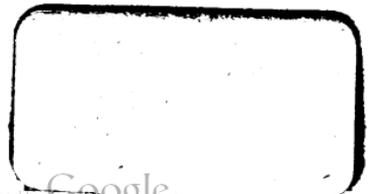


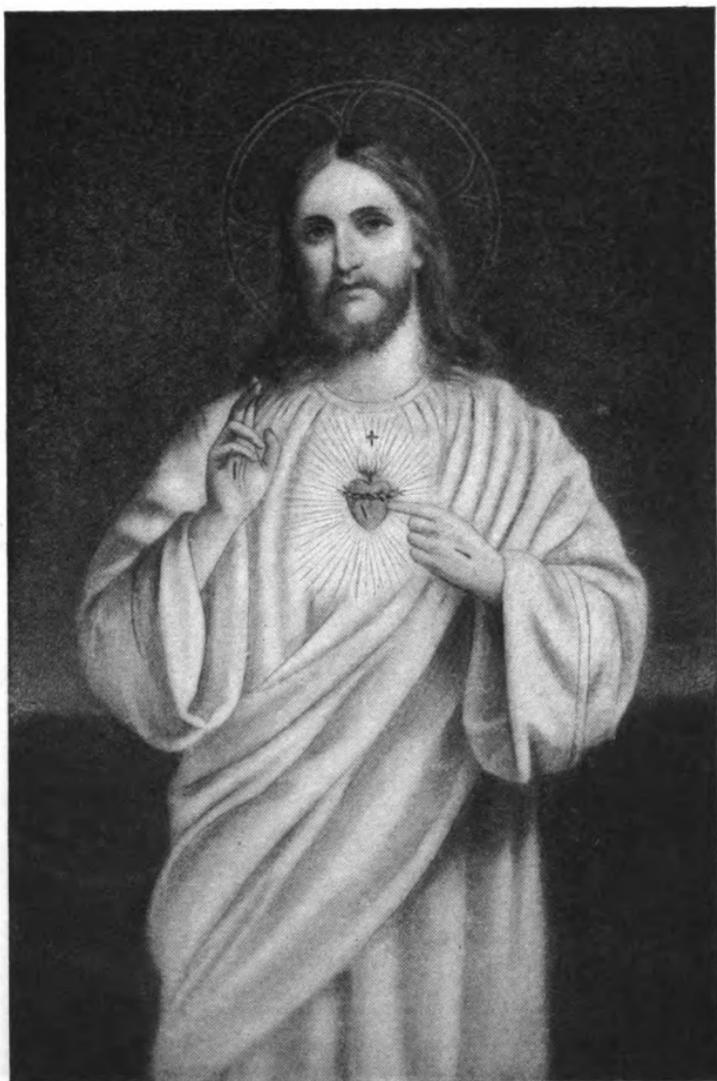


The Heart of the Gospel

Francis Patrick Donnelly

RD 14763





THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

Traits of the Sacred Heart

BY THE

REV. FRANCIS P. DONNELLY, S. J.



APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER
301 West 181st Street, New York
1911



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**TO
MY FATHER**

PREFACE

The chapters in this book had their origin in a desire to find out the meaning and use of the word "heart" in the New Testament and to apply that revealed teaching to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The various texts were studied with the help of approved commentators, and their meaning accurately determined, as far as was necessary for the purpose in view. No new interpretations were ventured upon and, in some cases, interpretations which might be looked upon as less probable were accepted, when it was thought they could better further the religious and devotional scope of the articles.

The study in many instances showed that the word "heart" in the Gospels serves to illustrate the traits of our Lord's Heart by contrast more than by likeness. But the results have been judged sufficiently helpful to warrant their appearance in book form. The hour of serious reading, the time given to the gathering of thoughts for prayer, will likely prove to be the best occasion for testing the helpfulness of these papers.



Preface

Some of these papers have appeared in the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*; some in the *Homiletic Monthly*; others are new.

May the truths here collected from the Word of God and the teaching of His Church increase in the hearts of the faithful the knowledge and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

F. P. D., S.J.

St. Andrew-on-Hudson,
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

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DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

*You are My friends, if you do the things I
command you.*

I.

DEVOTION is not to be identified with devotional practices any more than patriotism is with fire-works. A man may spend the great holidays quietly in his home, may saw wood on Washington's Birthday, and read a book on the Fourth of July, but if he observes the laws of his country and practises the ten commandments, he will be a true patriot and need not worry because he has not shouted himself hoarse hurraing for the blessings of freedom or burnt his fingers setting off fire-crackers, or even tired the muscles of his arm waving the Stars and Stripes. All of these actions are laudable and have their good effects. They are manifestations of patriotism, although not the highest manifestations, and they are means—in some cases necessary means—to enkindle and foster true patriotism. Devotional practices are indeed much more necessary to devotion than all the usual means of displaying and stimulating patriotism are for the proper

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development of that virtue, yet a devotion may exist and be intense without having any particular and exceptional ways of manifesting itself. The hymns, the lights, the pictures, the beautiful shrines, the special services on certain days, these and many other excellent practices are required to arouse and keep alive true devotion. Without all that, there may often be reason to suspect the absence of devotion or to be skeptical of its intensity. By such displays, too, true devotion is exercised and developed, not wasting itself by use, but growing stronger, like a muscle, with exercise. Devotional practices, then, are helpful and even necessary, but they do not constitute devotion. Light and air are helpful and necessary for life, but they are from without and life is from within, and devotion, too, is from within.

We sometimes hear good men say: "This business of devotion is not for me. I am not much for feeling or sentiment." What should be said in answer? These good people should be politely but firmly assured that they do not know what devotion is. If devotion is not the same as devotional practices, neither is it the same as sentiment

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and feeling. True devotion is not feeling; it is willing. It is conviction, not sentiment. Feeling and sentiment are not always within our complete power. They may vary with the weather or with the pulse. Devotion does not watch the thermometer or fluctuate with the barometer. It does not disappear with our appetite and return after a good meal. Devotion belongs to the will and has its source in solid convictions. Give a man a firm unyielding grasp of a truth; follow that up with a relentless determination to abide by that truth, and you have equipped a man with a full-fledged devotion.

Every year many of our gallant firemen meet the death of heroes. Do they wait, when the alarm comes, for a gush of sweet feeling or the spur of sentiment to rouse them from sleep and put them in motion? They have no time to wait for such superfluities. As they rush to their post, hastily tightening their belts, one idea is uppermost in their minds: There is a fire somewhere and our place is at it to put it out. That is their conviction; that is their willing. Next morning, perhaps, they may feel the warmth of feeling and sentiment, if they can find in the papers, as often they will not, the scanty

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recognition of their bravery. Have they devotion? The noble deaths of so many are a testimony beyond the power of words to show that men who may not know how to define devotion or call it by its right name, know well how to practise it in its highest and most unselfish form.

Yet, if devotion is not perfect or perfected without some devotional practices, so we may not deny the splendid influence of true feeling and right sentiment upon devotion. The man who would banish sentiment and feeling from the hearts of the world is an active worker for the return of the glacial period of very hard rock and very cold ice. Who would eclipse the dawning hopes of youth or draw the curtain of twilight over the sunset memories of old age? Must all the canvas, on which are painted the pictures of the world, be made into flour sacks, and all our monuments broken up to macadamize our roads? The eloquent vender of food-tablets may prove by facts and figures, by analytical tables and accurate weights, that his vest-pocket breakfast has all the nutriment of a table d'hôte dinner, but the world will not be won away from its varied and substantial meal to any tasteless, odorless,

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colorless, sizeless substitute for a bill of fare. If man were a machine, then sentiment would be as useful as a bouquet on a locomotive. If we were all angels, and had minds not continually swayed by conflicting currents of the body, or forever unsettled by brilliant pictures of the imagination, then a truth would mean a resolution, and a resolution an act, and we should leap without a pause from duty to devotion; but unhappily we are not yet bodiless angels. We throb with feeling, we glow with sentiment. Devotion is indeed conviction and willing, but true feeling and right sentiment must grace the path of duty, making conviction easier and willing prompter. Devotion will never produce its fullest and richest harvests unless feeling soften the soul and sentiment keep it ever warm. It is the purpose of many devotional practices, of pictures and songs and meetings, to awaken these emotions, stir up the being to some of its untouched depths, and so elicit the full cooperation of soul and body in realizing all the results of devotion.

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II.

In discussing devotion to the Sacred Heart there is especial need of remembering what devotion really is and how it may exist without great feeling or many devotional practices. The devotions of the Church have all enriched her emotional language, but none perhaps more so than devotion to the Sacred Heart. The most sacred words on man's tongue, words throbbing with the tenderest feelings, are frequent in this devotion, and one who would forget that devotion was of the will might feel that such language was a foreign one to him and one he could never master or speak with ease. Devotion to the Sacred Heart has also grown and developed, manifesting itself in a variety of ways, and, if devotional practices constituted devotion, the bravest would perhaps be appalled and discouraged when they saw how impossible it would be for them to take up a small part of the countless practices that the friends of our Lord's Heart have invented and spread abroad to do Him honor. It is consoling, however, to remember that we can be truly and profoundly devoted to the Heart of Christ without these many means that help

Devotion to the Sacred Heart

others. We need not sing, or need not be able to sing, all the hymns or say all the prayers or attend all the meetings or join in the services that have multiplied and will multiply around this devotion. We shall have as much of that as we like and as will help us, but to have devotion to the Sacred Heart, we must have, first, our conviction, and then our determination.

The fireman goes to a fire wherever it may be and whenever it may be because it is his conviction that his place of business is there, and he is determined to be at his place of business if there is anything to be done. What is the conviction of a man devoted to the Heart of Christ? Devotion to the Sacred Heart is devotion to the love of Christ. It comes from a profound conviction that Christ is our true friend, that at first He was God without a human nature, that afterwards He became man, that He became Christ, all for us and to show His friendship for us. "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." Christ our Lord was born of friendship for us, had no other reason for every breath of life He drew except friendship for us, and hesitated not to give the supreme test of the most

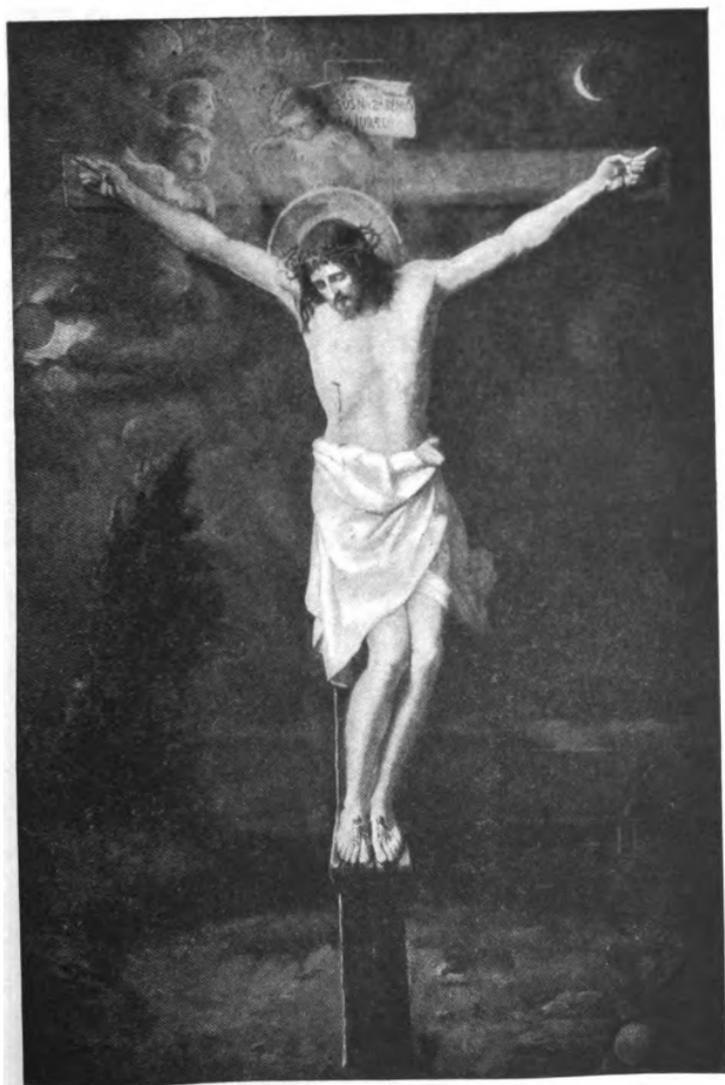
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loving friendship by going to His death for us. Admit that truth: "Christ is my friend"; don't merely say it to yourself but realize it; possess it and let it possess you, and you have the beginning and seed of devotion to the Heart of Christ. Now, follow up that conviction with a determination that you will recognize the fact of Christ's friendship in your life, that you will be His friend as He has been yours, and you have the full-grown devotion to the Sacred Heart. You may not dance with joy under the circumstances, though it would be an excellent thing if you could; you may not be thrilled through with the grandeur, the divinity of that conviction, though perhaps some day you may; but if the conviction is there, and the determination is there, you need not be alarmed at the absence of the feeling; your devotion is true devotion. The fireman says: "My conviction is that I should be at the fire; my determination is to get there as soon as possible." He is devoted to his duty. Let any man say: "My conviction is that Christ was and is my friend; my determination is to show myself His friend," and he is devoted to the Heart of Christ and will be ready with the



Heart of the Sacred

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Devotion to the Sacred Heart

brave fireman to make sacrifices, and heroic ones, if his duty calls for them.

It may be objected here that there is, then, no difference between being a good Catholic and being devoted to the Heart of Christ. There need not be any difference at all in what is done, but there is a great difference in the motive for which it is done. To go to Mass on Sunday, to go to Confession and Communion, to observe the laws of God and His Church for no other reason but because you are afraid of hell, is to be devoted principally to your eternal comfort; to perform those very same actions because you wish to acknowledge and testify your friendship for Christ, your friend, is to be devoted to the Heart of Christ. The motives for which we do an action are under the control of our free will and we are responsible for them. Of course, good motives will not make a bad act good, but they will ennoble any act that is not bad and intensify one that is good. The cup of water that is given in kindness deserves our gratitude; the cup of water that is given in the name of Christ will receive the reward of Christ because it is an act, if we so wish it, of loving friendship for Him. A man

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dies for his wealth and he is a brave man; he dies for his country and he is a hero and a patriot; he dies for his religion and he is a martyr. Christ died for me and He is my friend and my God. The death is the same; the motive is different and makes a profound difference in the result. You may be a good Catholic for many good and laudable motives, and if you are a good Catholic because you wish to testify in some small way your love of Christ, then you are devoted to the Sacred Heart.

But why, it may be asked, do we speak of devotion to the Sacred Heart instead of devotion to Christ? The question may be answered by another. Why have nations flags; why have causes their rallying cries, and colleges their colors and cheers? Why do we speak of the War of the Roses; why of the thistle of Scotland and the shamrock of Ireland? Why, but because we want a brief, telling way of summing up and expressing what we hold most dear? A word will do service for a thought, will hold it and keep it for centuries still fresh and green. So a symbol will express a whole cause, will explain it, will enshrine it forever. Symbols many and various have been seen among

Devotion to the Sacred Heart

men, but where has there been one more touching, more significant than the one used in this devotion? Christ himself, we fondly believe, chose this symbol of His Heart as His standard, a symbol that is the complete and tenderest expression of all we mean and practise in this devotion. The Heart of Christ is the symbol, the representation, the expressive picture of the love of Christ. Every language has made the heart a synonym for love, and the Heart of Christ, as the standard of this devotion, means and signifies Christ's love, and bears in all its details the strongest and most lasting proofs of that love.

It should be noted that there are different kinds of symbols. The flag is an artificial symbol for country: the heart is a natural symbol of love. There is no connection between cloth of certain shapes and colors and a government, except by a common agreement of the citizens. But between the heart and love, there is a connection established by nature, beyond and above all convention of man. The highest, the noblest love is not rooted in flesh and blood; it is of the soul and spiritual. The love of art, the love of country, the love of religion, like

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the love of one's mother and father, move in regions above the excitement of passion. Yet, as man is made up of soul and body, even his most spiritual aspirations are registered in their effects upon the less noble part of him. The purest love of God which filled the soul of a Saint Stanislaus caught up into its flame his innocent blood, and his heart beat with a fever-heat of fervor. The fact, then, of the natural connection between love and the heart is a matter of easily verified experience; even though the exact nature of the connection be not understood or even investigated, and so there is sufficient reason to make the heart a natural symbol of love.

The full symbol of devotion to the Sacred Heart contains elements not put there by nature, elements revealing the supreme love of Christ and persuading His followers to new and more tender expressions of their affection. The full symbol is not the Heart of Christ as it came from the hands of God, unwounded, uncrowned, in the vigor of life, in the perfection of Its being. The Heart, that is the royal standard of this devotion, is pierced with a spear, clasped with a crown of thorns, and forever supporting the weight

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of a Cross; It is a crucified Heart, the Heart not simply of a friend, but more, of a wounded friend. The full realization of this symbol will make clear another touching feature, that is found and should be found in true devotion to the Sacred Heart. That feature is reparation. Reparation is the Good Samaritan for Christ's Heart. It pours the oil and wine of an intense love and devotion into the wounds which others have made by neglect or offence. Gratitude is the birth of love; reparation is its full and perfect growth. Gratitude is turning from self; reparation is forgetfulness of self. Gratitude is gladness that a friend has shown his love for us; reparation is sadness that a friend has received harm from others. Reparation, then, naturally follows upon true devotion to the Sacred Heart. Reparation is love's noblest and most perfect revenge. Base revenge attacks the offender, visiting punishment upon him for his offences; reparation, with the revenge of love, flies to the one offended, and lavishes upon him fuller, warmer love, because others have been cold and cruel. When the mother dies, the father strives to be mother and father to his little ones. He is trying to make up

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for and repair the sad loss of death. Reparation strives to supply to Christ for every other friendship denied Him. The crucified Heart of Christ is, therefore, the complete symbol of this devotion. Whether the devotion inspires new deeds or vivifies with new meaning the customary actions of a man's life, it will put a purpose into them that was not there before. His heart will go out to his friend, his benefactor, his crucified Saviour; it will flame with the motives of gratitude, love and reparation. His life will be lived, influenced by such consoling convictions. He will be practising true devotion to the Sacred Heart.

On the battlefields of old, just where the enemy turned to flight and defeat, the victorious general built of the spoils of war and the weapons of the conquered, an enduring memorial which in days gone by was called a trophy. Our leader, our greatest conqueror, has reared a trophy. The enemy had advanced, apparently victorious, until his spear was thrust into the very Heart of our Captain, but there, where the enemy's victory seemed complete, his overthrow was accomplished. The tide of victory swept at that point to its highest and bloodiest surge, but

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then ebbed forever. From the weapons of His enemy, from cross and crown and opened Heart, our conquering leader fashioned a trophy which was the best testimony of His love and the most abiding memorial and standard of the cause to which we give ourselves in Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

III.

One more question, and everything on this point will, we think, be clear. What has the Apostleship of Prayer, then, to do with Devotion to the Sacred Heart? "It is in league with the Sacred Heart," is the full answer. They are allied forces in the same cause, partners in the same work, engaged in the same important business, fighting for the same great end. If, indeed, there can be an alliance or partnership where one of the two parties concerned does almost everything and the other almost nothing. Yet little as the Apostleship of Prayer does in the great work of saving souls, that little must be done. Christ's grace does everything, but it does it, so Christ willed, through Sacraments and prayer. By prayer it is that we

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league ourselves with the Sacred Heart for the salvation of souls.

Again, the Apostleship of Prayer is in league with the Sacred Heart because devotion to that Heart is the great means by which it carries on its campaigns. From that devotion it draws its weapons and the strength to wield them; by that devotion it unites its forces and wins its victories. That devotion, too, it propagates with all its power and keeps alive by its essential practices. The motive, we said, makes the devotion. "For Christ, my wounded friend," is the motive of devotion to Christ's Heart. But how do we put that motive into our life? By willing it. And when do we will it? When we think of it; and we must often think of it and will it, if the flame of our devotions is not to fail. It is just here that the Apostleship of Prayer comes in with its Morning Offering, and makes us say every morning of our lives: "This day and all that is in it for the Heart of Christ, for Christ, my crucified friend." The Morning Offering is the daily birth of conviction and determination; it is the new making of the fire of devotion; it is the tightening of the belt as we go where duty calls us. In the

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Morning Offering we catch sight, "by the dawn's early light," of our glorious standard, our unexampled trophy, and plunge once more into the fray.

Finally, the Apostleship of Prayer in its divine ambition to enlist all souls in a union of prayer for the salvation of men, is trying to infuse into every soul the purpose that was in Christ's Heart, to warm every heart with Its warmth, and color every heart with Its color; to make of mankind, we may be so bold as to say, one great, throbbing heart, another Heart of Christ, doing by the countless acts of prayer what He did by His countless drops of blood, building up the Kingdom of God with the redeemed. All the rays of sunlight that fall every day upon the great globe of the earth are but a few rills of light from the fathomless ocean of the sun. The banded millions of the League are far from what they would like to be; they are a shadow to their Model's substance; their limited love compared to His is like the slight lift of the tide far up some inland river when compared with the mighty wave that rises in the central seas; yet if all hearts upon earth respond even faintly and far off to the pulsings of Christ's tide of love, they

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will be what the Apostleship of Prayer wants them to be—they will form a throbbing, loving, world-wide Heart of Christ.

THE HEART OF PRAYER

Pondering them in her heart.

I

“**P**UTTING two and two together” is a simple expression for a sublime and fruitful work. Man and man alone can put two and two together. In that operation man is severed from the beasts by a chasm which only God’s omnipotence can bridge, because to put two and two together is the operation of a spiritual soul. By the same operation man gains experience, science and wisdom. Now it is that same simple, yet sublime work that goes on in the heart of prayer; the same which went on in its perfect form in the most perfect heart of prayer among men. St. Luke, describing the events of our Lord’s birth and recounting the story told by the shepherds of the Angels’ apparition, says that “Mary kept all these words pondering them in her heart.” “Pondering them in her heart” means, in the Latin and the Greek, what we may describe by the homely phrase, putting two and two together.

What must a man do to put two and two

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together? He must understand clearly; he must deliberate; he must affirm or deny that the single twos belong together; he must draw a conclusion. By reflecting then on what he has done, he may draw far-reaching principles, and, associating other similar conclusions, he may draw other principles. Principles then are put together and order arises; and from order, system and science and then wisdom. Such are the fruits of "pondering" over the treasures of the heart, fruits that Mary gathered in their fulness and richest ripeness. Take a similar but a far inferior case. St. Ignatius of Loyola spent nine months in the cave of Manresa pondering over the truths of God, weighing them, ordering them, and combining them. The results of that season of prayer we still have in the consummate science and wisdom of the Spiritual Exercises. Oh, if we only had the wisdom that grew and filled Mary's heart, from the pondering of her whole life, from her Immaculate Conception to her Annunciation, from the Annunciation to the Ascension, from the Ascension to the Assumption! The volume of that prayerful heart would contain all the revealed truth, which St. John declared all the books of the world

The Heart of Prayer

could not hold, and it would contain much more, as the treasures of Mary's heart were more numerous and more precious and more perfectly pondered than the riches of St. John. St. Thomas of Aquin put all theology into an epitome, called the *Summa*. Mary's heart of prayer was the epitome of all God's dealings with man—is it too daring to say?—God's *Summa*.

How then shall we describe Mary's heart of prayer when it took to pondering upon the Heart of Christ? Jesus was her all, her universe, and His Heart was that universe's central sun, not surely separated in her loving and prayerful pondering from the effulgence of the Divinity which invested that Heart and which divinized the mother's perfect affection, transforming supreme love into supreme worship. St. John heard once the beating of that Heart. He straightway became the "one whom Jesus loved," and his thoughts soared to distant heights and circled to far-off horizons, cognizant of visions hitherto beyond mortal ken. If nearness to the Heart of Christ was at least a partial cause of St. John's ecstasies (and who can doubt it?), then what shall we say of the pondering of her whose heart-beat was once

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His heart-beat, who long enjoyed a mother's privilege and blessing, whose sensitive ear caught every echo, even the faintest, of joy or sorrow that sounded in her Son's Heart, and whose motherly love realized those emotions more fully, more deeply than any other could possibly do, "pondering them in her heart"?

II.

Christ, it is true, was known in prophecy, but it was Mary's heart that was the first to know Him in realization. There was nothing on Mary's side to dim or tarnish that knowledge. What was offered was received, undiminished and unblemished. When the Heart of Christ, therefore, in Its turn would take to pondering, where would It turn, prompted by every noble impulse, more surely than to the heart of Mary? If a mirror is perfect, it gives back the image perfectly. No flaws or blurs on its polished surface impair the reflection. In fact, a perfect mirror is not seen at all; it is lost in its reflection. Such, no doubt, was the reflection of Christ in Mary's heart. There was no self there, no blur-

The Heart of Prayer

ring, no impairing of the knowledge and love of her Son as they radiated from her heart. Christ, then, would see in her, one responding perfectly to His grace, and, pondering on that fact, there would be an answering reflection from His Heart. Then would arise the exquisite rivalry of loving hearts. Imagine, if you can, where it would end in the case of Jesus and Mary. Put two polished mirrors face to face and a lighted candle between them. Your eye will be bewildered with the multiplied views of the tiny flame, stretching away in the distance. The rays of light leap from surface to surface, giving rise to an endless succession of images. Perhaps that picture will help you to realize the depths and deepenings of love as Jesus and Mary pondered in their hearts upon one another with ever new interchanges and reproductions of the light of love.

If Mary's heart gathered up in its loving meditations an epitome of Christian truths, Jesus, with His pondering Heart, could find in Mary's heart the epitome of His life and mission, of His Incarnation. He could watch every drop of His Heart-blood finding response in Mary. When sin would

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have seized upon Mary's soul at its creation, His blood was there to interpose between the destined victim and its inherited doom, and Mary's soul came into existence immaculate. In her this greatest mystery of Christ's grace as well as all other mysteries received their exemplification. About her He saw the Holy Trinity concerned in the Annunciation. Upon her consent His own Incarnation was made to depend. No, Christ would not have to look beyond Mary and Mary's heart to find a picture in miniature of the wondrous dealings of God with man.

We know, however, that the Heart of Christ in Its hours of prayer thought of other hearts too. Sinful hearts as well as Mary's sinless heart came within the scope of His pondering. Well for us that they did so! We need the prayers of that Divine Heart. "In the days of His flesh with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, He was heard for His reverence." The burden of our sins drew the strong cry from His lips and wrung the tears from His eyes, but He was heard, as He is heard now too. His priesthood is everlasting. "Whereby He is able also to





The Heart of Prayer

save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us." The unbelief of Thomas was the occasion of showing us that Christ did not permit His wounds to be closed. They are still open, and the most eloquent intercession comes from the wound of the Heart. Nor is that silent prayer the only one now offered for us in Heaven. The Heart of Christ still ponders on our sins and Mary's sinlessness, and still prays to God for us and is still heard for His reverence.

THE MEEK HEART

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

I.

THE one who first said that "meekness is not weakness" was the author of much more than a good rhyme. Meekness is a virtue, and for that reason it is an exhibition of strength. No one would consider trained muscles, graceful, vigorous and untiring, evidence of passiveness or weakness of body. The athlete is our ideal of a strong man. Now, virtues are the trained muscles of the will by the help of which man exercises his freedom energetically, perseveringly, at the proper time and in the proper way. Meekness, then, is strength, if to throttle a lion is strength, if to hold one's place on the fighting line is strength.

All virtues keep to the golden mean; they travel in the middle of the road; they swerve not to the side of excess, nor slip to the side of defect. Meekness has a hard road to travel. It holds the curb upon anger, keeping it to the path. The touchiness of resentment, the tenacity of revenge, the cry of rage

The Meek Heart

becoming a curse, the fierceness of wrath that vents itself in abuse or blows, these meekness must rule and govern in their incessant manifestations along the way of life. In this work meekness should have occasions enough to display its strength, and yet it has another task, not so laborious, not so frequent, but often necessary. There are times when just indignation is called for, when the voice must be raised in protest and when energetic resistance becomes a duty. Meekness then must put spurs to the laggard soul, that it may not weaken or fail in life's journey. So there is the hard task of meekness,—to keep the currents of our irascible nature at the proper temperature, not permitting them to be chilled into inactivity or to boil over into fiery vaporings, but retaining them in sparkling, refreshing vigor anywhere between freezing and boiling point. Or (to put it another way) meekness performs the duties of a good policeman towards our inclinations to anger. It will not allow them to loiter when they should move on or to break the law in any way, as rarely listless anger is more prone to do.

Have you ever considered why our Lord said: "Learn of Me because I am meek and

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humble of heart"? Some have thought that He wished to teach us those two virtues of meekness and humility in this passage. Such an interpretation neglects the rest of the passage where those words occur. Christ was opening a school in opposition to that of the Pharisees. He invited all to come to it. "Learn of Me." Never had any school a more attractive advertisement. The teacher was "meek and humble of heart"; the pupils would find rest for their souls; the lesson was sweet and easy. Christ, then, in calling Himself meek of heart was not inviting us to learn that lesson alone. He had many another lesson to teach us. Rather was He describing the teacher to us and showing His qualifications for the position.

No doubt the first lesson the pupils would learn would be that of meekness, which displayed itself in every word and motion of their friend and teacher, especially as the Pharisees who conducted the rival school had not the meekness of Christ. They were serpents and the brood of vipers, always lying in wait, always stinging to death. They were relentless tyrants in little things, with microscopic eyes and souls, seeing and counting anise and cummin, and choking at a

The Meek Heart

gnat. They clung to the letter of their rules and never looked to the spirit of them. They might wear for a time the mask of meekness, but spying, revenge, treacherous questions, reviling, persecution, death, these were the usual accompaniments of the course of studies in the school of the Pharisees. The pupils of Christ might shudder at the words, yoke and burden, if they forgot how their meek teacher would fit yoke and burden sweetly to their shoulders and necks, and how by His hands He would make them light. Yokes are made for two, and the other one, they would recall, is Christ.

II.

Meekness is properly of the heart; it is the safety valve of anger; it keeps the hot blood of the heart at a normal temperature. Anger, according to St. Thomas, has six daughters. The smallness of the family may excite some surprise, but the great theologian in his usual way shows why they are six and where they keep themselves. Two reside in the heart—wrath and revenge. Three live on the angry lips—the scream which is a confused cry, the abuse which attacks the

The Heart of the Gospel

neighbor, and blasphemy, which execrates God. The last of these unlovely daughters is blows, the latest-born of the children of anger. Meekness has to manage this unruly household, and does it by keeping the heart under its strong sway.

To call the roll of anger's brood will help us to appreciate better the meekness of Christ's Heart. On rare occasions we know that meekness fired His Heart with zeal, put a lash in His hand, and kindled just indignation upon His lips. But, more frequently, the meekness of Christ is displayed in patience and gentleness. There could not be in Christ the sinful strife of passions, but there could be the holy rivalry of virtues. Christ had real feelings and real passions, though not sinful ones. How many times meekness and just indignation struggled for the control of Christ's Heart, and how rarely did the victory go to the latter! St. Mark pictures that struggle for us on one occasion where Christ knew that the Pharisees had determined upon His ruin, and where He forced them by their silence to admit His right to heal upon the Sabbath. "Looking round about them," relates St. Mark, "with anger, being grieved for the blindness of

The Meek Heart

their hearts, He saith to the man: Stretch forth thy hand." That was one occasion out of a multitude where meekness allowed not anger to flame into rebuke, but melted anger into grief.

The Passion shows us meekness winning its greatest triumph in the Heart of Christ. Justice might have summoned legions of Angels, but meekness said to Peter: "Put up thy sword." That is the constant cry of meekness: "Put up thy sword." The silence of Christ in His Passion is another manifestation of His meekness. "When He was reviled, He did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not." Nor was the silence of Christ the outcome of a want of feeling. He felt every pain, every insult in its full strength. He felt the waves of just anger beating and raging ever, but ever stayed by the unyielding firmness of meekness.

Even in His innermost thoughts during the Passion we may behold His meekness. The frightfulness of the torments to come, the dark deluge of sin, the lavish generosity of His Redemption and its futility in many cases, these were so many motives why His will should complain and rebel, but meek-

The Heart of the Gospel

ness preferred the shame and won another triumph at the expense of Christ's Heart-blood. "Not my will but thine be done," said meekness, with bloody lips. From that dearly bought victory until the end, meekness was king in the Heart of Christ, and around the throne stood all the fair children of that virtue, as beautiful as the daughters of anger are ugly. There were there silence under lash and cross, the look of longing for the denier, the kiss of peace for the traitor, the prayer of forgiveness for all, the hands fettered forever in the widest embrace of love, the Heart shedding its treasures by every avenue upon the world, giving blood for blows, giving life for death. Teach me, Christ, because Thou art meek of heart!

THE HUMBLE HEART

Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

I.

ALL the virtues practise humility. They recognize deficiencies and defects. They bow in submission to the law. You have seen soldiers stand at attention on the firing-line and face towards the enemy. If there was no submission to one higher up, if there was no enemy to face, the army would disintegrate into the scattered aimlessness of a picnic. Humility is the discipline of the army of virtues, keeping them ever at attention, ever facing the foe, ever ready for the command, "Forward." When Christ our Lord opened His school and issued His prospectus, He promised His pupils perpetual meekness on the part of the Teacher. That single qualification would insure a full school, if the applicants were only certain of the meekness outlasting the opening day or the first class. Christ foresaw the misgivings of the candidates, and He hastened

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to add to His first qualification a second and crowning one: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

The meekness would last. It would always remember that it had a high standard above it and a host of good qualities to attain to, because the meekness always would be humble of heart. Every one, therefore, would troop into the school of Christ, welcomed with a glad, abiding smile, with no shadow of a ferule lurking in the background. Even the bruised reed would enter there and have its fragile and torn fibers not crushed to powder, but mended into wholeness again. And the smoking flax would come in full confidence that the gracious, condescending Teacher would stoop even to its feeble lowliness and with the breath of charity kindle its dull, faint spark into the glowing flame of life.

Yes, humility is a daily virtue in the great classroom of Christ, and pride daily haunts the schools of the Pharisees. Humility stoops, but pride holds its head high, treading on insignificant straws and stamping out the impertinent smoke of smouldering weeds. Both have their yokes and burdens; but, whereas humility studies carefully the weak

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muscles and tender flesh, fitting all with gentle, loving fingers, pride haughtily casts its yoke upon its slaves and arrogantly orders them to drag their cheerless burdens. Humility says with kindly voice: "Friend, go up higher." Pride thunders at its shame-faced followers: "Give this other man place." Humility and pride begin all their sentences in the same way, but end them all in opposite ways. Pride cries: "I am not as the rest of men; O God, I give thee thanks, I am not unjust." Humility whispers, "I am not as the rest of men; God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

How well humility was taught in the school of Christ is evident from the object-lesson he gave in that virtue. The Pharisees were the forbidding examples of pride. They were prominent, loved the first places, advertised their piety, trumpeted abroad their good works. Whitened sepulchres, cold and unyielding, was a good name for the proud people whom all should shun as they would a graveyard. Far other was the model of humility. In a splendid exhibition of true teaching, meek and humble teaching, Christ introduced His standard of humility to His Apostles. The child is the object-lesson in

The Heart of the Gospel

this great virtue. The child is too small to look down; it looks up to others. It is too young to know it has excellences. It is too healthy and active to pose before a mirror. To be proud one must reflect and be self-conscious. Children do not know that they are virtuous, and they could not remember it long enough to be proud, if they did know.

II.

A true teacher must ever be humble. He is forever coming down to another man's level. Judged by that standard, how humble is the Heart of Christ that stooped from the highest heights of divinity to the level of our humanity! To have humility it is not necessary that one should be capable of pride or sin. The mother loves all the more intensely even though it is impossible for her to hate her child. The Heart of Christ could not sin, could not have defects, and yet It had the truest humility, because with all truly humble hearts It saw that Its riches came from God. Without God It would be poor and nothing. Christ need not have felt the humiliation unless He chose; but He did choose and did feel it.

The Humble Heart

Consider the successive depths of humility to which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity descended. The Heart of Christ is the flower of the sublimest humility, stooping from Heaven to earth, the subjection of the divine to the human, an act which St. Paul made his supremest effort to describe by the words, "emptying Himself and taking the form of a slave." Even in that infinite plunge there were deeper depths. Christ need not have subjected Himself to the conditions of human birth, the nine months, the swaddling clothes, the nursing, the ills and helplessness of infancy, the growth in wisdom and age. Had Christ come in the fulness of manhood, He had avoided all that; but should we have had the same realization of His humble Heart? The Heart of Bethlehem and of Nazareth was not more humble than that of His public life, but it seems so to us, because we come closer to It.

Still deeper did Christ's humility go. He put Himself below men's whims and desires, men's ignorance and vices. He was perpetually renouncing Himself and perpetually conforming to others. In a sense He renewed every moment the humility of the Incarnation. His humanity, had He so de-

The Heart of the Gospel

sired, would from the first have been transfigured and glorified; but He clouded the divinity under the ordinary exterior of the ordinary man. Thabor lifted for a moment the eclipse of His humility, but His Heart enshrouded Itself once more and every moment denied Its assumed nature the manifestation of the splendor and loveliness and joy of Heaven. Yet, other and deeper abysses of humility yawned before that Heart, and down them It descended. At the feet of Peter and Judas, beneath the scourge of the soldiery, under the crown of mockery, upon the cross of shame, into the desolation of the malefactor's tomb, thither the humble Heart brought the tortured human nature.

Surely, in the Passion the Heart of Christ sounded the fathomless depths of humility. Ah, no! It created a profounder void still into which it lowered Itself. In the Incarnation Christ emptied Himself of His divinity to become a man; in the Eucharist He emptied Himself of His humanity, it might be said, to become food and drink. The Heart that could stoop to the bruised reed has passed into the ground wheat and the crushed grape. As the pupil watches his Master casting Himself down where depths

The Humble Heart

descend upon depths, it will not be so hard to stoop from the level of manhood to the slightly lower level of childhood. Jesus, humble of Heart, make me one of these, Thy little ones!

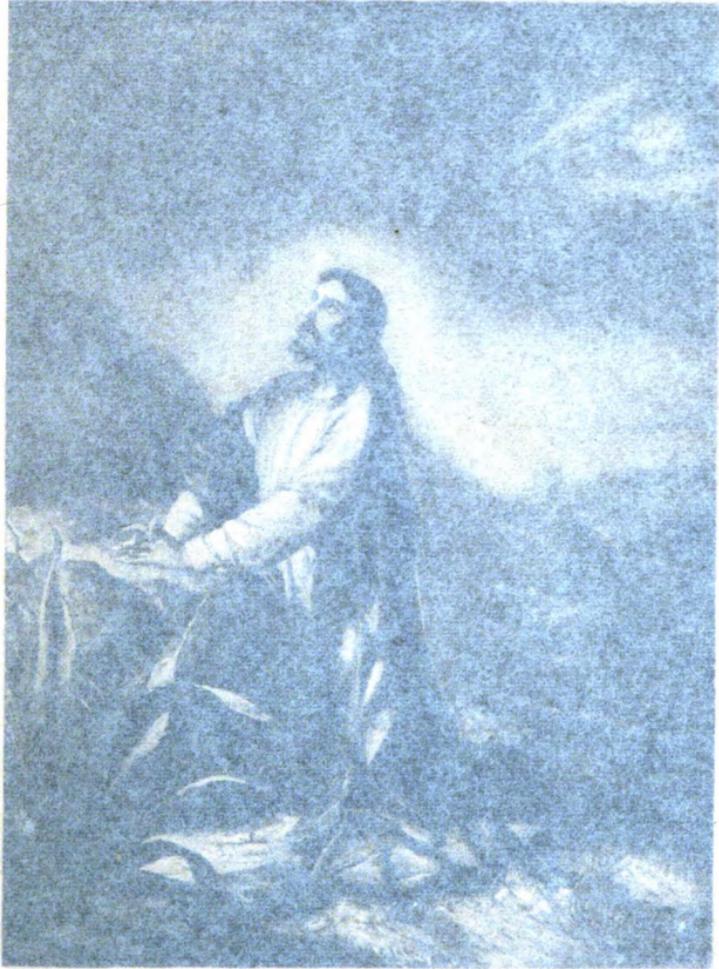
THE PENITENT HEART

He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart.

I.

SORROW for sin is consoling. The fretting of soul because we have not come up to our own expectations is not true sorrow for sin. Sorrow for sin arises in a conviction that we have not come up to God's expectations. Remorse is indeed painful, but then remorse is the clamor of conscience scolding the soul for its failures; it may lead to sorrow for the past, or the rebuke may be silenced by new and repeated excesses. No; true sorrow for sin is consoling. Pride may chafe us because we are not as good as we thought we were; right reason may torture us because we have acted through passion and wrong reason. Sorrow for sin, however, is humble and is submissive and obedient to right reason. Penitence is the healing of the contrite in heart.

When Christ, our Lord, asserted at Nazareth his claim to be the Messiah, He said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He



HEART

in spite of heart.

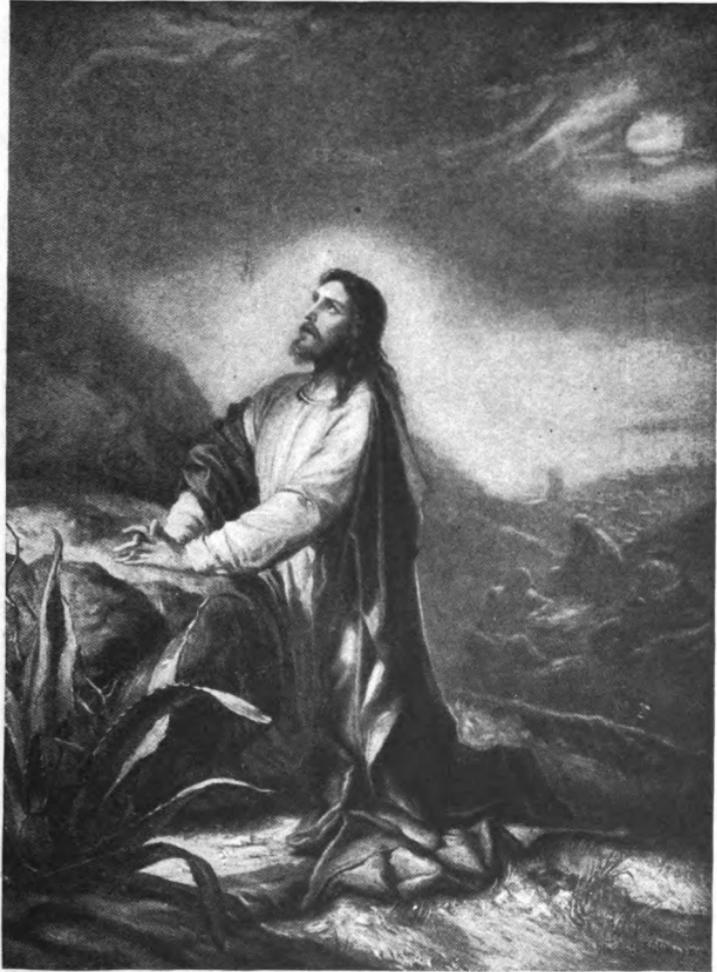
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The Penitent Heart

hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart." These words of Isaias which our Lord applied to Himself do not mean that He came to heal the hearts broken and saddened by sin only. "Contrite of heart" includes all broken hearts, although by far the larger number of those who feel the touch of Christ's healing hand are the hearts broken by the weight of sin. The Messiah came to console the penitent.

But are not tears the desired accompaniment of sorrow, and are not they the outward sign of desolation? How then can sorrow for sin be consoling? The answer is that tears may exist without penitence, and penitence may exist without tears. The pressure exerted by sorrow for sin is not upon the lachrymal glands, but upon the heart. Agitation of soul may fling off a few tears, as a storm whips the sea into flying flakes of spray, but it calls for a power in the sky mightier than a wind to lift the whole sea landward in a surging tide; and the power of penitence is not to be measured by falling tears, but by the lifting of the heart in response to the grace of God.

Nor are all tears scalding. Who will be-

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lieve that the tears of Magdalene which fell so fast upon the feet of Christ were signs of desolation, and not rather proof of her abundant love, gushing out with the fulness and refreshing softness of a "long day's raining"? The tears of penitence are rather the overflow of God's grace. As long as the heart clings to sin, refuses to relinquish the hold of unlawful passion, and looks with satisfaction upon the past, so long is there a barrier to God's grace. Let the heart, however, turn from what it before chose, and undo, as far as it can, the past; let it turn to God with an apology—for contrition is an apology of the heart to God—then the barrier is lifted and God's grace rolls in with a cleansing flood, and the pent-up heart finds relief in tears. Magdalene was in desolation, perhaps, as, dry-eyed, she faced the staring guests at the banquet. Magdalene was in consolation when she gazed upon our Lord with tearful eyes. There is a rainbow of hope in every sky looked at through the shower of penitent tears.

The Penitent Heart

II.

St. John Chrysostom has said that sorrow for sin is the only healing sorrow. Tears cannot recall a friend, staunch blood, close a wound, open a grave or cure any other pain or loss, but tears can heal sin. And why? It is because the Heart of Christ put the healing power there, because His love sweetened the bitterness of tears. In the Garden of Olives our Lord made an act of contrition for the sins of mankind. As we all sinned in Adam, we all repented in Christ. He was "made a curse for us." "Him, who knew no sin, He hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in Him." Yet the act of contrition in Christ's Heart does not supply wholly for the act of each soul. The sinner himself must give up his own sin, but, having done so, everything else before and after that act of the sinner's will is the fruit of His grace. It is grace which prompts the act, sustains and elevates the act and blesses its results in time and eternity. Our own freedom must save our souls, as our own food must give sustenance to our bodies, but Christ's love, with more than the completeness and wonder

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of a mother's love, prepares the food for our wills, made more helpless than infants by sin. We have but to co-operate with His grace.

Consider the perfection of the contrition found in the Heart of Christ. He could not be touched with sin, but "He was reputed with sinners and upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all," and for all He made reparation and sorrowed, including in His sorrow every quality found in our far weaker contrition.

Contrition should be interior, in the heart. "Rend your hearts, not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." The rending of the Heart of Christ is witnessed to by a thousand messengers who have hurried out by every way they could to tell us in a language that cannot lie, the language of blood, that the sorrow of sin is crushing His Heart. The rending of His Heart is eloquent in the words in which He voices His contrition: "Not My will but Thine be done." From the will—that is, from the heart—came that act of contrition.

Contrition must be supernatural. God must enter into the sorrow for sin. The Heart of Christ expressly excluded all thought

The Penitent Heart

of self, all motives that led away from God. Even the passing of the chalice that God's justice held to His lips was not to be effected by His will. God's will might remove it; His will would not. So then the draining of the chalice was accomplished with the purest unselfishness: "Not *My* will but *Thine* be done."

Contrition should be sovereign. Never had a heart to make more fearful reckoning between the worth of God and the price of sin than the Heart of Christ made, and never was the infinite value of God's law asserted more emphatically. On one hand was the whole Passion to come, with all its tortures of body and soul; on the other hand was God's justice. Christ accepted the sorrow, the suffering, the disgrace and death. He laid His Heart upon the altar of God's justice and was Himself the priest who completed the sovereign holocaust: "Not *My* will but *Thine* be done."

Contrition must be universal. Was there a single sin exempted from God's will? Was there a single wish of God's will that was not embraced by the Heart of Christ? Was there a single pang of pain, a single twinge of sorrow, a single drop of His

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blood excluded from the generous offer of Christ? There can be only one answer to these questions. The "My" of Christ included all that the "Thy" of the will He addressed included. "Not My will but Thine be done."

It is, then, that great act of contrition which sweetens the chalices of our penitence; it is the signature of Christ's blood which gives value to what would be worthless paper in our soul's sorrow; it is the Heart of Christ which heals the contrite of heart.

THE WOUNDED HEART

Bring hither thy hand and put it into My side.

I.

ONE kind of a heart-wound is inflicted by the loss of those we love. The separation may be brought about by estrangement or by death, and who shall say which wound is deeper or more painful? Who sorrowed more, the widow of Naim or the father of the prodigal? Bride, in all your blossoms and beauty, which will you have, the dark weeds of death or the dismal parting of the divorce court? God forbid you should have either, or that the heart which now beats happily beneath the blossoms should ever bleed. Now, Christ's Heart was wounded that ours may be healed. He says to every heart: "Peace be to thee," and invites every sorrowing soul, as He did St. Thomas, to find its solace in His open side. "Bring hither thy hand and put it into My side."

Death indeed has its sorrows and sharp is the edge of its reaping-hook. In many a home the voice once heard is heard no more;

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its echoes have died away. The eyes that glistened there with the regret of a daily departure, the smile that flashed with unfailing brightness a daily welcome, all have disappeared in gloom, and the household look and listen in vain. A familiar shadow will never more darken the door; a well-known step sounds no more on the stair-way, and the chair in the family circle, vacant forever, is a sad companion in the gathering twilight. Yet even that wound will be closed by the healing touch of time and by the blessed forgetfulness that comes with new duties and new affections. The tomb is final, and, bad as it is, we know the worst. But the wound of separation stays open longer. Estrangement is a daily death, and is ever presenting to the apprehension new fears, more dreaded prospects. The heart made vacant by a death may be filled again with new growth, but the desert sands of living separation put forth no blooms to refresh the aching gaze. The widow's son is at rest in the graveyard, where she may go and pray, but the prodigal's father is ever on the torturing rack with rumors of riotous living and famine and disgrace and filth and starvation, and is oppressed by the darkening despair that the

The Wounded Heart

prodigal, as often happens, will never come home.

It may be hard, or even impossible, to determine which of these two wounds of loss—death or estrangement—is the more painful, but there can be no doubt that another kind of heart-wound, the wound of pride, gives the keenest of all tortures. The heart wounded by pride often develops a running sore. It does not, and will tell you it can not, forget as those bereaved by death can do. Pride is, in reality, the cause of the worst anguish in estrangement, because what chafes in such separations is the thought that other persons have been preferred to us. How long is the life of a compliment? No one has yet determined the age to which it will attain. For years and years a compliment is music and fragrance to the memory. But if a compliment is long-lived, a humiliation is immortal.

The wounds of pride fester because a poison has tainted the weapon that made them. If a humble heart is wounded, it is not surprised. It does not identify itself with the universe, does not consider itself the crowned king of creation. But every affront or quarrel or humiliation for the proud heart

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is an offence against kingly majesty. The wound may be concealed; it refuses to be cured. To be cured, pride must go out of itself, and it would not be pride if it did that. Humility feels the hurt, but it does not feel hurt. Pride transfers the wound to personality; it recognizes a defeat; it smarts from another's superiority. In a foot-ball game the ball is only a distraction, while twenty-two souls and bodies grapple for mastery; the real issue of endurance and tactics could be determined just as well with a pin-cushion or a rope's end. In a wounded heart, in like manner, the real issue is not the word said or the deed done, but the fact that one king is rolling in the dust and feels the heel of another upon his neck. That feeling is the poison which festers; that is the heart-wound which does not heal.

II.

“Bring hither thy heart and put it into My side.” So says the Heart of Christ risen from the dead. Christ went about consoling His stricken ones during the days that followed His Resurrection. Mark His wonderful condescension, King Pride, who art

The Wounded Heart

enthroned in the wounded heart; mark how He submits to the conditions imposed by Thomas, how He humbly bows to his follower's haughty, "I will not!" It is the evidence and practice of God to draw good from evil. Never was there a more striking instance than here. Should we ever have known that the way into Christ's Heart was open except for Thomas's lack of faith? Perhaps not. At all events, there is no doubt about it now, that, when Christ glorified His body, He did not remove His wounds, but kept them to console us. The first stage in the consoling of wounded hearts by the Heart of Christ is the restoring of faith. "Bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not faithless but believing." A wound is not a reason for loss of faith in man and God. The wound of Christ is a proof of His Divinity. Christ has not promised that our hearts will not be wounded, but He has proved that our wounds will be our glory; He has proved that if we go down into the dark hollows on the sea of sorrow, we shall mount again to the heights of joy. The trough of the wave of Calvary rose to the white crest of Easter.

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The Heart of Christ is the healing of wounded hearts because He has traveled all the ways of loss and separation. We can enter upon no path of sorrow where His cross has not cast its shadow, where His feet have not left footprints of blood. He entered, too, into the valley of death. His body was made, it could be said, for immediate immortality, unlike ours, which must pass through dust to immortality. So, besides the deaths which through life wounded His Heart, St. Joseph's and that of Lazarus and of many others, His own death, the separation of His soul from His body by death gave Him the sharpest of wounds, and it was especially hard for His Heart to die, because death was not Its due.

There was, then, no wound of death which His Heart did not feel, and there was, too, no wound of estrangement which He was not called upon to suffer. He felt the exile from friends in Egypt. If Mary and Joseph sought Him sorrowing, much more did He sorrow staying away from them. These were but shallow wounds if measured beside the gashes of His Passion, when His people abandoned Him and His Apostles, and when by His own wish His mother was forced to

The Wounded Heart

abandon Him, and when, finally, deepest of all wounds of estrangement, the cry was wrung from His lips, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"So, you also who have a heart wounded by a humiliation, bring it hither and put it into My side," Christ says to us all. "I who am true King and God of all, have been humbled to the dust. The hand behind the spear-point was one to which I was reaching out My hand that I might grasp it in love and lift a soul to Heaven. Many would have festering heart-wounds if the one to whom they gave a cup of water would cast it in derision into their face. I gave of the brimming contents of My Heart, and mocking insulters have flung My useless, unavailing Blood back upon Me. More than that, wounded heart; the very blow which festers within you fell upon My Heart. This is no exaggeration, no figure of speech. I died for all sins and for the selfsame sin which wounded your heart, and because I know God better and understand sin more fully, and because, too, I love you better than you do yourself, the wound that was dealt you was dealt to Me and gave Me more intense pain than it did or could possibly give to

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you. Bring hither, then, your heart, whether wounded by loss or humiliation, and put it into My side, and you will find there a Heart more deeply wounded."

THE SAINTLY HEART

From the heart come forth evil thoughts.

I.

HOLINESS is of the heart. When that truth was obscured and almost forgotten, Christ made it clear and certain. Christ was our Jesus, our Saviour, and He was likewise the Saviour of man's heart. The Pharisees had made saintliness an external thing, a matter of ceremony and routine. Christ did not condemn the externals, but He placed the saintliness within. He put a heart behind the ceremony. On one occasion, among many, Christ asserted the dignity of man's heart in the strong language which characterized His teaching against the Pharisees. They had complained: "Why do Thy disciples transgress the traditions of the ancients? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Christ made answer: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but what cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. . . . But the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart. For

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from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands doth not defile a man."

"Out of the heart" are the momentous words that proclaim a far-reaching principle, a revolution in morals, an emancipation from traditional slavery, a declaration of independence from mere formalities. "Out of the heart" transferred morals from manners to man, from the hand to the heart. The heart makes good and evil, because the heart is free, and man should be more anxious about cleansing the heart than washing the hands. Christ's purpose must not be misunderstood. He no more condemned fasting here than He approved of gluttony. His purpose was to refer holiness to its proper source, to restore the heart to its lawful throne. Fasting may be holiness, or it may be hypocrisy, and it is the heart that makes the difference. Neither does Christ condemn the washing of hands. To wash the hands may be an aid to holiness; it will not constitute holiness. Christ did not wish to abolish ceremonies; He wished to abolish superstition, and formalism, and hypocrisy.

The Sainly Heart

He would restore circulation to the heart, and then there would be adoration in spirit and truth united with the appropriate expression of both in word, in garb, and in ritual.

The purpose, then, of Christ was to put the emphasis in the right place. There is a tremendous significance in the words, "out of the heart." They designate in the case of sin an act of man's free will, deliberately choosing evil instead of good, or making the choice out of an evil motive, or permitting the act of the will to lack its due perfection. The one who dips his hand in the mud with evil intent to cast it upon another, has a soiled object, a soiled hand and a soiled purpose. "Out of the heart" may come deeds thrice stained; stained because the heart's object may be evil; stained because the heart's action may be evil, like the soiled fingers; stained because the heart's motive may be evil. Out of the heart may come deeds bearing but one of these stains, yet teeming with dread consequences. It is that standard of morality set by Christ that makes all the difference in the world, or, rather, which makes an eternal difference. No detail of life that comes within the scope of

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man's free will escapes the influence of the heart. Every detail comes from a saintly or a sinful heart and bears with it the seeds of everlasting consequences. A man builds a monument. How long will it perpetuate his name? For a few years only. "Out of the heart" come monuments untouched by the ruinous finger of time. Man can send his thoughts and his voice over the land and across the sea. "Out of the heart" reaches a wire which sends man's soul over the wide chasm of the grave into the unending depths of Heaven or hell. Christ restored freedom to man's heart, but did not take away the heart's responsibility.

II.

Out of the Heart of Christ! Who shall measure the richness, the saintliness issuing from that sacred source? The Fathers of the Church saw the birth of the Church out of the Heart of Christ on the cross, as Eve was born out of the side of Adam. The water and blood were the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Eucharist. Striking picture of a more striking reality! Out of Christ's Heart came the sanctification of

The Saintly Heart

mankind. It is the brimming ocean of all our holiness. The grace won by His opened Heart serves to purify our hearts. Every thought, word or deed, freed from the triple stain of sinful object, sinful circumstances, and sinful end, and bright with the corresponding triple good, lacks the evil and rejoices in the good because of Christ's opened Heart. There is not the tiniest atom of holiness in the universe which does not reveal to the microscopic gaze of faith a tinge of the blood which passed through the Heart of Christ.

The Heart of Christ is holy because It is the cause of all created holiness, and, further, It is holy in Itself. Christ was God, and, as such, infinitely holy in many ways, and especially in the way of purest love. Sin is the embracing of evil by the heart; sinlessness is the embracing of good, and infinite sinlessness is the love of infinite good. God's holiness is infinite because His love is infinitely pure. Its object is God Himself; its motive is God, and there is no stopping short of infinite purity in the perfection of the act of love in itself. Love in God measures up to the level of His knowledge of Himself. The will which loves, will love

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as intensely and as extensively as it knows, and in God the knowledge of Himself is infinite. The object, the motive, the act may be stained in human love; in God they are all infinitely pure, and His holiness is infinite.

Christ as man participated of the holiness of God. We are indeed made holy by the vesting of our souls with God's grace. That created gift of God makes us, as St. Peter says, "partakers of the divine nature." What, then, must be the holiness of Christ, to whose human nature God Himself is united, not by the unstable bond of grace, but by the union, permanent and intimate, of His Second Person. And mark! Christ was not denied the fulness of created grace. He was to be the perennial source of all created holiness and "of His fulness we all have received." The Heart of Christ is holy by union with the infinite holy Person of God, and holy with as much grace as a created soul is capable of.

We are bewildered with the splendor of this holiness. Our eyes are fixed on the central fiery core of an unblemished sun, where the trace of an imperfection could not survive for a moment in the purging

The Sainly Heart

whiteness of love's purest heat. We are watching the flames that blend and rise to God from the Heart of Christ. No wonder that artists have crowned that Heart with a blaze of light and pictured It as consumed in Its own splendor.

The observance of law is the test of love as it is the expression of holiness. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." This is Christ's own test, and fully does His Heart measure up to it. The law is the manifestation of the will of the law-giver, and holiness is found in abiding by that will. The ineffably pure affection of Christ's Heart loves God for the sake of God alone, and loves Him perfectly. His commandments become Its commandments, for love makes the will of the law-giver the will of the lover, and so law is transformed and passes into its perfect state in that fervent fusion of love's making; law becomes love, and love becomes law. So it is in the saintly Heart of Christ, and so it is in every saintly heart that is modeled after His.

THE RICH HEART

Out of the abundance of the heart.

I.

ARTISTS and people of artistic tastes are much concerned about the wreaths and eagles and heads that are cut upon our coins. The practical business man looks to the metal and its purchasing power. We are all minting daily a multitude of coins, and the angel treasurers of the vaults of Heaven do not spend as much time looking for our profiles and dates as they do in sounding the metal to test if it rings true and will pass currency in the kingdom of Heaven. Christ was a keen merchant in the business of the soul. Witness His parables and see that buying and selling had no mysteries for Him. So when the Pharisees would pass off their worthless money upon Him, He knew the counterfeit at once and cried: "O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things whereas you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

There will not be gold at the lips if there

The Rich Heart

is not gold in the heart, is the teaching of Christ. The rich heart makes the rich word. "Out of the abundance of the heart" means "out of the riches of the heart," and this is clear from the signification of the word in the original text, as well as from the words that follow: "A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things; an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." The words may be as artistic as you will; they may be colored with poetry, or warmed with eloquence, or freighted with the rarest knowledge. All that is mere mintage and tinsel, and not itself precious metal in the sight of God. It need not necessarily be base metal, either, but its purchasing value in the mart of Heaven will not be greater than would a double eagle made of golden butter, unless the treasure of the heart go with the treasures of art. Before men we may all pass for the character in the fairy story, dropping pearls and diamonds and silver and gold every time our lips part; but what of the output of the heart before the eyes of God? May not the words be paste and pewter and brass, or, at the best, lightly plated ware?

The question is a serious one. One day

The Heart of the Gospel

a collection shall be made of all our treasures and their values estimated. "But I say unto you," continues the Lord, in the same passage, "that every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account of." There is a very dismal prospect, indeed! To think that all our idle words, our vocal tramps, the fleeting sounds into which we have put fleeting, vain thoughts, all that foam and froth of the stream of speech, is entered against us. Alas, poor lips that babble on heedlessly, of you we may say in the words of the Lord, slightly changed, "Out of the abundance of the mouth, the heart is silent." Idle words are the product of silent hearts. No man can say with the sinners in the psalm: "Our lips are our own. Who is lord over us?" Unhappily, our lips are not our own. God made them, and they are His, and must work for Him. An idle word is one that refuses to recognize God's ownership. Let the heart admit God's mastery; let the intention be renewed occasionally of doing all for God's services, and words will cease to be idle. There is then no need here of disturbing worry. The good Christian, trying to lead a good life, is by that very fact banishing idle words. Morning and

The Rich Heart

evening prayers, the Morning Offering, Mass, acts of piety and charity, all these are evidences of a rich heart, out of which come few or no idle words. The mother who loves her child, never utters an idle word in its regard, because in every word is the refined gold of love. Every Christian who loves God has a heart rich in love and is rarely idle in words.

II.

Who can estimate the richness of the Heart of Christ? It is the incarnation of the love of God. "The love of God was made Heart, and throbbed amongst us," we may say, following the words and spirit of St. John. The Heart of Christ is the symbol, the representation of the love of Christ, and so of the love of God. "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." The ripest fruit of divine love, as we may say, interpreting the words, was the Incarnation. The Heart of Christ was created to put before us in a language we could understand the love of God. God so loved that He gave. What, then, are the treasures of Christ's Heart? They are the rich-

The Heart of the Gospel

ness of Christ's love as God, and the richness of Christ's love as man. The beating of His Heart voiced both loves.

Consider, then, what was the precious coinage of Christ's lips. We may judge from their power. His words were omnipotent. They spoke to blind eyes, and they saw; to deaf ears, and they heard; to dumb tongues, and they spoke. "Peace, be still," He said to the waves, and they fell to sleep. "Be thou clean," He said to the leper, and the flesh at once grew wholesome, and firm, and ruddy with the glow of health. His words were stronger still, "more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching into the divisions of the soul and spirit; and discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Sinful and sorrowful heard His words, and sin and sadness were sloughed off the soul like the scales of leprosy from the body.

Truly, a two-edged sword, edged with divine and human love! Every action of Christ was one because it was the action of one person, but it was twofold in being accompanied by the action of His human and divine nature. The white-hot sword, so the old theologians put it, will cut and will

The Rich Heart

burn, and who will separate the smallest section of the metal which cuts from another section which burns? Every atom burns; every atom cuts. So in the fire of Christ's word blended the flame of two loves. In the beating of His heart the ear can detect the harmony of two sounds, the melody of the greatest love that ever throbbed in man, and its harmonic melody of infinitely higher octaves, the love of God. Every word, then, of Christ was far from idleness. It was possessed of a divine and an infinite energy. It was the coinage of the gold of Christ's Heart.

To-day we hear the same words; we witness and experience their might. The words of Christ are now on the lips of Christ's priests. "I absolve you," say the priests, imparting by those words of Christ the precious treasure of grace to the souls of men. "This is My body," says the same priest, speaking in the person of Christ. Immediately, by the transmuting power of the words of Christ, the crushed and baked wheat, poor, cheap substance that it is, is transformed into substance infinitely surpassing earth's rarest ores. Thus do all the Sacraments, every moment of every day, reveal every-

The Heart of the Gospel

where to mankind by the enriching words of Christ the supreme richness of the Heart of Christ.

THE HEART OF FAITH

O foolish and slow of heart to believe.

I.

DARK corners give pause to the steps of a child. What monster may be hidden in the shadows there he does not know, but the monster loses none of its terror for being imaginary and not real. The childish fancy huddles into the black gloom before it all the fearful things its brief experience has known, and adds to them new horrors, more towering heads, more fiery eyes and wilder looks, rougher hands with more mysterious weapons of frightful torture. What wonder the child is slow of step when a dark corner looms up before it! Was it not some such turn in the way of the soul, some dismal prospects peopled with apprehension that made the two disciples turn from Jerusalem the morning of the Resurrection to their home at Emmaus, and brought down upon them the rebuke, "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken"?

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The heart of man is not far from his imagination. It will rush exultantly after fancied joys or lag reluctantly with leaden pace where the imagination has nothing but sadness and pain in view. Had this pair of saddened hearts trusted to faith rather than imagination, they would not have shrunk from the disgrace of Calvary or the fear of the Jews. Faith would have told them that if there had been no Calvary, Christ was not the Messiah; that their disappointed hopes rested on a belief in some and not all of the things which the prophets had spoken; that the risen Saviour was on the way to the supper-room where the Apostles and disciples were gathered, just at the very time they themselves were leaving it.

In every heart there is a struggle between the swiftness of faith and the slowness of nature. Every act of the soul that merits the vision of God springs into being at the voice of faith. If I practise temperance for no other motive than to avoid ruining my wearing apparel by falling into the gutter, my virtue is natural, and has its natural reward. I save my hat. But if I would have the reward of God, I must be temperate because he told me that "drunkards

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shall not possess the Kingdom of God." If I obey nature I receive my pay from nature; if I hearken to the voice of God, I shall merit a recompense from Him exceeding great. So every thought or word or act that is to end in Heaven and in God begins in faith.

Ah, but nature is near to the soul, and is always advertising its rewards. The imagination is its advertising agency, and never were wares more temptingly described than by that agency, never more striking type for display, never more catchy engravings, never such flattering assurances of the best results. What will faith do to offset the nearness of nature and its alluring advertisements? How shall a man "stagger not in his heart but believe," when virtue seems gloomy, when the shades of the open confessional appear filled with horrible monsters, when the voice of vocation calls the soul along the way of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, at the very time that with a more clamorous insistence the advantages of riches and indulgence and license are cried up? The promptness of love must spur the hearts that are slow to believe all.

The Heart of the Gospel

II.

“Behold I come” was the swift reply of God the Son to the call of His Father. “Sacrifices and oblations and holocausts for sin thou wouldst not,” wrote the Psalmist and St. Paul of our Lord; “then said I, ‘Behold I come, to do Thy will, O God.’” That cry of promptness created the Heart of Christ. Its first beat was an echo of that generous offering. The Heart of Christ, then, will lend wings to the slow of heart.

Yet it may be urged that the Heart of Christ had the vision of the Father, and so had the inexhaustible wealth of charity, but had not the virtue of faith. Very true it is “that we see now through a glass in a dark manner,” but Christ “face to face.” He had not the difficulty of obscurity that vexes our hearts in faith, but He had such a consuming fire of love and obedience as would have swept off in its rapidity a thousand greater difficulties, had they come into His way. It is no reproach to the sun that its splendor is not dimmed by the smoking wick which impedes the flame of the candle. Christ had all the excellence of faith in the perfection, the promptness, the



The Heart of Faith

generous completeness of His sacrifice to the will of the Father. "Behold I have obeyed."

Witness how all through life He was prompt in the face of obstacles which naturally made us slow of heart to do. If faith calls upon us to make a sacrifice, it might be termed a plunge into the unknown, although faith is rather a lifting up of the heart in a flawless, unfailling and unflinching confidence of Heaven, but if faith is to be a plunge, then the Heart of Christ came from above down to the level of the ordinary man. When the lights and shadows were attractive at Perikheon, His Heart was drawn rather into the darkness of the unknown, but the lowliness of the manger, the poverty, the love could taint His Heart to make it slow to respond when God's voice spoke, but the perfect tenderness of His pure love for His Mother made the promptness of His sacrifice more keenly felt when He left her to be about the business of His Father in the temple of Jerusalem or throughout the land of Judea and Galilee. No sinful imagination could soil Him with seductive prospects, but His Heart was not slow when the more piercing vision of His mind brooded before Him and upon Him the weight



The Heart of Faith

generous completeness of His surrender to the will of the Father. "Behold I come."

Witness how all through life Christ was prompt in the face of obstacles which usually make us slow of heart to believe. If faith calls upon us to make what might be termed a plunge into the dark, although faith is rather a lifting on high in a flawless, unfailing and unfalling vessel of Heaven, but if faith is fancied to be a plunge, then the Heart of Christ plunged from above down to the nothingness of man. When the lights and music were attractive at Bethlehem, His Heart passed rather into the darkness of the cave and the lowliness of the manger. No unholy love could taint His Heart or make it slow to respond when God's voice spoke, but the perfect tenderness of His pure love for His Mother made the promptness of His sacrifice more keenly felt when He left her to be about the business of His Father in the temple of Jerusalem or throughout the lands of Judea and Galilee. No sinful imagination could soil Him with seductive prospects, but His Heart was not slow when the more piercing vision of His mind brought before Him and upon Him the weight of

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all mankind's iniquity. There was, it is true, a struggle, a resistance unto blood to comfort us when the weight of passion oppresses our weakness. There was a struggle that printed itself in blood-red letters for our reading. Yet the heart was true, was prompt when the test finally came. "Behold I come to do Thy will, O God"; "not My will but Thine be done." So, finally, in the last dark moments of Christ's life, when a heavier weight than sin fell upon His Heart, there was the same promptness, and the Heart which cried out as though God had forsaken It, shook off, if we may so speak, the slowness that dark desolation would have put upon It, and confidently and peacefully commended Itself to the Father's hands, a short while before the hands of men laid open with a spear that treasure-house of quick, generous love.

The heart of man, which is slow to believe, is quick as water to glide into various easy ways of unbelief. It is sorely in need of that steady principle which swayed the Heart of Christ. What a restless creature is the wave of the sea! Who can balance one drop of water upon another? Who, then, can keep a million jostling, smooth, slipping, tiny

The Heart of Faith

crystal spheres quiet for the briefest fraction of a moment? And then the air, with its multitude of shifting particles ever in ceaseless agitation—who can keep all that in rest when the lifting of an eyelash will disturb it? Now, bring the fickle air out over the waters and let it play upon that liquid restlessness, and you have a wave of the sea. St. James took that wave as the type of a heart without faith. "Let them ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the winds." The heart of man is no calmer than the surface of the sea. Over it sweeps a host of feelings which keep it ever surging hither and thither and forever pausing upon the verge of some new direction. Sorrows and delights, fears and encouragements, hates, resentments and angers, attractions, infatuations and passions, whirl like shifting winds over the heart.

However, what tames the unstable wave and makes it sway in one direction will give also steadiness to the heart—a principle from on high. Far off in the sky, the moon swings around in a circle and the great ocean moves obedient to its mighty

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power. The promptness of faith or love will make the unquiet currents of the heart docile and steady and quickly responsive. Loving obedience to the will of the Father made the Heart of Christ swift to hearken and act, and trusting obedience to the voice of God will prevent our infinitely weaker hearts from being slow to believe and act when a thousand agitations would swerve us from the right. The Heart of Christ is a spur to the slow of heart.

THE LOVING HEART

Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.

I.

LOVE was and is the first and greatest monopolist. The heart and the heart's object tend to union; they are jealous of any intrusion that would interfere with that intimate union; they form a closed circle and a closed circuit, through which the current of affection passes from loving to loved. The monopoly is not formed and completed at once. According to the teaching of our Lord, there are three main stages in the process: the transfer of the heart, the transfer of the mind, the transfer of all the rest. When Christ issued His warning against avarice and against making riches the object of love, He said that where the treasure is there also shall be the heart; that the light within becomes darkness; that the lover of wealth becomes the slave of mammon. Heart, mind and all are consigned to the treasure, and the monopoly is formed. The soul is enticed, entranced, enslaved.

For each stage Christ uttered a warning.

The Heart of the Gospel

Before you are enticed, before you lose your heart, consider the contrast between the treasures of earth and Heaven. Moth, rust or thieves destroy the treasures of earth. Beauty has its enemies as well as wealth. Disease is the moth that preys upon the fair face; age will rust the charms of youth, and death is the thief that is no respecter of the handsome form. Moth will attack the king's robes and rust will eat up the king's crown, and usurpers and successors will steal away his throne. Wealth, beauty or power are not safety-deposits for human hearts. There is only one place in the universe where moth-balls, rust-removers and burglar-alarms are not needed. If you are to be enticed into parting with your heart, our Lord warns you to put it where it will not be moth-eaten or devoured by rust or carried away by thieves. Since the heart will follow the treasures, it will suffer their fate. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven."

The wish is father to the thought, and has, it might be added, a very large family. Can the pale clerk cooped up in the city remain long at the seaside without being tanned? Can the Eskimo take off his

The Loving Heart

furs without feeling cold? The questions would be easy in the kindergarten, and in the class of physics the scholars would say that heat radiates constantly until all the environment becomes of the same temperature. What, then, will become of a pale, anemic mind when subjected to a blazing heart, or a thinly clothed mind when exposed to an arctic heart? The mind assumes the temperature of the heart. To say that the mind is thermometer to the heart is only another way of saying that the wish is father to the thought.

If the heart is in the cash-box, the mind will not be in the poor-box. The heart, which means the will with its desires, will bring the thoughts its way. Entrancement will follow enticement, or, as our Lord puts it, entering His warning against this second stage of an illegal monopoly: "If the light that is within thee is darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be!" His meaning is that the mind is the eye of the soul, and whatever blinds it, blinds the soul. Passion and enticement, in a word, the heart buried in treasures eclipses the sight of the mind. "There are no ugly loves," some one has said. The loving heart keeps the rarest

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cosmetics for the object of its love. The mind, therefore, is bewitched, infatuated, entranced. The doom pronounced by Christ against this second advance in the process of evil love, is darkness, and He hesitates to determine its intense blackness. "The darkness how great shall it be!"

The last stage of love's degradation is enslavement. "No man can serve two masters." This is the solemn warning of Christ. Where a man's heart and mind are, there also shall be the rest of him. There does not seem to be any place for bimetallism in the human heart. The single standard rules there, the gold of God or the gold of earth. A river cannot flow north and south at the same time. When the heart's currents wear out a channel for themselves and develop an impetus, who will turn back the strong floods? Some saints have been known to have been in two places at once, bilocated, as it is called. The heart cannot be bilocated. If it is heaped over with gold and swathed in greenbacks, then it is not kneeling in sack-cloth and ashes before God. A man may have both riches and God, but he cannot serve both. He cannot belong to two nationalities, to two opposite political

The Loving Heart

parties. If he is of the race of God and an upholder of the views of God, then he is not of the race of mammon and his adherent. It is, therefore, Christ's solemn warning to the enticed and infatuated heart, exhorting it to avoid enslavement: "You cannot serve both God and mammon."

II.

We have gone down to the depths of love, or, to use a more proper term, to the depths of passion. Passion it is which should be called monopolist. Love deserves a term of more noble memories and associations. Love is a conqueror and a king. Having, then, studied the degradation of passion, we now ascend to the lofty, glorious heights of love. It was in eternity and in God that love was born. It had there infinite good and infinite beauty to contemplate and cling to, but even that seemed hardly enough for King Love, the Conqueror. It longed for other kingdoms. It would have another treasure also, and a heart to put with it, and love created both. "God so loved the world as to give His only Son." The Heart of Christ was the

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creation of Divine Love. We were the treasures of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The souls of men that have their moths and rust and thieves, the souls of men with coldness, neglect and sin, were His treasures.

When Christ spoke of the passion of man, of man having his heart in his treasures, He spoke in a figurative way. It was a striking phrase which told that man always longs for his treasures. But when God created the Heart of Christ, it is the strictest truth to say that the Incarnation was the realization of the first stage of advancing love. Where Christ's soul-treasures were, there also His Heart really came to be. "My delight is to be with the sons of men."

In the Incarnation was the first victory of love; in the Passion was the second. If human passion has its infatuation, so, too, has true love. The way the blood of Christ's Heart throbbed to burst forth and be shed for us, His statement that He had a baptism of blood to be baptized with and was straitened until it should be accomplished, His eagerness which outstripped the Apostles on the way to Jerusalem, the

The Loving Heart

lavishness with which He poured out blood where one drop would do, with which He permitted a host of varied torments when one pang of one pain had been enough for our salvation, these are all overwhelming proofs that His love had reached the heights of divine infatuation and merited to be termed the "folly of the Cross." The light of His Heart was not darkened, as the light of earthly passion grows dark in its second stage. His light was resplendent, and, adapting His words, we may say: "If the light that is in thee be splendor, the splendor itself how great shall it be!"

One would imagine that with these two conquests, love had extended its kingdom far enough. But no! Holy love has its slavery too, if we may call it so, though it would be truer to call it consecration. Love has always been a uniter, but the Heart of Christ has revealed to us unheard-of powers under this aspect. His Heart leaped the chasm that yawned between Divinity and humanity, and united them. The Incarnation was the first wonderful union of love.

His Heart devised another union still with His treasures, the hearts of men, which

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staggers the belief and demands the testimony of God to establish its truth. What union is that? It is the union that He effects by His abiding presence in the Holy Eucharist and in Communion. No slave ever put himself so completely at the will of his master as Christ does for us. No love for men or for money brings about an actual physical incorporation between the heart and its object. The Heart of Christ, then, has attained to the highest heights of love. It enslaves Itself in the bonds of wine and wheat; It becomes our food and drink. It serves both God and men. Can love do more? The annihilation of the twenty-fifth of March, the "folly" of Good Friday, the daily consecration upon the altar, such are the triumphs and such is the climax of love's conquest in the Heart of Christ!

THE BURNING HEART

Was not our heart burning within us?

I.

MANY find it hard to get over disappointment. If others disappoint them, they note the fact down, say it over to themselves often during the day, stay awake thinking over it at night, and make themselves generally miserable for a long time. If they are disappointed in themselves, the disease is worse, and sometimes reaches a crisis in suicide. Self-disappointment is a subtle form of pride. Away back in the innermost recesses of consciousness is a little shrine, fragrant with the incense of self-gratification, illuminated with the lights of achievements great in one man's view and brilliant with the gathered bouquets, some sadly the worse for wear and water, of hoarded compliments. These are the furnishings of the shrine and group reverentially about the golden statue of self. The shrine has one persistent worshiper, whose knees never weary. Ah, but one fine day, as the sole worshiper turns at early dawn

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to his adoration, the thought of a failure occurs, a clear, undeniable failure. Will not a thicker cloud of incense hide it from view? Alas, it would, except for one thing: others know of the failure. Self has not come up to its own expectations, and the world knows it. Look at the shrine! The incense is burning rubber; the candles are smoking wicks; the flowers are—bah! take them away, and the golden statue is that of a calf. The new religion, with its high-priest, temple and ritual, passes into dust for ever. If there is humility near, a better, truer religion will be built up on the ruins; if pride rules, then there is lamentation and the loss of all religion. A youngster once said: "I just eat two 'smoof' bugs and two woolly ones"; and when asked why, replied: "Because nobody loves me." That was an early instance of self-disappointment. Older people, when deprived of their self-satisfaction, turn to drink or death instead of bugs. If many people saw themselves as others see them, the list of our suicides would be inordinately swelled.

There is a notable instance of self-disappointment in the Gospels that had a more fortunate ending than is usual in cases of

The Burning Heart

the kind. That surely was a sorrowful and gloomy set of Apostles and disciples which gathered together in shivering silence in Jerusalem, when Christ, their leader, had been killed as a traitor and a malefactor. They were the cold-hearted remnants of a lost cause. "We hoped" was their cry. The gorgeous sunset in which they basked had suddenly become a very thick and a very disagreeable and a very chilling fog when the Sun of Justice had set behind the hills. "We hoped" is the cry of self-disappointment, the lament of a cold, dark heart.

Among that crowd were two whose hearts had become lumps of ice. Their thoughts turned towards insect food. Perhaps that would warm them up amid the general low temperature that prevailed. "Away from Jerusalem," said the cold heart, "and back to Emmaus!" Their gaudy hopes had burst. They heard whispers around them of the body of their Master not being found, but their cold hearts urged that these were tales of women, frightened and trying to frighten them, that it was before the light and that those early risers had seen a vision. "We hoped" quenched all their faith, all their humility. They had constructed a brilliant

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plan upon which the universe was to be managed hereafter. Divine Providence had not seen fit to conform to their view, and their hearts were disappointed and cold, without faith, without humility, without hope.

II.

Our Lord had come to send fire upon earth. He surely needed a good fire as He drew near these two cold hearts. The task He had set Himself to do was done well and successfully. The ice was turned into a flame after being brought into contact with the Divine Heart of Christ. "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke upon the way?" That was their cry at the end. When "their eyes were held," their hearts were cold; when "their eyes were opened," they confessed that their hearts were burning. The Heart of Christ was the furnace in which their icy hearts had been placed and been melted and inflamed once more to faith and hope and humility.

It was not done all at once. A sudden transportation from the arctic to the torrid



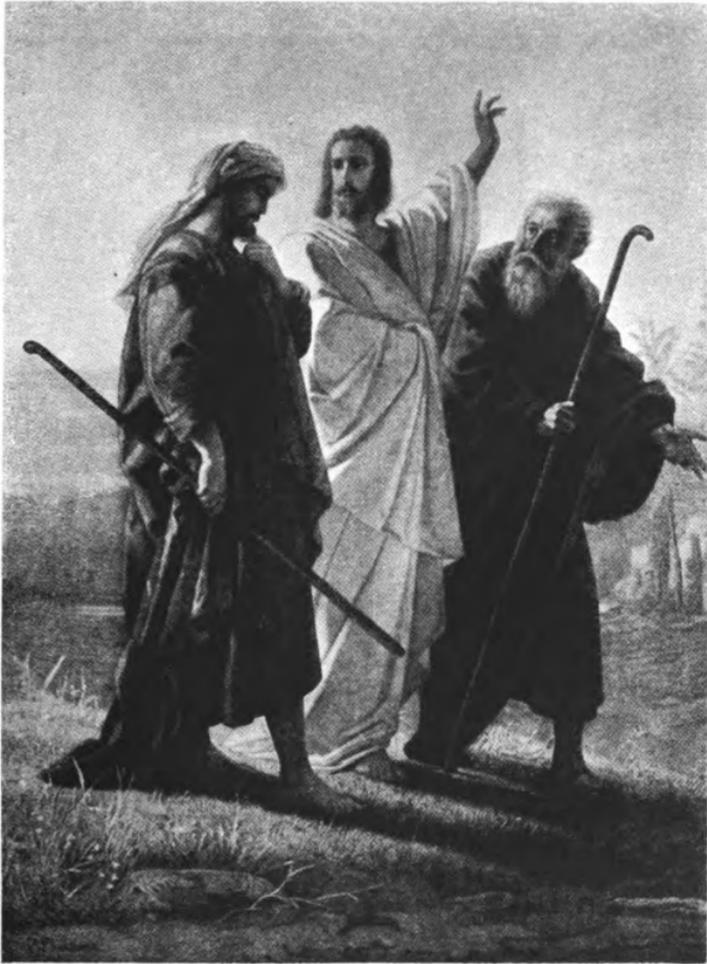
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The Burning Heart

zone is violent. It was not so the Heart of Jesus worked. He came upon their hearts with the steady, melting, almost imperceptible force of the spring. They had humility enough to let Jesus draw near, and so merited the greater humility of confessing their condition. They listened humbly. He brought them to see that their hopes were childish, that the Messiah was too large for Palestine, too great for a kingdom of earth, that the death which had chilled their hearts was the very proof of the Messiah, the very battle which won Him His true kingdom. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so have entered into His glory?" They went out from the dictation of self and let themselves be taught. Yes, their humility went farther. They were willing to depend upon another. Here before them was a religious teacher who was building for them a better shrine of enduring hopes, and they humbled themselves to prayer. "Stay with us because it is toward evening and the day is far spent." There was to be one more step in their progress. Jesus drew near. They welcomed Him and kept Him near. To bring the full force of His Heart upon theirs, He should come still

The Heart of the Gospel

nearer. "He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them." With their hearts besides His Heart, they needed no longer His presence before their eyes. "Away from Emmaus," is the cry, prompt and resolute, "and back to Jerusalem."

It was our Lord's will to ransom us in the way of justice, to pay the price for us. His Heart consoles us in disappointment because He experienced the keenest pangs of disappointment. We shall have no path of sorrow on which to tread in life where we may not see the red foot-prints of the Saviour. Naturally, He felt the exultation of success. His Heart exulted in joy and it was depressed in sadness. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem marked the highest point of his exultation. The very stones, He said, would take voices and acclaim Him. The world is wreathed in smiles for the exultant heart and dances with its dancing. That sunshine of Christ's glory is noonday whiteness when set in contrast with the midnight blackness of His disappointment. His Heart when it sent forth that agonizing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was not in despair, yet it was deeper down in blacker disappointment

The Burning Heart

than that which has sent many a weaker heart to suicide. In that hour Christ's Heart paid the price of our consolation. Then it traversed the bleak and barren fields of arctic cold, and as its weakness became our strength, so its coldness became our warmth. There was kindled the fire He came to cast upon earth, fire to melt away the ice of pride from disappointed hearts and fill them with flames of faith and humility, surging through the burning hearts that touch the burning Heart of Christ.

THE TROUBLED HEART

Let not your heart be troubled.

I.

AN eclipse of the sun is full of terrors for those who do not know its nature. The high position, the lordly movement, the warmth and the splendor and the magnificence of the sun have made it a god for some minds. To see, then, that resplendent orb and its universal flood of daylight blotted out of the sky by a mysterious shadow could not fail to disturb and terrify its worshipers. Christ our Lord is the sun of justice, the light of the world, and true God. For three years He had filled the lives of His followers, and on the night before His crucifixion, as they saw and felt the shadows of death upon Him, no wonder their hearts were troubled. The mysterious solemnity of the Last Supper weighed them down. The betrayal of Judas had been revealed; the denial of Peter predicted; the departure of Jesus proclaimed, and their hearts shuddered as the light seemed to be shorn from Jesus entering the

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eclipse of the tomb. Christ knew the trouble of the Apostles, and He offered them the remedy for it. O troubled hearts of the world, hearken to the peaceful words of Christ!

St. John has kept for us the whole treatise on troubled hearts. "Let not your heart be troubled," Christ says at the beginning of chapter fourteenth, and towards the end of the same chapter, after His teaching, He says again, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." Jesus furnishes His followers, one after another, with motives of consolation. Commentators have numbered them, and one can hardly believe they have found them all. The Father's mansions prepared for them, the second coming of Himself, their own following after Him, the gift of miracles left to them, the promise of the Paraclete, the indwelling of the Father, the peace of Christ which the world cannot give—these are a few of the sources of consolation Jesus points out to the troubled hearts before Him.

But why enumerate and count the reasons for consolation? They are all resolved into one sufficient and satisfying reason, the person of Christ. He is the calm of every

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trouble; He is the answer to every difficulty. Christ began His discourse in the thirteenth chapter of St. John, and He began it with love. "Love one another as I have loved you." Peter was the first, as we might have imagined, whose troubled heart voiced its difficulties. Christ replied that Peter would follow Him thereafter. Thomas, as blunt if not as impulsive as Peter, was the next to cry out in trouble: "How can we know the way?" "I am the way," came the answer. Then Philip, who on a former occasion thought that a few loaves and fishes were an insuperable difficulty to feeding a multitude, once more spoke with some impatience from a too matter-of-fact mind: "Show us the Father." Christ reproachfully complains of Philip's lack of knowledge, but the answer is the same: "He that seeth me, seeth the Father also." Judas, not the Iscariot, is the last to let his troubled heart find expression: "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" Christ had meant a spiritual manifestation, and He makes answer that since as God He was one with the Father, He will come to those who love Him and keep His word, and He will love them and will abide with them.

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One after another the troubled hearts cry out, and in their sad cries our own troubles find an echo. They were our spokesmen, and in His replies through them Christ offers Himself as the solution of every difficulty. For our distrust He is the hope; for our wandering, He is the way; for our ignorance, the truth; for our unbelief, the fullness of belief; for our coldness, divine love; for our troubled hearts, the peace which the world cannot give. The person of Christ is the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night when our hearts are in the desert.

But why should the person of Christ be so completely the end of every way which the sad heart may travel? The reasons are many. One may be dwelt upon which will show how the Heart of Christ bears with It the gift of peace. That reason is the personality of Christ's love. Love may be called the selection, the preference of personality. In that is the very essence and life of love. A person singles us out of many and prefers us and makes us the center upon which his heart's inclinations are focused. On the other hand, the torture of jealousy consists in the realization that our

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preference is imperilled. But is not the recognition of that preference, pride? Not where there is true love. In true love there is a humble wonder that we should have another's affection; there is a sense and feeling of complete unworthiness that another should give place in his thoughts to us and turn his heart to us.

There, too, in the same truth is the dignity of love as well as its preciousness. To drop personality out of view is to degrade love and doom it to a speedy destruction. Passion, or selfish advantages, or mere pleasure are all signs of a mortal, passing affection. Such brief desire we give to things. We have an appetite for a dish, a gratification in a trolley ride, a satisfaction for a tool, some excited interest in a new toy, but for a person we have love. Passion is proud; it makes itself the center and end of all. Passion is selfish; it exists but for its own gratification. As well eat your dinner to appease some one else's appetite as make passion unselfish. But love is humble and unselfish. It goes out to another and centers upon another, not knowing, not caring whether it will come back to self again.

The Troubled Heart

II.

In applying this teaching to the Heart of Christ we are met with a difficulty. It is true that St. Paul, speaking of the love of Christ, declares: "He loved me and delivered Himself up for me." But is that not unjustifiable egotism for St. Paul to think that Christ singled him out as an individual for His love and for the supremest test of His love? We shall see that St. Paul was not egotistic. We must not measure the love of Christ by our imperfect standards. He comes to each and every one whole and entire in Communion, and the whole wealth and preference of His personality comes with Him. His Heart throbbed and shed Its contents for every man, woman and child from the first to the last, but had I been the only one in existence, there would not have been one beat less nor one drop of blood less in the exhibition of Christ's heart-love.

God is a person and has personal love for us all. His love is showered from Heaven upon us individually as if each were all. The sun would be just as bright, just as warm, if it shone on one alone, and now

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we all share it. Scientists tell us that in one sense each one sees a different sun, because the rays that lead the vision back are not the same in any two cases. Yet each and every one sees the whole sun. God's love, too, comes to each, and each can and must feel that God loves him with a personal, individual love. St. Paul was right; God loves me.

It was, however, when Christ took a Heart that He made the personality of love tangible to us. To talk of the love of an infinite God is to talk in a somewhat unknown language. Our bodily nature is slow to understand what is spiritual and infinite. But tell us a human heart is interested in us, and we who have had friends and a father and a mother will know at once what the personality of love means.

It is, then, in the Heart of Christ that the troubled heart will find its surest consolation, when it realizes that all of His love is centered upon it. The mother will bend her head and turn her ear and listen to her child, and in that action reveals her love. She soothes her child in sickness, and her love thrills through her touch. She looks upon her child, and the depth, the

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intensity, the light of her eyes speak more eloquently than ear or hand, or even voice, of the ardor of her love. What would men write, what convincing proof of the personality of her love would her children have, if they could see her heart which struggles for expression by means of the weak instruments of the senses! Now, in devotion to the Heart of Christ we are ever at the fountain-head of His love. Christ's life has become love; Christ's Heart has become in our language a person. We speak of It as of a person. The Sacred Heart is born; the Sacred Heart is crucified; the Sacred Heart dies. In every act and word and thought we think of His Heart. Everything speaks to us of His love for us. The King in European countries is an officer in different regiments, and honors them by wearing their uniforms. The many devotions which find their center in Christ behold Him, it might be said, clothed in varied garbs. But in devotion to the Sacred Heart we look upon Christ in life and death as clad in the red robe of love.

Therefore, troubled heart, Christ's whole life and activity is centered upon you, thinks of you. He listens to you; He

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touches you; He looks upon you, and you know His love. His life and sufferings are before you, and speak to you by His Heart, and your own heart is filled with the joy of that preference. "He loves me," is the refrain that should echo above all the din of trouble. "Peace be to you," is the cry of friends as they bid farewell. "Peace be to you," said Christ to the troubled hearts around Him the night before He died. "Peace be to you" is still the message sounding in our ears, the message of personal love, the message of a Heart to troubled hearts.

THE SINCERE HEART

Their heart is far from Me.

I.

UNTRUTH is the lack of agreement between the heart and lip. When we say what we do not mean, we are untruthful; when we say what we do not will, we are insincere. Insincerity is vocal hypocrisy, just as hypocrisy is insincerity in action. Years ago, therefore, when Christ wished to describe the Pharisees in fit terms, He quoted Isaias at them: "Well did Isaias prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'this people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.'"

It is well to note that it is not the absence of attention; it is rather the absence of intention that makes insincerity. Christ has not complained about the lips being far from Him, but of the heart being far from Him. If prayer or Mass or any other religious exercise is begun with the earnest desire to please God, the mere wandering of the thought from the words or acts will not make them insincere. To have insin-

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cerity, the wish itself must wander; the desire of pleasing God must be given up. If the thought flies off in any direction, the words will still ring true; the acts will not be mere acting as long as the heart turns to God. Children have a ball attached to a piece of elastic rubber. They know that the ball will fly off in any direction, but that it will come back, and will not be lost while the rubber remains unbroken. No matter in what direction the fickle thoughts fly, the heart must break with God before distracted thoughts can make us insincere. The thing that should worry people in this matter is, not whether the mind was distracted, but, rather, whether the will was distracted. It is best of all to have both attention and intention; it is not insincerity to have the latter without the former.

The fault of the Pharisees was that they laid all stress upon the exterior action and neglected or made little of the sincere heart. They accused the Apostles because they had omitted some ceremonial washing of one kind or another. They hardly noted or cared to note whether it was love of God inspired the exterior acts. The Pharisees would reduce piety to machinery. Religion

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would be turned into a collection of phonograph disks. Some of the ancients had certain religious formulas in word or act stereotyped, and all that posterity would have to do would be to reproduce the identical formulas. Christ objected to reducing the service of God to the heartlessness of a talking-machine. The heart is far away from a phonograph voice; Christ wanted lip and heart to be near, and the most successful spring or dynamo is no substitute in religion for the sincere heart.

II.

Christ had the sincerest of all hearts. His words rang true; they were the echo of a true Heart. His Heart had in Its spiritual sense, from the first moment It beat, one and the same pulse with His Father's will, as It had in Its material sense the same blood and beat with the Heart of His mother. The intention of Christ never deviated from the will of His Father. "In the head of the book it was written of Me, I come to do Thy Will, O God," were the words on Christ's lips when His Heart began to throb. "Thy will be done" were

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the words on Christ's lips when, obedient unto death to His Father's wishes, His Heart ceased to throb upon the cross.

All His life the sincerity of Christ in word and deed impressed every one. It was, no doubt, the note of sincerity as well as the wonder of His teaching that made His hearers say that no one spoke as He did. His slightest acts were marked by the like sincerity. His tears shed at the tomb of Lazarus drew forth even from His enemies the testimony of His sincerity. "Behold how He loved him," they cried. His constant rebuke of the insincerity of the Pharisees is the clearest revelation of His own sincere Heart. No one ever stigmatized in stronger or more striking language than He the vice of insincerity. We fear almost to quote the simple, straightforward words, the strong pictures He made use of. Vipers, sewers, soiled dishes, sepulchres of bones, and other such terms which Christ applied to the hypocrisy and insincerity of the Pharisees, would shock the squeamish ears of modern congregations. Their tremendous significance, however, is an evidence of what Christ thought of the insincere heart, and a proof of the pure, crystal sincerity of His

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own. Insincerity was so loathsome in His sight that His imagination went to the basest and most disgusting pictures of human physical corruption to get a language to describe the grossness of the insincere heart.

Our Lord is often pictured with His Heart revealed to our gaze, and that unveiled prominence has its lesson of sincerity, which may be made clear with the help of a simple English phrase. The one who wears his heart on his sleeve is a man who might desire to be insincere, but could hardly be so in act. To wear the heart on the sleeve is, in the meaning of the words, to have no secrets from the world, to be transparent to all observers, to have one's thoughts and wishes known even before they find expression upon the lips. The phrase is not always complimentary in English. It is often used to describe a sudden, effusive and trustful simplicity which passes for weakness in the opinion of men. The words do not, then, express a quality which most people would care to possess, at least for all the time. But there are occasions when all would perhaps like to wear their hearts on their sleeves. In the worry of a misunderstanding, when our

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hearts are right but our thoughts are perplexed and explanations seem only to add further complications; in the bitterness of sorrow, when the pressure would be eased and the poison pass away if all could be told as we feel it, and, most of all, in troubles of the conscience, where shame or ignorance of the right terms make us halt and stumble as we try to tell our story; in all these cases it would be as great a gain to wear the heart on the sleeve as it would be to have the doctor be able to know our most embarrassing diseases without the confusing necessity of telling him. Then we should be glad to reveal ourselves in sincerity as well as in simplicity.

If any such occasion ever arises in our life, then we can turn to the Heart of Christ, which He graciously deigns to wear upon His breast that, with the proofs and tests of His love evident in our eyes, we may be attracted to Him who has no secrets from us and is pleased when we have no secrets from Him. Misunderstanding, sorrow, troubles of conscience will find relief in recourse to the Heart of Christ. He has demanded of us the humility of acknowledging our sins to His priests, but His Heart

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beating before our eyes in the full attractiveness of His humble, sacrificing love will draw us to put our confidence in Him, and with the strength of that sincere revelation have courage to go on to the further revelation which His merciful justice has laid upon us as a duty. The Heart of Christ is not far from us. He has brought It as near to us as He could. He stands before us with It fully exposed. That revelation invites our revelation. There is nothing between His Heart and ours; there should be nothing between our hearts and His. His sincere Heart should be the forceful incentive to make our hearts sincere to Him and to His ministers.

Finally, Christ gives us the supremest revelation of a sincere heart. "This people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me." The distance between the lip and the heart is the measure of sincerity. The nearer those two points are the greater will be the sincerity. Christ brought the two points together; He identified them. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." What was the end? Not His death merely. Even beyond that He gave testi-

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mony of His love; beyond that His Heart spoke. Under the pressure of the centurion's spear His Heart took lips, lips eloquent of the greatest love man ever had. There is the divine model of sincerity, of the heart-voice. Lips and heart are there one and identical. The Heart of Christ is the sincere Heart, speaking truthfully through red, rent lips of the true love within.

THE UNSELFISH HEART

The multitude of believers had but one heart.

I.

THAT two hearts should beat as one is the ideal, it would seem, of human affection. Such heart-duets are scarce enough outside of poetry and fiction. In everyday life discord arises after a few beats, and the choir breaks up at the end of the first song. Heaven's ideal of harmony is something still higher. There are not two or more hearts beating as one; there is only one heart doing the beating for a multitude. There can be no discord; there is only one voice. "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul." There were many veins and arteries but there was only one heart, a great, warm heart pumping life-blood through the innumerable ways, reddening, heating, enriching, invigorating innumerable bodies. One sun is the color and warmth and life of the human race; one heart gave color and warmth and life to the Christian Church.

"The multitude had but one heart." That is, we believe, the greatest miracle of the

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New Testament; that is a convincing proof of the divinity of the Christian Church. God alone could accomplish that tremendous achievement, and so it was, for in the verse just before the one quoted you may read: "And when they had prayed, the place was moved wherein they had assembled; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." It was the Holy Ghost that took the multitudes of hearts, melted them in the furnace of Heaven and then moulded one heart for all out of them all.

What was the change wrought in that conquering, purifying fire, which made men's hearts lose everything individual, peculiar, private and selfish so that they blended and were moulded into one, unalloyed mass of virgin ore? A multitude of sheep become one flock because they acknowledge one shepherd and hearken to one voice that they know. Every sheep has to give up its own inclinations and submit to the inclination of the shepherd. As long as they retain their own voice they are just sheep; when they take one voice they become a flock.

All unity in some way begins with individual sacrifice and is perfected by one principle. What was the sacrifice, what the

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unifying principle that put one great heart into a multitude, that wedded, or rather that welded, multiplicity into unity? The answer is found in the words following those first quoted: "Neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them." The sacrifice each one made was of "his own" and the unifying principle was "common to all." Detachment and unselfishness are the instruments that in the hands of the Holy Ghost made the one heart. The fleshy wrapping of the human heart is called the pericardium and is made of tough sinew. It is painful to stretch it far. But the moral pericardium, the selfish wrapping around the human will is tougher still. The early Christians did not try to stretch it; they threw it away, and the Holy Ghost put all their wills inside of one large pericardium. They gave up all personal, possessive pronouns of the singular number. "Mine, thine, his," and the like make little hearts; "ours," or rather "God's," make the great, unselfish, one heart.

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II.

What heart was more unselfish than the Heart of Christ? The hearts of the early Christians were once selfish; Christ's Heart never was. Their hearts were narrow, small and had to be enlarged; the Heart of Christ was made large from the beginning. It was made to hold God's love for men; it was made to hold all men. A great miracle, indeed, it was to identify the varied wishes of the multitude, and bring them by detachment and unselfishness to unite in one wish; a marvel, to thrill all with the same common love, and turn all hearts one way as obediently as all the compasses of the world face one direction under the spell of the magnetic current. But Christ's detachment and His unselfishness are a divine wonder. Christ could not detach Himself from His Divinity. That was Himself. But to all outward appearances He had done so. The prophets saw Him detached almost from His humanity. "He was a worm and no man." St. Paul saw Him detached from His royalty. "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Something harder and more generous in our way of thinking was the detachment

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of Christ from His own will. His Heart, in the truest sense of the word, was not His own; It was the Father's and ours. Christ sacrificed for us the personal, possessive pronouns. "Not Mine," "the business of the Father," "the will of the Father," "the will of Him that sent Me," this is the language of Christ's Heart, the evidence of the complete identification of His will with the Father's will.

The possessions of the early Christians were anybody's because they were everybody's. Such too, was the complete surrender of the Heart of Christ to us. Its love is for all and yet as fully for each of us as if each were all. "He loved me; He delivered Himself up for me," cries St. Paul, and everyone may say the same with like sublime egotism. There is not a single drop of blood in Christ's Heart that had any other purpose in coming into life, in continuing in life and going out of life than that. Every drop says: "I love you; I deliver myself up for you, and if you were the only one in existence, My Heart's blood would go out for you." There is the truly unselfish heart that holds the universe and loves all without ceasing to love each.

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How eager that unselfish Heart was to show that Its contents had but one purpose, to be shed for us! His blood was deeply stirred in the Garden at the spectacle of the Passion. It felt straitened until that great work should be accomplished. If the casing of His Heart would try to restrain that bubbling flood, then in Its supreme unselfishness It would know what to do; It would break through the barriers of flesh and form beads and streams of ruddy sweat, anticipating in unselfish eagerness the Calvary of the morrow.

THE ENLIGHTENED HEART

Grieved for the blindness of their hearts.

I.

BLINDNESS of heart is a strange phrase. The heart feels, worries, loves, but does the heart see? And how can the heart be blind? For us the heart more commonly means the source of willing and feeling, less commonly the source of thinking. But in the Scripture the heart often has the meaning of mind; yet always with a shade of difference. When the mind thinks the truth may be bright and clear, but cold, like sunlight in the Arctic zone; when the heart thinks, the truth is warm, like sunlight in warmer zones. The will is never far away when there is talk about the heart, and when our Blessed Lady was pondering the words and deeds of her Son in her heart, it was, we may be sure, no idle reverie, but a deliberate act of the warmest love that made her think and kept her thinking. Knowledge precedes love and love precedes knowledge. We will to open our eyes, and we see to will some more.

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Blindness of heart is a strange phrase, but it is a serious one, and implies a state that filled the gentle Lord with grief and anger. Witness the vivid picture given us by St. Mark: "And looking round about on them with anger, being grieved for the blindness of their hearts." There was a lightning flash of anger in the glance which swept the circle of Pharisees on that eventful Sabbath, and that flash, or the look of sad pity which succeeded it, should have found its way through the blindness of even a Pharisaical heart. There was something of the same vexation, though tempered with more grief, when our Lord had to reproach His Apostles for blindness of heart. The Pharisees were blind because they would not see, but the Apostles were blind because they could not see. "Why do you reason, because you have no bread? Do you not yet know or understand? Have you still your heart blinded?"

There is a blindness of heart which closes its eyes to all light. Of such blindness there is scarcely question in the texts cited. There is, however, another blindness which falsifies the light, color-blindness, and another still which dims the light, a kind of short-

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sightedness. The Pharisees saw something. They saw the law. But like people whose eyes do not respond to red, they were blind to the spirit and the purpose of the law. The law is not an end in itself. It is made for a purpose; it exists for a purpose, and wilfully to close one's eyes to that purpose is to be blind of heart. Christ gave them light enough. He taught them by reprehension, by action, by a miracle, by a clear and pointed statement of the spirit of the Sabbath law, but all this light was wasted on the Pharisees. Christ cured the withered hand before their eyes, and put his teaching into the terse balance of an epigram: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." All in vain! The Pharisees "going out immediately made a consultation how they might destroy him."

What is this terrible blindness which can resist so much light? It is pride of will. No one is so blind as he who will not see. To admit that Christ was right was to confess that they were wrong, was to submit to His teaching, to obey His decisions, to make an open acknowledgement to their own little world that they were inferior to their new teacher. His words were clear; His proofs

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were convincing, but their wills were proud and stubborn. They did not simply cover their eyes or close them with lids which might readily part again. Rather they blinded themselves, refusing to yield free obedience to the teaching of Christ. The Pharisees plucked out the eye of their heart and would not see Christ's interpretation of the law.

The Apostles were blind, too, but their blindness was due to a lack of light, not to a rejection of the light. Their vision had not been destroyed. It needed, however, to be rectified. When Christ told them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Apostles understood Him literally, and were somewhat alarmed because most of their bakers belonged to the Pharisees. There was to be no more bread for them, they thought. Christ had to tell them that the leaven of the Pharisees meant the Pharisees' hypocrisy, their evil doctrines, which would secretly permeate and corrupt the soul. He reminded His Apostles that He had fed thousands, and there were baskets of fragments over and above. But He talked to men whose spiritual eyesight was dim, whose souls were not lifted above the tangible and sensible, whose vision was hampered by the material and did not pierce

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to the spiritual. "Have you still your heart blinded?"

Blind of heart are those whose whole life is given to pleasures and to the gratification of the senses. Blind of heart are those who make wealth the only good and the supreme good. Blind of heart are those to whom applause is the sweetest of sounds, and a high position the greatest delight. All these do not savor the things of God. To speak to them of the delights of prayer, of the consolation of Communion, of peace of conscience, is to use a foreign language. They hear the words; they note the gestures; they cannot fathom the meaning. A man of no literary tastes cannot understand the enjoyment of poetry. It seems to him mid-summer madness. A man of blinded heart looks on religion and its practices as so many mysteries, cannot imagine they possess any charm, and deems religious people weak-minded or unbalanced.

II.

The so-called nebular theory is a possible explanation of the universe; it may be true or further explanations may prove it false,

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but it will serve to illustrate a solidly established fact. The Incarnation witnessed the creation of another light, the light of the moral world. God had said: "Let there be light, and light was made." In the Incarnation He may be considered to have said, "Let there be love, and the Heart of Christ was made." If the primitive nebula, which theory conjectures, contained all the energy of the universe, the Heart of Christ which was God's love made flesh, is the burning source of all light, heat and motion in the universe of souls. Into the Heart of Christ was poured the ocean of God's love and out of It has flowed every drop of grace which has exercised an effect in this world.

"Of His fulness we all have received." Out of the reservoir of His love, which God created for us at the Incarnation and opened for us upon the cross came the universe of grace, with its planets and suns and moons and constellations, that light up and adorn the firmament of the new creation, more brilliant than the firmament which God's Omnipotence arched over our head when He said, "Let there be light," and broader, because this arch stretches its span far into a horizonless eternity. From the brief

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splendor of the passing thought or wish which prompts to repentance or lights the way to higher virtue, even to the undimmed and steady radiance of the holiest soul's highest sanctity, all came from the fire kindled by the Heart of Christ. Apostles and missionaries carry that light into the darkness of paganism. Doctors and teachers explore with it the innermost recesses of baffling truths. The pastors of the Church from priest to Pope have the guidance of the Light of the World when they lead their flocks along the ways which pass from night to eternal day. Christ is the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and the Heart of Christ is the center and source of that tremendous and unfailing energy. The light of the world was kindled into flame by the love of His Heart.

In the narrower world of the blinded individual the Heart of Christ is the light, the healer of blindness. Christ became a victim to laws blindly interpreted. His Heart was laid open in obedience to law. That spear is the fit instrument, and fit emblem of the blind law. A blind law is cold, is edged with sharpness, is relentless. So was that spear. Pride may be broken; it refuses to bend.

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The spear of the Roman soldier will represent the pride which blinds hearts to the meaning of a law. Ah, but God's law came in obedience, in humility, in love; it came in a heart. Wherever love goes with the law, there will be no blindness to the spirit of the law. When Christ's heart was opened on the cross, all blind hearts won the power to open their closed eyes to the light and to see, just as Longinus, the centurion, saw the light and threw away his rigid spear and became a saint.

The loving heart will not be blind to the purpose of the law, and the loving heart will rightly interpret the meaning of the law. Love will cure color-blindness and short-sightedness. The heart never forgets the person for whose benefit the law is, for the law is not for the pride of the ruler but for the good of the ruled. The heart does not miss the meaning of the law. The eyes of charity see all and see deep. When the heart of the Apostles had been prepared by living with Christ, by seeing Him die, by feeling His love and learning to love Him in turn, when, in a word, their hearts were made like His Heart, no longer did they misinterpret His meaning. With the instinct of love, as a

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mother divines the need of her child, they went to the meaning of Christ's words. Some hidden selfishness, perhaps the urgent thought of their bodily necessities, made the Apostles' hearts blind when they heard their teacher speak of the leaven of the Pharisees. There was only one kind of a yeast for them. But when love ruled supreme, they went to the heart of things. They understood and were short-sighted no more.

To cure blindness perfectly there is need of two things: of good light and of good sight. The Heart of Christ furnishes both remedies in full perfection for blindness of heart. His Heart it was, Love Incarnate, that became the Light of the World. His Heart it was that gave good eyes to the hearts of men by showing them that love must enforce the law and love must interpret the law. By dying under the spear-point of tyranny and ignorance, the Heart of Christ won the grace for all to see, and It became the medium for all to see, became the crystal lenses of love rectifying the imperfect visions of men.

THE HEART OF SYMPATHY

The heart of this people is grown gross.

I.

SYMPATHY is the nurse for illness of the soul. It smiles with hope when we are despondent; it is gentle and soothing when we are in anguish, and when the crisis comes and the soul hovers between life and death, sympathy never leaves the side of the sufferer, easing the pain by every possible means and tempering the fever when it ranges alarmingly above normal. How sensitive sympathy is! It quivers like the eyelid and surrounds the object of its care as promptly as the lashes of the eye meet across the sight. Scientists tell us of a wonderful substance called ether, which bears the light and electricity upon its swift waves. The universe, they say, is poised in it as in a mass of infinitely light, palpitating, unresisting jelly. It seems to offer no opposition or resistance, responding to the slightest touch. Wonderful substance, truly, and almost in contradiction with itself! Yet sympathy is more responsive,

The Heart of Sympathy

more receptive than ether. The sun touches the ether, and in eight minutes that delicate substance has brought the touch to our eye, ninety millions of miles away, and we see the light. But sympathy is swifter. When the thoughts race, and thought is faster than light, sympathy outstrips them all. Sympathy even anticipates the slow mind. It is prophetic, it foresees.

If sympathy is swifter than thought, its home must be in the heart, and not in the mind, and so it is. Surely charity is of the heart, and sympathy is nothing more than winged charity. Anything that will weigh down the heart will clip the wings of sympathy and fetter its flight. Our Lord and His Apostles looked for sympathy, and, we have sad reason to believe, often lacked it. Therefore, it was that a passage of Isaias, describing lack of sympathy, was often quoted by the Apostles, as it had been by our Lord. In every Gospel, in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, we find the passage mentioned or alluded to. St. Matthew has it thus: "And the prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled in them, who saith: 'By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see and

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shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross.'”

The heart that is gross (the word means fat, dull, heavy) is not sympathetic. Such a heart stops sympathy at the fountain-head; instead of being sensitive, it is callous; instead of being prophetic, it is blind and deaf. Such a heart cannot fly; it cannot crawl, but it is tied to itself and caged within the narrow limits of selfishness. The great English dramatist has said the final word on the last stage of the gross heart, lost to all sense and feeling. He describes a heart in which there has not been merely degeneration by the deposit of fat in the muscles of the heart, but the complete absorption of the heart in fat. “Duller shouldst thou be,” says the ghost of his father to Hamlet,

“than the fat weed

That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf.”

Not a single element of that picture should be lost, not “weed,” nor “roots,” nor “ease,” nor “Lethe,” the land of complete forgetfulness, nor “wharf,” where the well-watered weeds grow rankest, if one would get a complete view of the gross heart which Isaias complained of, when he was enter-

The Heart of Sympathy

ing upon his mission, and whose complaint our Lord and His Apostles found justified in the audiences they appealed to. They looked for sympathetic hearts, and in many cases found gross hearts that closed eye and ear and every avenue of knowledge to the message of Christ, hearts that would not let even a whisper of Christ's voice stir their weedy fibers as they slumbered in forgetfulness and ease forevermore.

II.

To have a sympathetic heart of the truest kind there are three requisites: unselfishness, knowledge and experience. As the magnet looks northward, sympathy looks outward. Sympathy is essentially unselfish; it is the flower of Christian civilization. In fact, there is a danger of overdoing sympathy in our day. The sentimentality that sends flowers to a murderer and ignores the widows and orphans of the murdered, that feels more for animals than for man, is not true sympathy. No virtue is found in excess or extravagance, and pity for brute beasts should not go so far as to arrest a New Jersey man for cruelty to animals or

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for heartless vivisection when he dispatches one of the pests of his native shore. Besides unselfishness, sympathy calls for knowledge. We must know another's sorrow and pain to feel for him. Nor is knowledge enough for the most perfect sympathy; experience, which, after all, is the ripest knowledge, produces the truest sympathy. The one who can say, "I have suffered the same way myself," is likely to have the most sympathetic heart.

Now, where can these three elements be found in greater completeness than in the Heart of Christ? That Heart was utterly unselfish. It was made for others; it was a gift to us. It came into existence bearing an address, and it was addressed to us. A letter is not at all for itself; it is for the one to whom it is addressed. The Heart of Christ has the same unselfishness and its contents are wholly for us. Every drop of its blood is for us as well as all their gathered wealth in the precious receptacle of His Heart. Not a single soul of all mankind was excluded from His sympathy. "God so loved the world as to give." The gift to the world was to all. Christ does not withhold the blood of His Heart from

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anyone. It goes to everyone. If it does not reach its destination, it is because the human will rejects the gift. In our sympathy we transmit feeling by means of words; in Christ's sympathy His Heart brings blood to His suffering ones by means of His infinite power everywhere present.

Christ read the hearts of men. "He knew their thoughts, He knew what was in man"; these and like statements occur frequently in the Gospel. As God, He had the unique privilege, denied to everyone else, of being the searcher of hearts. Therefore, could the Heart of Christ be sympathetic. Then, as for experience of pain and sorrow, who that has read Isaias' prophecy and its more than perfect fulfilment in the Passion can mention a species of pain or grief, or a degree of pain and grief which Christ did not experience in His life and death? Theologians have weighed and numbered His sorrows: saints have with the ingenuity of love described and valued them. For us all there is proof that we can see and hear. Our eyes are fascinated with the horror of His bloody sweat which reveals in lurid red how His blood fled in terror from the prospects of anguish and

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torment. Our ears are chilled with the cry of divine abandonment which springs out of the soul of Christ from the consummation of His torture.

The Heart of Christ must have been sympathetic, and a reading of His life-story shows that it was. Sympathy is the promptness of charity, the delicate refinement of the rarest love. To show all that in Christ's Heart is simply to rehearse the Gospel. Take instances none can fail to understand. Children are most susceptible to sympathy. They do not reason about it, they feel it. The pretense of it can scarcely escape their detection. Then remember how the children flocked around Christ and felt at home near His Heart, whereas the well-meaning Apostles felt, we may imagine, as awkward as a locomotive colliding with the fragile lace of a spider's gossamer web.

Christ's dealing with sinners is another luminous revelation of His sympathetic Heart. The world of His day could not understand it. It would not, if it could, tread upon the same earth with the sinner. Christ's Heart had no such unsympathetic aloofness. The proud, sensitive sinner who hardened into stone under the scorn of the

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world, melted into the tears of repenting sorrow, and followed the children into the circle of Christ's Heart. We are content to rest the proof of the sympathy of the Heart of Christ on the conduct of the mothers and their children, on the simple words of her who said, "No man, Lord," on the actions of Magdalene, on the tears of Peter, who succumbed to one glance of sympathy.

THE FORGIVING HEART

So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

I.

PARISIANS point with pride to their gigantic sewers and have arrangements by which visitors can go down to and examine the six hundred miles of tunnels, freighted with the refuse of a large city. No village, we believe, has ever conducted with civic self-satisfaction even one traveler to its humble gutters. It may be upon the same principle that great criminals achieve a certain distinction denied to the starving pauper who takes a loaf of bread. Perhaps some such idea possessed the mind of the servant in the Gospel who was forgiven a debt of twelve million dollars. Very few could point with pride to so gigantic a deficit in their accounts, and it should scarcely astonish us when the proud possessor of so great a distinction throttled a fellow-servant whose deficit was just fifteen dollars, or about a million times less. Unhappily for the distinguished

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criminal, the master of both servants was insensible to mere size as a title to fame, and, revoking the gift of twelve millions which he had made by canceling a lawful debt, he delivered the millionaire debtor to the torture until he should pay all. The amount of that torture is appalling, but more appalling are the words with which the story concludes: "So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts."

No doubt our Lord purposely made this parable striking in its details, details which are verified only where God is the master who forgives infinite offences and men are the slaves who forgive not petty faults. In reality, however, it is almost unbelievable that any master would let his servant accumulate so immense a debt, and almost impossible that any man would be so mean, so contemptible, so small of heart as to turn around and throttle his fellow when he had so much forgiven himself. We say "almost impossible," because man's selfishness is so colossal and his imagination can so exaggerate his own troubles and so minimize his neighbor's troubles that no inconsistency of conduct is astonishing where

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wounded self-love and a heated fancy get to brooding on wrongs.

One great reason why forgiveness from the heart is so scarce among men is to be found in the exaggerations of self-love. No one deserves the consideration we are entitled to. Our wrongs are so great, are so personal, so intimate to us, that no one else, we think, can appreciate them at their true value. We can always see reasons why others should feel their wrongs less keenly, but in our case there was something about the person or the time or the manner of the injury that in our brooding and distempered minds we are persuaded that we have discovered a new, unheard-of species of sorrow—ours. No doubt the servant in the Gospel was a victim of such stupendous self-love. Like the watch-maker, he screwed a microscope into one eye and turned its gaze upon the tiny little sum owed to him until it assumed gigantic proportions, and closed up tight the other eye, which ought to have been looking at what he owed to his master. He exaggerated others' debts; he obliterated his own. It is a calumny upon the honorable profession of watch-makers to liken them to unforgiving hearts.

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They, at any rate, have this consolation: their work is useful and necessary, and when it is over their countenance resumes its accustomed grace and beauty, but the unlovely, strained looks of an unforgiving heart never relax into peace and sweetness. Equipped with magnifying glass on one eye and an impenetrable blind on the other, the unforgiving heart shuts out the whole world and brings its bent, peering gaze to bear upon the life-long contemplation and distortion of its wrongs.

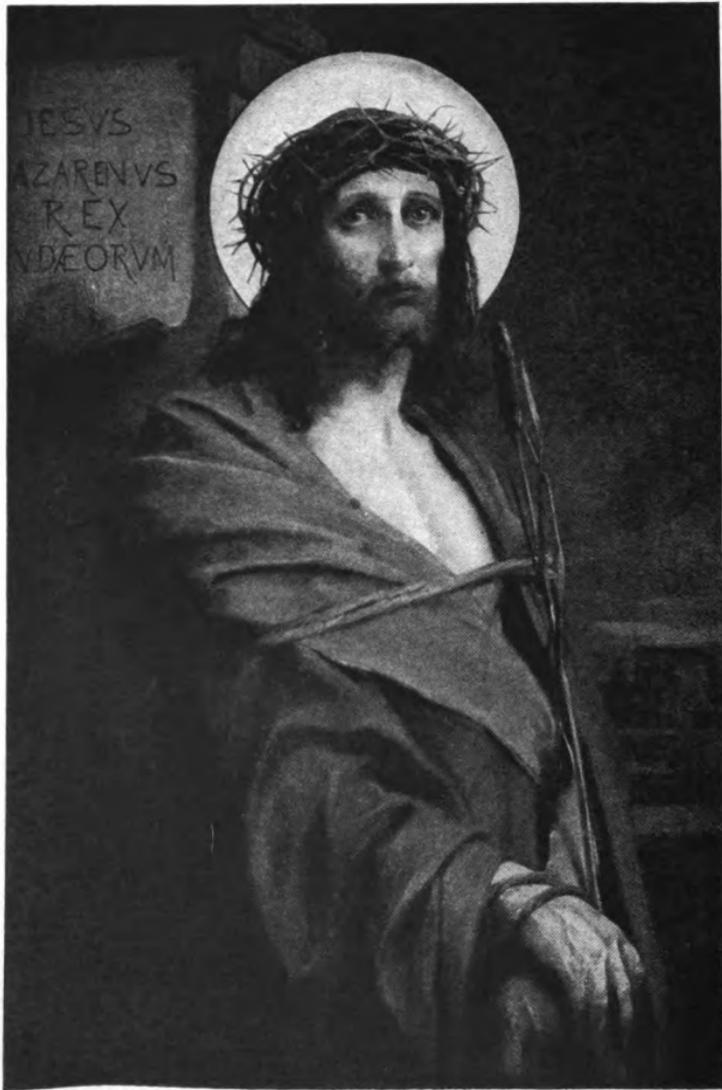
II.

Forgiveness of enemies was a virtue dear to the Heart of Christ. It is one of those virtues, like humility and virginity, which are so sublime and so opposed to the natural impulses of human nature that their revelation and teaching by Christ seems to many to prove His Divinity. Surely, then, if He may be said to love one virtue more than another, it would be one which was His own because He was the first to teach it to the world.

His revelation of this virtue was as perfect as it was new, and in that we may

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see another reason why the forgiveness of enemies was dear to His Heart. No one has conceived or can conceive a single perfection which may be added to this virtue as taught by Christ. The forgiveness is to be perfect in extent, including all; perfect in its promptness, letting not the sun to go down upon its anger; perfect in its practice, not calling another a fool, not exacting an eye for an eye, not harboring evil thoughts or judging him. So thought, word and deed were to be filled with forgiveness. The virtue was no less perfect in its continuous performance. The forgiving of trespassers was to be as regular as the petition for daily bread. There was to be no limit to the number of times it was to be exercised. Its exercise, if necessary, would reach the perfect number, "seventy times seven times." Forgiveness was to be the perfect badge of Christ's followers. "By this all men shall know you." It was to be perfect in its sincerity, forgiving from the heart; perfect in its sanction, because in what measure we mete to others, it shall be meted to us; perfect, finally, in its model and standard, because we are to forgive as Christ forgave, we are to be merciful as



will be a true and complete forgiveness of all our sins, and a teacher's life will be a life of peace and joy, and our enemies will be our friends, and we shall be united to Christ.

Forgiveness is the key that opens the door of mercy so full into the heart of man, and all our sins and wrongs have been forgiven by the Heart of Christ by His imagination. The Heart of Christ is the source of all healing and overcoming, and the Heart of Christ is the model of the Heart of God, and the Heart of Christ is the healing of all our sins, and the Heart of Christ is the unforgiving heart of God, and the Heart of Christ is entirely a giving heart, and the Heart of Christ is the Heart of Christ, and sees in them a man, and it is infinite, cannot be compared.

Away back in the days of old, what was God's Heart? What was Christ? Some anointed a vessel full of the Heart of Christ, and they are more like the Heart of Christ, and the thoughts of God as God's suffering, wounded Heart, crucified, to be given to us, and of Devotion to the Heart of Christ.



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our heavenly Father is merciful. If the teacher's heart is in his favorite lesson and perfect lesson, then forgiveness of enemies was especially dear to the Heart of Christ.

Forgiveness is difficult because self enters so fully into the wrong and because the wrongs have been so exaggerated by the imagination. The Heart of Christ, by meeting and overcoming these two difficulties is the model of the forgiving heart and the healing of all unforgiving hearts. If the unforgiving heart is selfish, the Heart of Christ is entirely unselfish. If the unforgiving heart exaggerates the faults done it, the Heart of Christ has endured wrongs and sees in them a malice which, because it is infinite, cannot be exaggerated.

Away back in the depths of eternity, what was God's first view of the Heart of Christ? Some answer that He saw It as a vessel full of the fire of love; others, and they are more numerous, declare that the Heart of Christ never appeared in the thoughts of God as anything else than a suffering, wounded Heart, created to be crucified, to be pierced, to die. The symbol of Devotion to the Sacred Heart was never,

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so they hold, even in God's designs, to be different, if the Heart was to be at all. It was made to be a holocaust for sin. From first to last, and in every part of Its brimming contents, It was destined for others and for the sins of others. It was to be the great peace-maker between infinite worth and infinite offence, between God and God's enemy. The Heart of Christ, then, had not a trace of the taint of unforgiveness. It was planned from eternity for forgiveness; it was created in time for forgiveness; it lived and died for the same Divine purpose. The Heart of Christ is forgiveness itself. It is mercy in its most winning and most perfect form, mercy made into a Heart.

How well, then, may the Heart of Christ serve as a model of the forgiving heart! No selfishness there; no acute sensitiveness to receive and retain wrongs. It was pure unselfishness, utterly flawless forgiveness. A diamond is transfigured carbon, changed from density and darkness into marvelous brilliance by the power of crystallization. Imagine all the carbon of the world collected into one mass, heated to glowing incandescence, subjected to the necessary

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pressure, and allowed to cool so that every atom would fall into line in obedience to the marshalling forces of crystallization. Then you would have a diamond planet without a flaw or blemish, which would flash back the garnered sheaves of sunlight in blinding splendor. A poet's dream all that, you say. Yet the Heart of Christ is more wonderful still. Infinite love has transfigured It into total unselfishness. It gathers up into Itself God's infinite mercy, and pours it back upon the enemies of God, making every drop of His blood to reflect God's infinite forgiveness.

The unforgiving heart is not only selfish, but it exaggerates its wrongs. Humorists are fond of showing how a lively imagination and a poor nervous condition can bring upon a man more diseases in an hour than he could get in the contagious ward of a hospital in a century. Wrongs and offended dignity are, if possible, worse victims of the tyrant imagination than weak nerves. Does the Heart of our Lord meet this weakness of the unforgiving heart? It does, and most successfully. Let us take, unforgiving heart, the very wrong which infuriates you most, which has been turned into a monster by a

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heated imagination. The Heart of Christ felt that very same wrong, has seen in it not any false malice manufactured by temporary madness, but the true malice of it, which far exceeds the powers of imagination. His Heart is more tender than yours and has felt your wrong more keenly than you have, and has felt it longer than you have, because He felt it from His first heartbeat to His last. You are wounded for one reason, because you are offended; Christ for two reasons, because He is offended and because you are. He feels your wrong, because you are His brother, because your wrong is His wrong, because your wrong is God's wrong. There is, then, a malice in your wrong which Christ knows and feels in His Heart, a malice that is infinite. You think it is a great thing that you should be offended; our Lord understands that it is an infinitely greater thing that God should be offended. The Heart of Christ, therefore, says to you, unforgiving heart: "I have understood your wrong better than you, have seen it so black that it could not be blacker, have felt it more deeply because it was more Mine than yours, have forgiven it after all, and have

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died for it." What will you answer to that appeal, unforgiving heart?

And yet that is not all the Heart of Christ has done. It has not only forgiven the wrongs done to it, but by a divine refinement of mercy and charity It changed the blow that was dealt It into a benefit for the hand that dealt the blow, and conferred on Its murderers the power of salvation and life everlasting in the very act in which they robbed It of life, dying for those who were killing It, saving those who were slaying It. The blood that rushed from the Heart of Christ went speeding upon an errand of mercy, hurrying out to heal Its enemies and destroyers; it was warm, eternal, infinite forgiveness from the Heart.

THE DETACHED HEART

The devil now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him.

I.

THE Irish orator, Curran, was very fond of trees. Near his house there was a very fine one, whose growth he watched with care, whose beauty he learned to love. As years went on, the tree grew and spread and finally encroached upon the house, blocking the light and pushing here and there against the walls and roof with its branches, seeking a chance to expand. "You will have to cut down that tree," said a friend to Curran. "I was thinking of taking down the house," replied the orator.

The human heart has its growths, which it loves and watches and makes sacrifices to, and to meet that tendency we have the virtue of detachment. Detachment plants in the proper place, keeps rank growth well pruned, and if need be, lays the axe to the root rather than lose a greater good. It saves the house rather than the tree. For Curran the tree may have been more valu-

The Detached Heart

able, but for detachment the soul is more than its attachments. Detachment is at the head of the bureau for the conservation of spiritual resources. It does not permit the energies of the soul to be wasted or monopolized by passion to the exclusion of the soul's supreme interest, God Himself. Detachment, then, uproots or controls all attachments except one, attachment to God.

The Gospel gives the complete history of a disastrous attachment which grew, which overshadowed the soul, and which finally destroyed the soul. St. John tells us the last stage: "The devil now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him." "You will have to give up that attachment for the purse," said detachment. "I will give up Christ," replied Judas. It was a question of the axe or the rope, and rather than lay the axe to the root, attachment chose the rope. The devil had easy access into that attached heart.

The attachment of Judas did not grow in a day. To leave all and follow Christ shows no roots of avarice in the heart, but at least the seeds of the highest holiness. Judas left all, yet, with the weak inconsistency of human nature, he let the strings of

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a purse wind about his heart, as Peter, with like weakness and inconsistency, was willing to face, and no doubt would have faced, a thousand sword-blades, but did not face the tongue of one maid.

Judas alone could tell us how attraction changed to inclination, how inclination blossomed to evil desire, and how evil desire branched out into the full growth of attachment. Then came the blocking out of the light, the overshadowing of dark principles, the unchecked wild struggle for mastery. This was the stage of deceit when attachment decked itself out as a virtue. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pieces of silver and given to the poor?" asked Judas, and from the Gospel it is clear that he whispered this hypocrisy to the other Apostles. They were deceived, and in good but mistaken faith took up the complaint. There you have a picture of the essential meanness of attachment. It would not be too much to believe that Judas kept in the background, while his poisoned dupes fought his battles for him. Cowardice, meanness, hypocrisy, poisoning of souls, such are the deadly fruits of attachment.

The final stage came when attachment

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was full grown. It staggers us to think that a man would sell another man, though the other was a worthless one, for thirty pieces of silver, for nineteen dollars and a half. That was the price to be paid for a murdered slave. Judas accepted the pittance with its insulting memories and agreed to betray Jesus. It was money or Christ, and attachment, with its blinding, grappling hold upon the soul, had its way, and Christ was crucified.

No doubt other motives helped avarice at the end, but a full-grown attachment so exaggerates the object of its selfishness as to debase and pervert every other noble instinct of the soul. The shock of the completed crime alone opens the eyes again, and then God's infinite mercy must be grasped and held to or the heinous foulness of the attachment's cancerous growth will excite the loathing of despair.

II.

The successive stages of attachment are: love of earthly good for God and with God, love of earthly good and God, love of earthly good without God, love of earthly

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good against God. The Heart of Christ, which belonged to God, the Second Person, could never pass out of the first stage. It was and ever will be for God and with God. It does, however, give us a picture of perfect detachment, meeting and counter-acting the various stages of attachment: the planting, the overshadowing, the final struggle.

When Christ, our Lord, looked into the world to choose a mother and a place of birth and a manner of life, all the attractions of earth lay before Him: wealth, honor, intellect, power, comfort, pleasure. He passed them all by and chose Mary, Bethlehem and Calvary; purity, poverty and pain. So the seed of every human attachment was banished at once from the Heart of Christ and therein was planted the love of virtue and holiness and of suffering. When Christ picked out a Heart for Himself, He took one that was wounded and girt with thorns. Attachment loves the velvet touch of pleasure and the crown of gold, and the noxious plant cannot grow beneath the painful points of the thorns and spear.

Christ also manifested to us His detach-

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ment in opposing the second stage of attachment, where vice masquerades as a virtue, when selfishness is substituted in the soul for God. It was in the desert that Christ allowed Satan to tempt Him and thus reveal to us His Heart, turning to naught the vain deceits of the evil one. It was not to open sensuality that Christ was tempted. Though the temptation was opportunely timed, coming after the long fast, yet it was subtly cloaked under the exercise of power. It offered a chance for self to indulge in deception, to seek the gratification of the flesh under the guise of doing good. Christ unmasked the tempter. No attachment to bread alone will give the soul life. Again, it was not to open pride of life that Christ was tempted in the second instance. The pride was deceitfully allied with the Temple, God's angels and God's Providence, circumstances that seemed to justify in self an exhibition of power. But it was not so that Christ was to assert His power in the Temple, nor was God so to be tempted. Then, finally, the evil one promised to crown self king of the world. Attachment enthrones the same king, and attachment uses the same means that the

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tempter used for Christ. Imaginary pleasures, imaginary power and glory, are spread before the bewitched eyes of the mind. Dreams of new worlds of delight, brittle and brilliant, are the deceitful creations of attachment. Christ bursts the bubble. Not self, but the Lord God alone is to be adored and served.

Christ is, too, our example and our stay in the final struggle against attachment in the death-grapple of soul and selfishness. In the hour of His agony in the Garden there were many sorrows that came to lay their burden upon the stricken Saviour, but of the presence of one heavy sorrow we may be sure. If ever the axe was laid to the root of attachment, it was in that hour. All the attachments of man come from and go back to one great attachment, the love of self. Self will let the soul be lost rather than lose its own gratification. What, then, will self feel when not one or other pleasure is threatened but its own existence is in doubt? The love of life is more than the love of pleasure or power. In His agony Christ struggled with the attachment of all attachments, with the love of life. He saw, He felt His enemies, not simply

The Detached Heart

severing one desire from His Heart, but laying the axe of torture and death to the very juncture of heart and life. "Not My will, but Thine be done!" The detached Heart of Christ makes the supreme sacrifice. It slays self, immolates attachment to life, and offers the holocaust to God. God is never overshadowed or crowded out in the detached heart, and Christ had the most detached of all hearts beating in His breast.

THE WHOLE HEART

Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart.

I.

THE great horizons of the world make our eyes ache; the level stretches of the heaving ocean, the depths of the heavens when the cold north wind cuts the stars into brilliants and gives them perspective, the vast length of the sky across which the thunder sounds, and whose chasm the lightning spans in its leap, these daze and bewilder us. The horizons of the soul are vaster, and never, perhaps, is the spiritual eye more likely to waver and fail than when it strives to pierce the length and width and breadth of the tremendous words of Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind." Immense indeed is the scope of this "first and greatest commandment!" Sunrise gives us a world-wide horizon; this commandment is a dawn in the moral order, dispelling darkness, clearing up the outlook, and widening the gaze to the infinite depths of the

The Whole Heart

heart, the infinite height of the soul, the infinite width of the mind.

We are commanded to have the whole heart for God. There are no fractions, no small currency in His mart. We do not give Him so much and wait for the change. He takes all our gold. We are commanded to be whole-hearted, not half-hearted, and it is within our power to be so, for God does not command impossibilities. It is to be noted what this command means; otherwise our soul will surely be bewildered. "Thou shalt love with thy whole heart." We are bid to love with all the heart that belongs to us, that comes within the control of our will. The will does not open or shut at its pleasure the lachrymal glands. It does not light up the eyes with happiness or darken them with sorrow as it wishes. It can spread a smile on the face, but cannot prevent it at times from being no more than muscular. In a word, our feelings are partly rooted in the body, and may be as much beyond our voluntary control as digestion is. The manifestation of feeling may be checked; its presence or absence cannot always be managed as we desire. "With thy whole heart" does not mean with tears

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or smiles. If we long to have these trimmings of human love, that very longing bathes our heart with tears or wreathes it with laughter, even if our lips are marble and our eyes a sandy desert without an oasis. "With thy whole heart" does not mean feeling which we cannot always have; the phrase does mean willing, an action we can always do.

We love God with the whole heart when we do not give our service to false gods or to God's enemies, when we rate God at the highest price in the universe, and His infinite excellence makes it possible and reasonable always to do that. We love God with the whole heart when word and thought and act, and all our life have but one bent and direction, which is towards Him. The right love of self, of family, of friends, of country, are not fractions taken from God's love; on the contrary, they are the parts which make up that love. If the stream flows towards God, not one of those currents must be diverted from paying its due tribute to the sea. The mother weeping in wild grief for her dead child is loving God with her whole heart. God gave her a mother's heart; He imparted a share



THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

longing to have these trinitarian gifts, they are very longing for them, but, as it is, it is as if wreathes of flowers were laid on a marble altar. If our lips are marble, if our hearts are a dry desert without an oasis, if our "sensitive heart" does not have the "sensitive heart" we always have; if we are not always willing, an action we cannot perform.

It is not to love with the whole heart when we are not serving to false gods or idols, when we do not rate God at the same level as the universe, and His infinite love makes it possible and reasonable to be that. We love God with the whole heart when word and deed are one, and all our life have but one object of affection, which is towards Him. Our love of self, of family, of friends, of country, are not fractions taken from God's love; on the contrary, they are the parts which make up that love. If the stream flows towards God, not one of those currents must be diverted from paying its due tribute to the sea. The mother weeping in silent grief for her dead child is loving God with her whole heart. God gave her a mother's heart; He imparted a share



The Whole Heart

of His infinite loveliness to her lost one, and in her very cry and heart-ache is made vocal the void which God left in us to be filled by Himself. The mother would like to, but perhaps cannot, shower on God, as she does on her child, the flood of her tears or the wealth of her smiles, but while she recognizes in the loveliness of her little one but a tiny drop of God's infinite loveliness, she is whole-hearted for her child and for her God.

II.

The Heart of Christ will show us how to weave the separate and various strands of human love into the vesture of many colors, "without a seam," which is to be placed at the feet of God. It would be a mistake to think that the Heart of Jesus did not thrill with the affections which He has implanted in our hearts and wishes us to manifest according to His law. His teaching reveals His Heart. The touching picture of the mother hen gathering her chickens, which described His love for His people; the images of the good shepherd, of the woman's search for the lost coin, of the more than earthly father of the prodig-

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gal, which tell of His love for sinners, those, with many other words of Christ, put before us clearly and tenderly the affections of His Heart.

His friendships are even more significant than His words. They are not all the same. They had an appropriateness in their variety. "I know Mine and Mine know Me." Mary, His Mother, and Mary Magdalene, John and Peter, Lazarus and Martha, all found a place in His Heart, and to each He accorded an individual love, suitable and fitting. The knowledge He had of each was varied; the friendship followed suit. The manifestation, too, of these friendships was different. His Heart showed itself in tears at the tomb of Lazarus, flashed forth a melting look for Peter, thrilled in the deepest tenderness in the call of "Mary" to Magdalene, and was lavished on St. Joseph and His Mother through thirty years of loving subjection.

In spite of, or, rather, because of, all these friendships for those whom He met in life, friendships that are repeated in every soul that turns to Him, the friendship of Christ for His Father was whole-hearted. Indeed, so vigorously, so sternly did He

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assert the absolute claims of His Father, short-sighted criticism forgets that Christ knew the Fourth Commandment, forgets that He was lovingly subject to His Mother ten times longer than He worked openly for the world, and that she was in His thoughts as He died. Criticism forgets all this because it forgets that the love of the mother can be and must be united with the love of God. The fire of whole-heartedness purifies and converts into its own rising flames all the fuel that it touches. Listen to the strong language of whole-heartedness: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." "If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." These are other ways of saying what Christ said in the first commandment, "with thy whole heart." His life, His Heart show us how they are to be understood. God must not have any rivals; to Him all must be directed; and whatever feelings may dictate, if they make willing easy by going with the will or make willing hard by going the other way, the

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will must, as it can, be whole-hearted in preferring God to any created thing when the soul stands at the parting of the ways. It can, and it must, love the friends God gives, but it must stop short at sin. The heart must be whole-hearted.

Look at the love of the Heart of Jesus. It was whole-hearted in extent, for men: "having loved His own, He loved them unto the end;" for God: "He was obedient to death, even to the death of the Cross." "Unto," "even to," are the badges of whole-heartedness. The love of Christ was whole-hearted in its nature. It went forth to creatures without straying from God. The splendor of the sun may be separated by crystal glass or crystal water into its various component colors; the rainbow hues may again be blended into the whiteness whence they came. The love from the Heart of Christ went forth in all its varied beauty to many hearts on earth, but it stayed not centered and arrested in any one, but, uniting its rays, passed on again to God. God is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of the whole heart, and the Heart of Christ was the most complete of whole hearts.

THE FRUITS OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.

I.

THE Church is richer in many ways for the practice of devotion to the Heart of Christ. To choose thus a part of Christ might seem at first sight to narrow the view, to limit the attention, and so decrease knowledge and power; but it has not been so. The view has been intensified, if restricted; the attention has been focussed, and so we know more of Christ and feel more truly the force He exercises. One simple fact is proof. Make a catalogue of the books written on this subject, and you have an index to the riches which have been laid up for the Church by the study and honoring of the Heart of Christ. However, the numbering of books and counting of their pages is a crude way of reckoning our gains. There is a better way, and the heart itself will be the best measure of our increased wealth and in-

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come. What does the heart do for the body? It gives color; it gives warmth; it gives life. See the heart in the glowing face; feel it in the warm hand; experience it in the vigorous action of every member of the body. Color, warmth and life have come to us from devotion to the Heart of Christ.

The candle-sticks on our altars were often, especially years ago, hung with dangling pieces of glass, which multiplied and intensified the lights around them. The altar-boy who was fortunate enough to obtain, either by accident or design, one of those glass pendants considered himself wealthy. He went around looking at everything through his crystal treasure, and he found, to his wonder and delight, that all he saw was edged with brilliant colors. He did not know it then, but he afterwards understood, that those glass pendants were prisms and broke up the white light of the sun, and so clothed the world for him in the fair vesture of the rainbow. The incident is, perhaps, too trivial to be used as an illustration to a great and consoling truth. Yet Christ, who took the mustard seed to picture the kingdom of Heaven, and the hen

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and her little ones to portray His solicitude for His people, will not complain of the trivial, if it will teach the truth clearly and convincingly.

Well, devotion to the Heart of Christ has colored His life and our life. When we look at His life through His Heart, we are looking through the glorifying medium of His love. Every word of His lips and every thought of His mind and every act of His gracious hands is clothed in new light. Every truth about Him, all doctrines, are tinged with a new color. As we look on them through devotion to His Heart, we see them clad in the imperial colors of His love. Everything He said or thought, His whole life, in detail and in fulness, is a gift to us, a gift of divine love. "God so loved the world as to give us His only begotten Son." What is the color that has entered into the life of those devoted to His Heart? It is the return of that which beautified His life. Gratitude is the reflection of love. His life has come to us with every event of it bright and fair with love. Devotion to Christ's Heart gives back to Him lives lit up and colored with grateful love.

Proof is scarcely needed to show how

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devotion to the Heart of Christ has imparted warmth. It has enriched our prayers with a new vocabulary. It has made it impossible for insincerity to speak the language of this devotion and remain unchanged. The effort would be too great. Insincerity will be dumb, or, if it speaks, the earnest, glowing words, like so many insistent strokes, will fall on the most indifferent heart and beat it into fervor, or, perhaps, strike out a grain or two of fire to set a soul in flame and enkindle with good purposes an hour or two of life. Give fire an outlet and you give it intensity. A new language was the outlet of a warm heart which grew warmer with the expression of its devotion.

But the new language was not all. The Heart of Christ sent further warmth into our life, because devotion to it brought the soul within the circle of its influence. When heresy and unbelief bore the hearts of men far away from Him, beyond the sphere of His rule and in rebellion to His law, this devotion came to draw the faithful believers nearer to the light and force from which they received their faith and to which they acknowledged obedience. They would not

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follow the rebellious on their wanderings through space, chilled and darkened. Christ had been their sun, and, in devoting themselves to His Heart they were setting aside everything that might eclipse the light or lessen the heat. They would not stay on some distant orbit, but would plunge into the very source and center of their day. The Heart of Christ meant His love, and those who practised this devotion were not dwelling on any comparatively cold action or word of His, but reached into the very furnace where His life was kindled, into the love which brought Him to earth and kept Him upon it and nailed Him to the cross.

And what, practically, did this new warmth mean for those who were pledged to the Heart of Christ? As looking at Christ's life through devotion to His Heart meant that it took on a new color in every detail, enriched the mind with new ideas, and so awakened the answer of gratitude, so also it meant the enrichment of the will with new purposes and fervent resolutions, and awakened and made vigorous the practice of reparation. Reparation is sympathy which has found expression in action. If

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this devotion leaves us with glowing words on our lips and a cold heart within us, then it falls short of its purpose; it is mere sentiment, and not conviction. If the heart is warmed into sympathy and yet finds no outlet except in protestations and professions, it is mere feeling. In neither case is it devotion. But if the fire of expression hands on its flame to the feeling and enkindles sympathy, and sympathy, in turn, inspires the burning resolve and the burning deed, then there is true devotion and true reparation. Gratitude is the answer devotion makes to the gift from a Heart; reparation is the answer devotion makes to a gift from a wounded Heart. Gratitude has done all when it hands back its life in thanksgiving. Reparation will not be content until the cross is removed from its living pedestal upon Christ's Heart, until the crown of thorns is unclasped from It, until the wound in It is healed beyond the possibility of reopening, until the Heart is as God made It, not as man made It—the Heart of Bethlehem, not that of Calvary.

The Fruits of Devotion to the Sacred Heart

II.

Some cold winter's night, as a man is carried swiftly home on the electric car, reading his paper in the bright light from the bulbs above his head, he gives very little thought to the cluster of wonders of which he is the center. He is so accustomed to this journey night and morning that any surprise he might have felt has long since disappeared. He reads; he is borne along, and he feels the grateful warmth that keeps out the cold of winter. Suddenly the car is dark; the speed slackens and ceases; the heat gradually grows less. He begins to feel the cold, and he now appreciates the power of that mysterious force of which he was the center. Electricity gave him light and warmth and motion. We may not have appreciated, as we ought, the triple benefit which devotion to the Heart of Christ has brought into our religious lives. If it went out of them, assuredly there would be darkness and want of energy in our souls. We have seen how this devotion gave light and warmth. It remains to be seen how it gives life and motion.

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Devotion to the Sacred Heart brought life into the practice of our religion. It brought us below the surface of Christ's life, into the very secret of its existence and to the force that pulsated through its every action. It made us aware of the rich, invigorating life-blood which warms and flushes the pale, cold records of the written Gospel. It made us touch the very life of His life and be thrilled through with an increase of life. How did it accomplish all this? Devotion to the Heart of Christ laid its finger on His pulse and revealed almost to our sight the motives which brought Him to life and death. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." To focus the life of Christ into the glowing center of a heart, is to bring out, as words could not, the love of Christ for us. The symbol of this devotion is a rubric that rivets the attention and draws it, as no other symbol could, into the very soul of the Incarnation. Devotion to the Heart of Christ, it cannot be too often repeated, is devotion to His love; it is the recognition, the study, and the full, practical acknowledgment of that love. The singling out of Christ's Heart

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emphasized His love for us and so stirred the pulses of our life.

This devotion emphasized also the love of Christ in its principal and most loving manifestation. The Incarnation took on new life. The world refused to adore Christ, losing sight of His Godhead; this devotion, in protest, singled out a part for adoration. The world was making Christ a man; this devotion made Him, if possible, more so, by insisting on His human nature, while showing Him reverence and honor such as could be paid only to God.

The Eucharist also received an increase of life. If heresy would declare that Christ left us a mere figure, and that the Pasch which He had desired with desire to eat was no more than ceremonial, with less significance than the older pasch which it replaced, then this devotion to Christ's Heart would protest against so narrow, so cold and so false an interpretation of the words of the Saviour. The Eucharist, therefore, became the home, the dwelling-place of a Heart. It was the center towards which gratitude was directed and from which reparation ward off all attacks. By devotion to the Sacred Heart, Christ was brought more fre-

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quently than ever before out of the tabernacle and into the monstrance, out of darkness into the light, out to the hearts of men. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament became numerous and received new interest from the spirit of reparation, which found one of its most touching manifestations in the Holy Hour. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is a devout practice, whose rise and spread is practically one with the rise and spread of this devotion. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is associated in the minds of the faithful with the same devotion. Communion was received from a new, unselfish motive, a motive which invited frequency and enkindled friendship and added fuel to its flames. They who might not be at the altar at all, or rarely, would often be there when an appeal was made, not to their own advantage, great though that undoubtedly was, but to the advantage of a Friend whose Heart could find relief from the neglect and insults of others in their love and service. So, in every way, new life came to the Eucharist from devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Passion, too, ceased to be mere history; it became actual and present. The

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cross and the Heart were brought together and both were helped by their union. The source of the Passion was made strikingly manifest in the way the Heart of our Lord was usually depicted. "He loved me and delivered Himself up for me," said St. Paul in his magnificent egotism. What St. Paul united in expression, this devotion unites in representation, His love and His death. His love was the impelling motive of His death, and when the cross was enthroned upon the Heart, when the crown of thorns was wreathed, too, about it, even the eyes saw what St. Paul told the faithful. The same picture revealed not only the source of the Passion, but touchingly brought out its poignancy. It made us feel that it was not a man but a Heart that was suffering. The silence, the dignity, the reserve and almost passiveness of Christ during the hours of His Passion might possibly hide from us the keen pain which throbbed beneath that restrained exterior, but in this devotion the eye and mind could not forget the lesson of the Agony. We saw now not merely the tell-tale drops of blood rushing out to reveal to us the pain within, but the whole treasury of His

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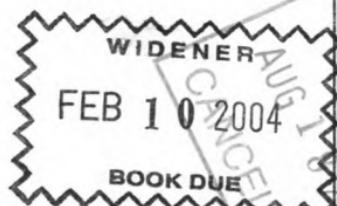
life-blood was laid bare to our gaze, furnishing us with an illustrated commentary of the words, "Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friend." Those who are devoted to the Heart of Christ could never misunderstand or forget the meaning of those words. They saw the crown transferred from His head to His Heart; they felt that its sharp points had always pierced there; they understood that the Passion was the crucifixion of a Heart, the wounding, the torturing, the death of love itself.

In return for the life imparted to Christ's life, this devotion expected life to be imparted to the souls of men. The life of the soul is in faith, in hope, in love, and these virtues all felt the thrilling touch of devotion to the Heart of Christ. True devotion is the enthusiasm of conviction; it is purpose coupled with energy. The conviction of faith, the determination of hope, the energy of love, were all intensified by the new light, the new warmth and new life of devotion to the Heart of Christ. His Heart put a heart into our religious life.

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