store of fagots and straw lay beneath it. Above it was fastened a placard bearing in large letters the following blasphemous doggerel:

*David Darvell Gatheren,
As saith the Welshman,
Fetched outlaws out of Hell;*

*Now he is come with spere and
shilde,
In harness to burn in Smithfielde,
For in Wales he may not dwell.*

*And Forest the Friar,
That obstinate liar,
That willfullie shall be dead,*

*In his contumacie
The gospel doth denie,
The King to be supreme head.*

Near the gate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, stood another long platform. This was intended for the Lords of the Privy Council and for the city mayor and other men of civil authority and influence.

On reaching Smithfield, the exe-

cutioners immediately loosened their victim from the hurdle and led him to the platform, which he was ordered to mount. A solemn hush fell on the vast multitude when at a given signal Latimer ascended the pulpit and began his defense of royal supremacy. No doubt, he had prepared his sermon well and left no argument untouched that might draw the friar from the faith for which he was ready to die. The martyr was aware that he would not get a fair hearing; hence during the faithless bishop's tirade against the Pope, he prudently kept silence.³⁷ At last, after preaching over an hour, Latimer turned to him and asked in what state he would die. At this Forest arose and with a loud, clear voice replied "that if an angel should come down from Heaven and show him any other thing than he had believed all his life time past he would not believe him, and that if his body should be cut joint after joint, or member after member, brent, hanged, or what pain soever might be done to his body, he would never turn from his old sect of this Bishop of Rome." Then facing Latimer he chid him saying, "that seven years ago he durst not have made such a

36. Thaddeus, p. 67.

37. According to Fr. Marcos, Forest tried to speak, but the heretics made so much noise that he could not be heard. See Camm, Vol. I, p. 316.

sermon for his life."³⁸

But Latimer had long since learned to stifle the voice of conscience. Hence he coldly disregarded the well-meaning rebuke of his former friend.

"Dr. Forest," he urged, "above all I am astonished that thou, whom I hold for one of the most learned men in the realm, should be accused of being a Papist, and I refuse to believe it till I hear it from thine own mouth."

"Thou has known me for many years, Latimer," the friar calmly retorted, "and I am still more astonished at thee, that for the pomps of the world thou hast endangered thine own soul. Dost thou not recollect what thou didst write me against the emperor, when he was against Rome and the Pope, and how thou with all thy voice didst denounce them all as heretics? Recollect how we, the doctors of the Church, considered the act and condemned it, and decided that those who did it should be excommunicated. What wert thou then, Latimer, a Papist or a heretic?"³⁹

"I am no heretic," shouted the bishop, quite discomfited, "but rather was I then deceived, and am now enlightened with the Holy Spirit, and if thou wilt call upon thy better self, thou also wilt receive the light, for thou art now blind."

This duplicity and perversion deeply pained the man of God. How he longed to reclaim this erring fellow priest, who in his mad pursuit after royal prefer-

ments had wantonly strayed from the path of duty.

"Oh, Latimer," he pleaded, "I think thou hast other things in thy heart! But since the king has made thee from a poor student into a bishop, thou art constrained to say this. Open thou thine eyes; take example by that holy Bishop of Rochester and the blessed Thomas More, who renounced the goods of this world, and chose rather to die than to lose their immortal souls."

"O God," cried Latimer, at a loss what to say, "how great are the snares of the Bishop of Rome, who has kept men in darkness for so many years."

Evidently, he was engaged in a losing game with his doughty adversary. To save himself and his cause in the eyes of the people, he must play a different card.

"And look thou, Dr. Forest," he hastily continued, "that thou mayest see the snares and the falsity of his saints, they shall bring hither one of the idols of the Bishop of Rome."

At these words, the statue of St. Dervel was brought and placed on the platform occupied by the friar.

"Look, Dr. Forest," repeated Latimer, pointing to the image, "this is one of the idols of the

38. Wriothesley, quoted by Camm, Vol. I, p. 316.

39. Here was Latimer's chance to make a count in his own favor by referring to the martyr's recent abjuration, had such an abjuration actually been made.

Bishop of Rome, and for my own part," he added contemptuously, "I think the priests ought to have given the Bishop of Rome half of his profits."

The blessed martyr could not refrain from laughing.

"I am not surprised," he said, "that what thou sayest should have happened, for the priests are so greedy, that they well might invent that, and much more; but do not think that the Pope sanctions any such thing."

Sorely vexed at the obvious discomfiture of Latimer and anxious to see Forest in his torments, Cromwell abruptly terminated the disputation.

"My Lord Bishop," he exclaimed, "I think you strive in vain with this stubborn man. It would be better to burn him."

Far from intimidating the intrepid friar, the minister's words rather served to embolden him.

"Gentlemen," he said defiantly, "if I were willing to sacrifice my soul, it would not have been necessary to come to this place."

"Take him off at once," commanded Cromwell, pale with rage.

Unspeakable joy thrilled the brave soul of Forest when he realized that at last the long looked for moment had come. Turning toward the three men still supporting the statue, he smiled and said playfully:

"Brethren, I pray ye, do not drop

it on me, for my hour is not yet come."

Wholly intent on overcoming the constancy of the valiant friar, Latimer once more addressed him. There was a suspicion of sadness and sympathy in his voice that showed how his own soul was racked with remorse.

"Brother Forest," he pleaded, "I beseech thee to turn. The king will give thee a good living, for I know full well that if thou wishest thou art well able to give doctrine to great numbers."

But compared with the promise of eternal life, this world with all its goods had no value in the eyes of the blessed martyr.

"All the treasures of the world, Latimer," he replied, "will not move me from my will; but I much desire to speak with one of the gentlemen here."

Thereupon, the Duke of Norfolk arose to go over to where Forest stood. Cromwell, however, intercepted him.

"My Lord Duke," he commanded, "take your seat again; if he wants to say anything, let him say it out that we can all hear."

Though mortified at this public indignity, the Duke was constrained to obey. He well knew that Cromwell was all-powerful with the king. When Forest perceived that no one would be per-

mitted to speak with him in private, he turned quietly toward his enemies and making the sign of the cross, exclaimed "Gentlemen, with this body of mine deal as you wish."⁴⁰

Provoked beyond measure, Cromwell gives the sign. The throng of spectators gaze in breathless silence at the venerable friar, who offers no resistance when the executioners drag him down from the scaffold and lead him to the gibbet. Heedless of the torments he knows are in store for him, the dauntless champion raises his eyes to heaven and declares, "Neither fire, nor fagot, nor scaffold shall separate me from Thee, O Lord."⁴¹ The executioners tear off his outer habit, gird him about the waist and under the arms with the iron chain⁴² that dangles from the gibbet, and draw him upwards, so that he hangs suspended over the straw and fagots. These they now ignite, a dense volume of smoke ascends, and soon the inhuman torture begins. Tongues of fire lick the martyr's feet. Racked with pain, he involuntarily raises them and clutches the scaffold; but only for a moment; and as if repenting of the act, he willingly lets go his hold and suffers the flames to do their work. Fed with chips hewn from the statue of St. Dervel, the heat becomes well-nigh unbearable, while the heartless executioners

grasp their halberts and with their aid bring the martyr into a swinging motion. A strong wind sweeps over Smithfield and fans the flames to one side, so that they reach only his lower extremities. Though untold agony convulses the martyr's body, his soul is rapt in sweet communion with Him who died on the cross to save mankind. Above the crackling of the fire and the low murmurs of the bystanders, he is heard praying for strength and perseverance; beating his breast with his hands, he cries, "In the shadow of thy wings I will trust, until iniquity pass away."

Two hours have now elapsed. Still dangling from the gibbet, oppressed by the scorching heat and smoke, the man of God is patiently waiting for death to end his fearful sufferings. The spectators are filled, some with disgust

40. The above dialog and details are taken from Garcias's narrative as quoted by Stone, pp. 66 seq., and by Camm, Vol. I, pp. 317 seq.

41. Bouchier, p. 48.

42. Thaddeus, p. 69. Sander (ed. 1585, p. 90—ed. 1690, p. 243) says that two chains were fastened round the martyr's arms. Bouchier (p. 49) speaks only of one chain, which was secured round his waist (circa ventrem). "One would like to think," remarks Camm (p. 320), "that the martyr was hung by the middle, in order that he might be the sooner suffocated, but it is to be feared that the motive was to make him look ridiculous."

at the obstinate friar, many with sympathy for him. At last, the executioners approach the gibbet and loosen its supports, so that it crashes with its burden into the greedy flames. At this, the heroic martyr prays aloud, "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice. Bow down thy ear to me: make haste to deliver me." Amid the crackling of the flames, his prayers grow fainter and fainter. Then at last, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit"—the martyr's voice is heard no more⁴³—his beautiful soul freed from its prison of clay has ascended to the mansions of unending bliss to receive the martyr's crown and to join the triumphant ranks of those "who have despised the life of the world, and have arrived at the reward of the kingdom, and have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb."

It is related that while Bl. John Forest was in the midst of his torments, a snow white dove was seen fluttering about the gibbet and settling at last on the head of the martyr. Furthermore, we are told, the Saint's right hand, mouth and tongue remained untouched by the fire, "as if God," remarks Thaddeus, "would thus show his approval of all he had written and spoken in defense of the Faith."⁴⁴ Nothing certain is known regarding the whereabouts of the martyr's relics. Father Thaddeus

thinks it is "most probable that the mortal remains of Father Forest still lie hidden at Smithfield, near the corner of St. Bartholomew's Hospital opposite the gate of the ancient priory,"⁴⁵ where, according to Garcias, they were interred on the day of his glorious martyrdom. Already in 1638, Fr. Arturus a Monasterio thus commemorated him in his *Franciscan Martyrology*: "At London, in England, memory of Blessed John Forest, an apostolic man and martyr, who, by order of Henry VIII, King of England, was cast into prison for the defense of the Catholic Faith, and after a cruel imprisonment, sentenced to death; being suspended on a gibbet, a slow fire was lighted at his feet and he was inhumanly roasted, until at length, being all consumed by the fire, he went up to heaven victorious." On December 9, 1886, Pope Leo XIII declared him blessed together with the Tertiary Martyr Thomas More and fifty-two others, who between the years 1535 and 1583 shed their blood in England in defense of the faith. The feast of Bl. John Forest is celebrated annually on May 22, throughout the Franciscan Order.

43. Thaddeus, p. 70.

44. Thaddeus, p. 71. See also Guerin, *Le Palmier Seraphique*, Vol. V, p. 470.

45. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, p. 464.



Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy and Boarding School

Ad sanctificándum ánimae et virtútibus cultiváte.

Dear Young Ladies,

We observe that a nation is as moral as the women in it. Without a strong and moral womanly presence, society degrades even below the level of brute animals. Women, even as the weaker sex, have the power to inspire great and noble virtues into society, or to inspire the basest and grossest selfishness along with the vilest passions.

Our society has taught women that they are equal to men and has allowed them to lower themselves to the level of the basest and vilest of men. We would like to counteract this by giving you the opportunity to become a positive force for goodness and virtue in your life and the lives of all around you.

If you are willing to listen to the voice of God in your conscience and follow Him with all your heart and soul, we believe that you can be that positive force in society that was once referred to in terms such as: “the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world.” This we believe is the greatest and grandest vocation of every woman, turning society toward virtue and God. With this in mind we invite you to consider entering our boarding school.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy is a boarding school looking for students who are willing and eager to learn. We offer a

humble, but spiritually rich and rewarding environment for those who are mature enough to work hard and pursue their goals in this life, but most importantly the spiritual goals of sanctity.

Our young ladies pursue their studies at their own pace, not with a goal of completing so many lessons, but rather with the desire to learn the subjects at hand. Our principle goal is to sanctify our souls, and secondarily to cultivate the virtues that are so much needed in the women of our world today.

We have a mature woman, who has volunteered to oversee and assist our ladies in the many areas that need a woman's touch. She has our young ladies assist in the planning and preparing of meals, as well as the shopping and the day-to-day upkeep of our home and school. She takes care of the assignment of household chores as well as chaperoning our many field trips and outings. The Rochester Public Market has become one of our favorites.

We do not desire to force a vocation upon anyone, but welcome all who are interested to further investigate such a possibility, if it is God's will. We would like to help our students discern what God's will is for them.

We hope and pray that those who come to us may be better prepared to spiritually meet the demands of life in whatever vocation God may call them to. If this type of environment and study appeals to you, please contact us through:

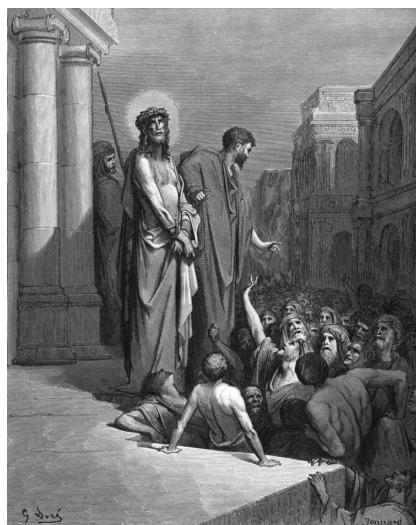
THE SERAPH,
3376 Mount Read Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14616

Our daily schedule begins with:

- ☞ Holy Mass at 7:00, followed by breakfast,*
- ☞ Religion at 8:30,*
- ☞ Mathematics at 9:30,*
- ☞ Latin at 10:30,*
- ☞ Lunch at 11:30,*
- ☞ English (grammar, spelling, composition) at 12:30,*
- ☞ Literature at 1:30;*
- ☞ History/Science (alternate days) at 2:30.*

On Wednesdays our mornings consist of Sewing, Voice Lessons, and in the afternoon Piano Lessons taught by local professionals. Twice a week after lessons we volunteer at a local nursing home.

The Rochester area is rich in the performing arts which gives us many opportunities to better our cultural appreciation.



OUR BEST FRIEND

Christian Pesch, S.J.
Translated from the German
by Bernard A. Hausman,

CHAPTER XX

Grief of the Heart of Jesus at the Indifference of Men to Salvation
"The wisdom of the flesh . . . is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be" (Rom. 8:7):

1. *The cause of men's indifference to salvation is worldly self-love.* In his treatise, *The City of God*, St. Augustine tells us that there are two kingdoms, a heavenly kingdom and an earthly kingdom, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil. The motivating principle of the subjects of the earthly kingdom is frank love of self carried even to contempt of God; that of the subjects of the heavenly kingdom, unreserved love of God even to contempt of self.¹ In another work the saint distinguishes between the virtue of charity and concupiscence; he defines charity as a tendency of the soul which strives to enjoy

God for His own sake and all else for God's sake; concupiscence, on the other hand, as a tendency of the soul which seeks to enjoy creatures for their own sake without any reference to God.² Holy Writ distinguishes in the same sense between love of God and love of the world (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15), between serving God and serving Mammon (cf. Lk. 16:13).

Since we know on the authority of Christ Himself that the one service excludes the other, it follows logically that the children of this world, who are attached with every fiber of their hearts to earthly treasures and pleasures, have no appreciation for heavenly and divine realities. Every man must choose between finite

¹St. Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 1, 14, c. 28.

²St. Augustine, *De doctrina christ.*, 1, 3, c. 10, n. 16.

and infinite possessions. The children of this world thoughtlessly choose the finite and strive to be happy without God.

A very common argument by which many deceive themselves and which has caused the loss of many souls, may be summed up in these words: Let us first enjoy the world; there will be time enough to serve God later. Men who argue this way take as their motto: The best for the world, the rest for God. They do not seem to suspect that they are insulting God by such conduct, or if they do, they seem to consider it a matter of very little importance. Yet every time that men insult our Saviour by harboring such despicable sentiments, He feels anew the pain that He felt when the Jews cried out: "Away with Him. Give us Barabbas."

In the gospel narrative we read of the obdurate Jews: "They could not believe" (Jn. 12:39). Why could they not believe? Because of their worldly spirit, their inordinate desire for wealth, honor, and pleasure. Wealth in itself is no obstacle to salvation, but inordinate attachment to wealth to the point of slavery or the service of Mammon is. To a man who devotes all his time and energy to the acquisition of wealth, heavenly treasures seem worthless, be-

cause they cannot be deposited in a bank and interest drawn on them. Our Lord, on one occasion, reminded His listeners that they were merely the stewards appointed by God of these earthly treasures, and warned them that if they did not use them to gain friends in heaven, and proved untrustworthy in their stewardship, God would certainly withhold from them greater spiritual treasures. The Pharisees began to ridicule Him for this. Why? Because they were covetous, the Evangelist tells us. But Jesus said to them: "You justify yourself before men, but God sees your heart, and what He sees there is an abomination to Him" (cf. Lk. 16:9 ff.). Whatever is an abomination to the Lord is grief to the heart of Jesus, who came into the world to transform men from objects of loathing to God into objects of the divine good pleasure.

Christ assigns yet another reason why so many Jews failed to accept Him and His doctrine. He said: "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. You seek only to be honored by men; whether you are also deserving of honor from God, concerns you not" (cf. Jn. 5:42-44). God had determined to exalt this people above all peoples in the kingdom of true, divine glory, and now He finds that they desire

nothing but the worthless plaudits of men. Thus God's designs were frustrated. The leaders of the people and with them the great masses of the people were entirely engrossed in worldly pursuits and ambitions; they were satisfied with a purely external worship of God, and prided themselves on their descent from Abraham, as though this in itself were sufficient to insure for them all the treasures of the Messianic kingdom which was to come. Our Saviour calls them "blind, and leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:14): This is the reason why this blind nation with its blind leaders plunged into the abyss of unbelief and of the judgment of God; it was a consequence of their worldliness. What great grief this caused the heart of our Saviour!

2. *Our Saviour has told us forcefully what He thinks of love of the world.* "But woe to you rich! for you are now having your comfort. Woe to you who are filled! for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you! In the selfsame manner their fathers used to treat the prophets" (Lk. 6:24-26). This fourfold woe is hurled against those who seek to satisfy the hunger of their souls for happiness with earthly possessions, pleasures, and honors, and thus stifle in their souls

all desire for divine, eternal treasures. "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven," our Saviour said, when the rich young man departed from Him sorrowfully, because he did not have the moral strength to accept the loving invitation of our Lord to distribute his wealth among the poor and in poverty follow the poor Saviour (cf. Mt. 19:21 ff.). What would have become of this young man had he followed the divine call? Probably we should honor him today as a saint. But the unfortunate youth sacrificed such signal honor and the heavenly treasure promised him by our Lord, because he was a slave of wealth and was unable to break the chains which bound him to this service.

Such worldliness was also the reason why the greater portion of the Jewish nation was excluded from the heavenly banquet while the heathens, and more especially those among them of the poorer classes, as St. Paul tells us (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26 ff.), came in crowds and sat down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt. 8: 11). Our Lord describes this for us in the parable of the great supper which a rich man prepared and to which he had invited many. The rich man is God, the supper is the kingdom of heaven (cf. Lk. 14:15, 16), and the invitation to the banquet was proffered by all

the prophets down to John the Baptist (cf. Mt. 11:13). Then the kingdom of heaven itself came with the coming of Jesus Christ and this kingdom will be consummated in the heavenly banquet. The apostles and disciples were sent to tell the Jews, who had already been invited, that the kingdom of God was at hand (cf. Mt. 10:6; Lk. 10:9). But those invited declared that they had other concerns and could spare no time for the kingdom of God. What were these other interests? One had acquired property and had to inspect it. Another was engrossed in his work; he had bought oxen and wished to try them. A third declared briefly, "I have married and hence cannot come" (Lk. 14:18 ff.). These three excuses all meant substantially: "we have our satisfaction in earthly treasure and no desire for the heavenly banquet." This is the attitude of the children of this world. But there are many who are poor and miserable and therefore not attached to earthly pleasures. These the rich man summoned from the streets and lanes of the city, from the highways and hedges of the country, and they came full of joy and filled his house (cf. Lk. 14:21 ff.).

But we must not draw the conclusion that all the rich are excluded. Our Saviour found friends also in their ranks. We need but recall Matthew, Nico-

demus, Joseph of Arimathea, the families of Lazarus and of Zacchaeus. For wealth itself is not opposed to Christ, but only slavery to it. A wealthy man who is not a slave of his wealth can easily become a friend of God. Thus we read: "A certain rich man of Arimathea, Joseph by name, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus" (Mt. 25:57). He was "a good and just man . . . who likewise was looking for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 23:50, 51). On the other hand, there are also poor people of whom it is written that they have not and covet; they envy others for the things they themselves cannot obtain (cf. Jas. 4:2). Hence, anyone who gives his heart to the world, whether he be rich or poor, cannot give his heart to our Saviour; and anyone who desires to give it to Him, must first strip himself of all love of the world. We cannot serve two masters. Slaves of the world are not the friends of Christ.

St. James tells us: "Adulterers, do you not know that the friendship of this world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of this world, becomes an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). He calls apostasy from God, with consequent devotion to the world, adultery. This is also the language of the prophets (for example, Ps. 72:27), and of Christ, who calls the Jewish nation of His day "an evil and adulterous genera-

tion" (Mt. 12:39), which denies God by its works and as a child of the devil does the devil's will (cf. Jn. 8:44, 55). Years ago they had been possessed by an evil spirit, the devil of idolatry. He was exorcised in the Babylonian captivity. But in his place seven other evil spirits worse than the first took possession of them, so that they rejected their Messiah and put Him to death, and eventually reached such a pitch of insane frenzy that shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans they even began to murder one another. What a terrible punishment — but what a just one — for their apostasy from God and from Christ and for their thoroughly worldly spirit. Christ had foretold that in the case of this wicked generation the last things, namely before the repression of the Jewish revolt by Rome, would be worse than the first had been, before the nation was led captive to Babylon (cf. Mt. 12:45).

3. *The grief of the heart of Christ at the worldly spirit of His people* was so great that it forced tears to His eyes (cf. Lk. 19:41). For worldliness is an evil which opposes an insurmountable obstacle to His desire to bring salvation to the world. Our Saviour desires the hearts of men, the love of men. Hence He warns us: "Do not store up for yourselves corruptible treasures which may be destroyed or stolen, but rather by

your good deeds lay up to yourselves incorruptible treasures in heaven." And why is this so important? "For where thy treasure is, there thy heart also will be" (Mt. 6:21). A heart which seeks all its joy in the treasures of earth finds no consolation in God and feels no desire to possess Him. Heaven is the portion only of those who seek it, who strenuously strive to attain it (cf. Mt. 7:13, 14). But this is impossible for a heart filled with love of the world, for no man can go in opposite directions at one and the same time. As long as we do not subordinate creatures to our last end but seek them for their own sake, they are a leaden weight which keeps us on the earth and prevents our rising above it.

This is the reason why our Saviour exhorts us: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and its justice and all that you need of earthly goods shall be added unto you" (cf. Mt. 6:33). By the word "first" our Saviour here designates not the order of time but that of importance. He says in effect: "The kingdom of heaven must be your first, your highest aim, and you must subordinate all else to this. You must not have another end beside this, but must consider and use all else only as a means to this end." Let us abstract now from those who have no faith and do not care to get to heaven, and consider only the

aims and actions of those who would gladly after death share in eternal beatitude. Do not most of them lead lives which are ordered as if Christ had said: "Seek ye first the treasures and pleasures of the world; and the kingdom of heaven will be added unto you"?

But they will be disillusioned as the rich man in the Gospel was disillusioned. This man clothed himself in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day, foolishly convinced that since he was a descendant of Abraham he would surely share the kingdom of heaven. What must have been his thoughts when he found that he had not been called from the pleasures of life to the joys of heaven, but had been consigned to the flames of hell? He pleaded piteously with his father Abraham. But the answer was: "Son, remember that you received good things in your lifetime; now only torment remains for you" (cf. Lk. 16:19 ff.). This man is not accused of any grave crimes; he merely neglected to strive after heaven by the exercise of justice, that is by doing good deeds. His guilt consisted in the fact that he knew no other use for his wealth than to spend it for his own comfort and pleasure. His punishment was eternal torment in hell. This is natural consequence of that love of earth which would gladly renounce all claim to the possession

of God if only this material, pleasurable life were eternal.

Every Christian worthy of the name is, of course, prepared to give up material goods insofar as they are incompatible with the love of God. But to purify our hearts from all earthly desires to such an extent that no desire or deed is influenced by inordinate love of self is difficult indeed. This is a state toward which we must ceaselessly tend, but which we shall attain only gradually. The devotion to the Sacred Heart is an excellent means to this end. This we learn from the life of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. She admits that all earthly things had become matters of indifference to her since the day that she began to cultivate the devotion to the Sacred Heart and to make the desires of this heart the guiding principles and the motive force of her life. Since we know how much grief love of the world caused and still causes the Sacred Heart, we should not deserve the name of friends of Jesus if we did not strive earnestly to combat this enemy of His, at least in our own hearts.



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