Father Garesche
YOUR INTERESTS
ETERNAL
YOUR INTERESTS ARE ETERNAL
YOUR INTERESTS ETERNAL

Our Service to Our Heavenly Father

BY

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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1918
Imprimi Potest.

ALEXANDER J. BURROWES, S.J.,


Hibil Obstat.

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.,

Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur.

+JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY,

Archbishop of New York.

New York, September 11, 1918.
TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
SEAT OF WISDOM
PREFACE

This is one of a group of little books designed to afford to Catholics in the world a convenient series of readings bearing on their own spiritual advancement, the help of their neighbor, and the defense and spread of the Church. The volume preceding this is entitled Your Soul’s Salvation, and presents suggestions for getting on in the interior life. This book is called Your Interests Eternal, because it more especially deals with our personal relations with our Heavenly Father.

Those who are familiar with the style and manner of treatment of the preceding book will not need to be told that an informal, direct, and chatty conference between the writer and the reader is aimed at rather than any lofty or abstruse flights of rhetoric. It is meant to be a volume that one will perhaps like to have at elbow and take up from
time to time to fill in a leisure or a quiet hour. We respectfully ask that those who derive any profit from the book will sometimes say a prayer for its writer.
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YOUR INTERESTS
ETERNAL

THE LOVE OF GOD

Since the love of God is the most precious thing in creation—the noblest of all actions, the most meritorious of all motives, the best of all possessions, the most efficacious of all prayers—it is obvious that if we are wise we shall pursue the love of God with eagerness and spare no effort to achieve it. The philosophers' stone for which the alchemists of the Middle Ages sought unceasingly, which was to turn all metals into gold, and the Fountain of Youth, which was to heal all diseases, were mere fictions, which no one nowadays would be so foolish as to try to find. But in the life of the soul there is a fountain of youth and there is a philosophers' stone—the pure love of God. Whoever has this incomparable possession can turn even the least of his actions to the purest gold of heavenly merit, and he has within him a fountain of healing to cure every ailment of his soul and keep him young with the angelic youthfulness of heaven. Nothing
is so precious and so well worth having as the love of God, and the true understanding of it simplifies and clarifies the whole spiritual life. "Love God," said St. Augustine, "and do as you please"—because if you truly love God, you will not please to do anything contrary to His law, and that love will be as a holy instinct in you leading you simply to accomplish God's will.

There are nowadays a great many very good people who make the spiritual life a very complicated and perplexing thing. They conceive the service of God as a task as delicate and difficult as balancing on a wire. A great number of intricate considerations assail their conscience, and puzzling questions of perfection and duty distract their mind. What a great benefit it would be for them to understand that the short cut to perfection, the compendium of holiness, is the simple and pure love of God. The saints understood this principle, and it led them through amazingly different paths to the one clear summit of sanctity. They differed in many ways—in time, in nationality, in tastes, in learning, in customs, in station—but they all
The Love of God

resembled one another in their love of God. They even showed that love in astonishingly different ways. Some of them, like St. Louis of France, and St. Ferdinand of Castile, went to war for the love of God. Others, like St. Francis and St. Genevieve, were the most peacable folk in the world, and cherished from harm even the beasts of the field, because they saw in these the creatures of God's love. Some of them, like St. Anthony of the Desert, fled to the loneliest solitudes so as to be free to think of God and praise Him the entire day and far into the night. Others, like St. Francis Xavier, coursed about the world like a restless flame, ever on the move, ever in the midst of throngs of men to whom they made themselves all in all that they might win them all to the love of God. Some, like St. Simon Stylites, and St. Benedict Joseph Labre, did penance in strange and appalling ways for the love of God. Others, like St. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, mingled intimately with the life of great cities and dealt constantly with worldly affairs that they might put upon them the stamp of consecration to God's service and
The Love of God

Nothing about the saints is more striking than their diversity of character and method, and the single unity of their motive and end. For the same motive of the love of God, St. Philip Neri was so merry and playful that the grave Cardinals whom he plagued by his levities called him in affectionate revenge the holy fool. For the self-same motive St. Jerome in Palestine lay half clad in his dismal cave, and wept and beat his bare flesh with a stone. There is no sameness in the saints save that the self-same love inspired them, and they were forever constant to the high requirements of that sweetly tyrannous love. They loved God consumedly, and did all things from the motive of that love. This love, however, like all true love, perfected, it did not destroy their human nature and the characters which God had given them. St. Augustine, for all his holiness, is still the rhetorician, using the arts of weaving words which he learned in the schools of Carthage to charm and edify the Church of God throughout the centuries. St. Ignatius, utterly as his motive has changed from that
which moved the young warrior at Pampluna, is still the great captain leading his spiritual army with the same great-hearted courage, the same determined perseverance, nay, even the same inflexible discipline and method that he had used to sway the infantry of Spain.

This most various and age-long experience of the saints should be a guide and an encouragement to ourselves in the gaining of the love of God. They were so various in natural characters and gifts that it is plain that no single age, disposition or degree of talent is excluded from the sweet contest for the great love of God. They kept their traits of mind and soul, and went about their daily work like the rest of men, in the station in which God had placed them, boys and girls some of them, like Agnes and Stanislaus, soldiers and tradesmen, doctors, and men of the law, day-laborers, priests, princes, beggars, students, servant girls, and clerks, teachers, and scrub-women, simple mothers and fathers of families, learned and ignorant as the world judges, shrewd and commonplace, some of them artists and poets, others
mere useful drudges, some shining in courts, some sweating in kitchens or grubbing their whole lives long in the fields.

God in His sweet providence has given us this inexhaustible variety of the saints to assure to every one some patron of his own kind, some example within his own reach, a model whom he can follow and a guide who has gone his way and lived his life, but excellently for the love of God. Just as the considerate and most wise mercy of God has planned the Incarnation, first for our salvation, and then for this also that we might have a model who is God, and therefore most perfect, but also man, and therefore most imitable—one who shows us in practice how we ourselves (even we!) can be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect; so also in His provident and considerate goodness God gives to each of us some high model of the love of God who is at the same time most imitable because he is most like our own self.

We can each of us find a saint who is not only heroically holy, a sublime lover of God, but who is also most lovably and imitably
human, surprisingly like ourselves in the talents of his mind, the circumstances of his life, the tasks he had to accomplish, the troubles to face, the sorrows to bear, even the virtues he had to sweat mightily to get, and the vices he had to struggle painfully to conquer.

Saving our souls is the one business of our life; everything else is by the way and of only a passing interest, and will matter nothing in a hundred years. We can save our soul, too, either barely or abundantly; can just steal within the doors of Heaven or become great and rich with the undying gold of sanctifying grace. The example of the saints, showing us in practice how to love God and live out His love in all our lives, is a constant text-book of the great business of our lives, an inestimable aid in the acquiring of that which alone we shall prize for all eternity, and of which nothing, not even time, shall ever despoil us.

Let us set ourselves, then, to study the methods of the saints in getting and keeping and increasing the love of God. Perhaps we shall be able to see only a little of their wisdom, but that little will be of very great price.
THE MOST PERFECT MOTIVE

The intention with which we perform our actions determines their merit or demerit. God watches our free will to see what we truly mean by our every deliberate action, and, according as our intention is pleasing or displeasing to Him, He measures out to us our punishment or reward. All the mere feelings or sentiments which accompany or influence our actions are of importance for merit or demerit only in so far as they affect the action of our free will. It is the will alone which, by its free choice and action, pleases or displeases God, our Lord.

The intention of our will, then—the motive from which we act—is of supreme importance in every moment of our waking hours. To act habitually from a good and holy intention is the one wise course from the viewpoint of eternity; and to cultivate in our daily actions the intentions most pleasing to God is the supremest prudence in the sight of Heaven. What motive, then, in our actions is most pleasing to God?
The theologians and the saints answer in unison that it is the love of God. To perform our actions from the love of God makes them singularly pleasing in His sight. They become more and more acceptable to Him as they are done more and more for His love, and the perfect love of God is the most meritorious of all motives. The reason for this is quite plain.

Whenever we act from the true and sincere love of God, we give to Him our whole selves. The action we perform from this motive, whatever it may be in itself, becomes transformed and takes on the character of a supreme service to God. Beyond the mere immediate purpose of the deed, whatever that may be, our will goes forward to its last end and greatest desire and rests in the love of God. Our whole action is thus transformed and pierced through with the heavenly light and beauty of divine charity. It becomes an offering of exquisite price to the Most High, a whole-burnt offering, in which we ourselves and all we possess are given to God by the sincere and efficacious power of love.
The Most Perfect Motive

No wonder, then, that the saints so highly praise and recommend the constant practice of the motive of the love of God. One of the best—nay, perhaps the very best—of all practices of the particular examen (described in a preceding volume) is that of the constant renewing of the intention of the love of God at the beginning of all our more important actions. Nothing can be more blessed or salutary to us than to strive constantly and with increasing fervor and determination to do all things for the love of God.

The motive of the pure love of God—that is, the performing of our actions for God because He is so good in Himself and so worthy of our love—is of unspeakable merit and efficacy. The theologians teach us, interpreting the words of Our Lord Himself, that one act of the pure love of God is sufficient to obtain us pardon for all the mortal sins which we may have committed, if only we have the purpose, express or implied, of mentioning them in sacramental Confession when we have the opportunity.

And this act of the pure love of God can
not be a very difficult affair for us, because it is the only way to salvation, so far as we can see, for millions and millions of the heathen and for those many non-Catholics who are cut off from the sacraments because they do not belong to the body of the Church. Besides, this act of the pure love of God is most closely in accord with the nature of our will, which, by its very nature, is always ready to love what is presented to it as good, and to avoid what seems to it evil. Now God Our Lord is the supreme good, and in Him there is no shadow of evil or imperfection; so that if we learn to dwell truly on His infinite perfections, we shall find it most easy to love Him.

If we find it hard to love God or even to think of Him, it is because we are so much distracted by the things of this life and wrapped up in the love of the perishable pleasures of the world. We are like children who are so amused and delighted by the toys their father has brought them that they will not look up into his face, nor show him any signs of gratefulness or love. We play among the delights which God has given us
only to lighten our labors on the way to Heaven, and use them to distract our hearts from Him and fix them fast on the things of this earth.

The remedy for this childishness of ours, and the way to acquire the true and pure love of our Heavenly Father, is to make frequent and earnest acts of the love of God. From time to time, during our hours of prayer, or in those vacant or weary moments when our hearts instinctively seek release from the cares of the day, we should raise our thoughts to God and think how good He is in Himself and how worthy of our love. Reflect how constantly God sustains us, and all things, in being; how He watches with unceasing loving care this universe which He has made, so that every motion of the leaves, every cloud in the sky, the wonderful processes of our own bodily life, even the most secret actions of our souls, are evidences of His constant and watchful love.

Thinking of God, we shall form a better and better idea of His greatness and lovable-ness and of the insignificance of all things else when compared to Him. We shall ac-
quire a sort of contempt for all merely earthly and passing things as compared to the great and most lovely Author of the universe, whose infinite perfections even the most glorious of His creatures only feebly shadow forth to us. We shall become enamored of that infinite Loveliness who is our God; and our hearts, once accustomed to seek and embrace His undying and endless perfections, will disdain the mere perishable and sordid joys of earth. Our will can then easily stir itself to acts of pure love of this eternal Father, in whom our intelligence perceives all that is worth loving and in the most perfect degree. Our hearts have been created to love God. They are withheld from Him only by the bonds of ignorance and the clouds of sensual allurements and earthly loves, and if we break these bonds and dispel the clouds by the means of holy thought and prayer, our hearts will flee from earth and rest in God.

While in our thoughts and prayers we are seeking to know more and more of God and to free our hearts from the illusions of the world, we should exercise our wills very
often in making acts of the pure love of God. When we arise in the morning, one of our first efforts should be to make an act of love of God for His own sake, and to offer the actions of our day to Him from the pure motive of this love. Then, before all the important actions of the day, or at the beginning of every hour, when we hear the striking of the clock, or when some particularly strong temptation assails us, or some unusual difficulty looms in our way, we should renew the act of the pure love of God and offer up to Him as a holocaust our entire being, the thing we are about to do for His service, and all else that we shall be able to accomplish for His glory during all our lives.

It is impossible to conceive what a blessing it will be for us to acquire a rooted and constant habit of making acts of the love of God. The deep currents of our lives will then all run in the direction of Heaven and of eternal glory. It is not the outward show of our actions that avail for eternity. "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It is not the
heaping up of riches that perish, nor the gaining of honors that will be soon forgotten, nor pleasures that pass and leave bitterness, that make the true successfulness of a life—but it is the faithful love and service of our hearts to God. The most humble and hidden life may be transformed by acts of the pure love of God into a sublime and heroic achievement admirable in the eyes of Heaven. The most lowly and insignificant actions will glow at the day of judgment with amazing luster, if only they are performed from this glorious motive; and the specious exploits of earthly heroes will be quite insignificant in the eyes of God if they lack the transforming motive of His service and love.

Whatever other practices we take up for the sanctification of our soul, we should, then, always pay special care to the gaining of the habit of the love of God. Pray continually that the Holy Spirit, who is the Love of the Father and the Son, may pour into your heart the pure and mighty love of God. Remember that every earnest effort you make to love God for His own sake and
The Most Perfect Motive

because He is so worthy of all love has a twofold and inestimable effect in your soul. It cleanses you of sin and greatly increases your present merit and your future glory, and, besides, it lays the solid foundation of a habit of loving God for His own sake, which will transform all your earthly life with spiritual strength and joy and bring you unspeakable delight for all the ages of Heaven.
ON BEING INTERESTED

The first requisite to gaining a great love of God is to be extremely interested in the things of God, to wish very much to know more of Him and of spiritual and eternal things. This desire for knowledge of divine things is a necessary prelude to the true love of God, because unless we seek for this knowledge we shall never get it, and we can not love what we do not know. Before love, comes some acquaintance with the one we love; and before this acquaintance, comes the wish to be acquainted. First of all things, then, we must stir up in our will a sincere interest, a wish to know more about God that we may love Him better.

We are all of us interested in many things. What our eyes present to us, all the sights of every day, awaken in our mind curiosities, questions, interests, trains of thought, which set us inquiring, learning more, following out lines of investigation, gathering together information. We little realize, most of us, what slaves we are to what we see. From
the moment when we open our eyes to another day, our thoughts are tyrannized over by the impulses that come to us through our sight. It requires a strong will and a firm self-discipline not to be carried away and distracted by what one sees.

And if this was always true, even in simpler times of the world, it is particularly true in this time, when the eyes are assailed by so many new distractions, and when so many ingenious and injurious appeals are made upon our interest and attention on every side. From the morning paper, which brings to our breakfast table its cheap and ephemeral budget of sensations to catch the precious and unspoiled attention of our morning hours, to the movie thriller, which is the evening recreation of so many millions and which flashes on their staring sight the shadowy figures of scores of inconsequential characters doing wild and interesting things in a dozen lands, our whole environment seems in a perpetual conspiracy to distract us and to steal our thought away from the things which matter for eternity.

It is clear, then, that if we are to make our
thoughts worth while, and, in particular, if we are to fix them effectively on God so as to learn more of Him and grow to love Him more, we shall need a strong interest and a great resolve. The world and its passing affairs force themselves on us with a sort of shameless violence, whether we will or no. We must, then, do ourselves a contrary violence in order to think much and well concerning God.

The first step, therefore, toward the love of God is to withdraw ourselves a little from the distractions of the world and to read more and think more of Him. We should very deliberately and earnestly cultivate in our minds a hearty interest in whatever pertains to God. The New Testament, which is the most wonderful of all books, being indeed the biography of the Word made Flesh, is one great mine of the love of God, if only we will read it thoughtfully and prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit, whose word it is, to make clear to us the entrancing picture it gives us of the character of Our Lord. Yet this most interesting of books does not yield its treasures of knowledge and of love to
On Being Interested

us so readily as the lesser works of men. The cheap and flimsy fiction of the day has spoiled our minds for serious reading and weakened our power of assimilating earnest thought. We wish to rush over and devour at one reading the books that interest us, and are impatient at the serious thought and study that the Holy Scriptures demand of us. The word of God in the Scriptures does not give up its meaning at one reading. A whole lifetime of pious and reverential study is too little to give to the Book in which God Himself has taken care to preserve truly and for all ages the teachings of God made man. The New Testament is incomparably the most interesting book in the world.

We must awaken our interest, too, in other books which treat of the love of God, and give some of our time to reading spiritual works. Whoever wishes to become an adept in any art must go through courses in reading to become familiar with the matter in hand and to get possession of all that others have found out through laborious days. It is so, too, with those who wish to learn the greatest of all arts, the queen of all
On Being Interested

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sciences—the love of God. There are many books which treat of spiritual things, chief among them the many Lives of the Saints, which we should do well to read, so as to fill our minds with the science of the saints and to teach our hearts to follow along their holy ways of love. It is the lovely characteristic of these books which treat of the love of God that they arouse in the mind the desire of still more and more knowledge of the great subject with which they deal, and when we shall once have got a true taste for the literature of Eternity that of time will seem to us by comparison very mean and poor.

But this interest of ours in the love of God is not to be confined to the reading of books. Indeed, some of us may plead perhaps that we are too busy to do very much reading of any kind, and that our training has never fitted us to digest the solid food of spiritual works. But we can all arouse in our souls an interest in the love of God which shall show itself in other ways and be nourished by other food. There is no one so poor or so unlettered that he is not called to the
love of God. Moreover, this love shows itself and is increased chiefly by acts of love. Hence we must rouse in our hearts a great interest in making acts of the love of God and in praying with insistent sincerity and faith for an increase of that love.

Love is a gift of prayer. Love is increased by acts of love. Hence we must begin our quest for the love of God by stirring up in our souls a great interest in these two means of gaining and growing in love. We should be much more interested in prayer if we realized how almighty is its efficacy in gaining us the love of God. Our Lord said wonderful things of the boundless generosity of His Heavenly Father, provided only that we ask what His fatherly heart sees to be for our good. Now, when we pray for an increase of the love of God we can not fail to receive the thing we pray for, because nothing can be better in itself nor more profitable to our souls and honorable to God than that we should receive an increase of that love.

Again, we should be immensely interested in making acts of the love of God. Such acts are the most meritorious exercise of our
human faculties, the most noble, the most glorious, the most pleasing to God, the most profitable to ourselves and to our fellow-men. There is no better way of spending our time than in the practice of the love of God, and this holy exercise may fit in with all our other duties and be carried on in the midst of work or rest or play. Just as a mother, who goes about her household tasks and busies herself with a hundred little cares, has always in her heart the thought of her little child and makes sweet acts of love, doing all her tasks well for love of her little flock; so, too, we may carry into all our cares and work the love of God, and in the midst of every action think sweetly from time to time of Him and make acts of His love.

But, let us say it again, the beginning of the love of God and of all other good things is an interest and a true desire. The interest stirs our mind to grasp and understand the true meaning of the good thing which we seek, and the desire, born of our right understanding, fires our will with courage to seek and find, to strive and not to fail.
Interest and desire—let us pray our good God to give us these things for the pursuit of His holy love, and then we shall go forward bravely in the often hard and self-denying efforts necessary before we shall come to the great love of God. For whatever is good is commonly not easy to come by, but demands that we work and suffer in its achievement, and we must be prepared to buy the love of God with some pain and effort and sorrow. That which we shall receive in return for our striving will be beyond all comparison greater than the price we shall be asked to pay, for, as St. Paul assures us, the glory which will be revealed in us on the last day in recompense for our love and service of God on this earth, is greater beyond comparison than the tribulations of this life, even though we should bear them all.
CHRIST’S INVITATIONS

Our Lord is patient and He gives us many calls to follow Him. First there is that general invitation of His coming on earth and walking among us. The very presence in the world of a man whose every trait was divinely perfect, whose life was an epitome of all nobleness, and who in every act and word taught, with consummate skill and wisdom, the perfect love of God and man, invites our hearts to imitation. Our human nature has in itself infinite aspirations to perfection. The sight of a perfect character stirs up these yearnings in us and makes us ambitious to show in our own lives the traits we see and love in him. Hence the mere presence of Our Lord in the world is of itself a most powerful invitation to copy the model He affords us.

But though Our Lord gave us this constant invitation of His acts and life, He was not content with such an implicit invitation. He had foretold by the Prophets that He was to be the model for all men, and so the
appeal of His example was only the fulfillment of their words. He was to be the leader of His people in the ways of salvation, and to show them the paths of justice and of truth. And He led them, not merely by pointing out the path and telling them in words the ways of righteousness, but by walking before them and letting them see His works, so that not even the shrewd and keen-eyed malice of His enemies could ever detect in Him the shadow of evil-doing.

Finally, Our Lord gave us frequent and urgent invitations in word to follow and to imitate Him. Read the Scriptures, and you will see how this most humble of men bids us again and again to follow His example and imitate the models which He proposes for us. "I am the way and the truth and the life. If you would be perfect, follow Me." The imitation of Christ is the epitome of sanctity and the summing up of all His teaching, and the whole art of holy living is bound up in knowing and following Him.

But even these two clear and general invitations do not satisfy the loving heart of Christ. There is a time in the spiritual life
when He brings home to the individual soul a clear and personal invitation to love and to follow Him. This pleading of Christ for our homage comes in different ways to different souls. To some it is conveyed merely in the ordinary course of their mind’s growth, through the teaching of Christ as this is given them in the Church’s teaching. They come to realize in some way His special love and desire of their personal allegiance, and it is brought home to them that they, even they, are called to serve and follow Christ. This happens in the way of what we may call the ordinary dispensation of God’s providence. He thus invites all to His service who correspond to His preliminary graces long enough to give Him the opportunity to invite them to imitate and follow Him.

One may see the result of a prompt and faithful response to such an invitation in the good and edifying lives of so many simple and holy men and women in the world. The key-note of their lives is fidelity to Our Lord. They are surprisingly free from the ugly leaven of worldliness. One sums up
their character and their lives in saying that they are true Christians, and this is, when one thinks of it, an astonishingly great praise, for it means that they have heard the invitation of Christ to follow Him, have caught, with the aid of His grace, the true lineaments of His character. They are, in their humdrum lives and in the most lowly surroundings, actually imitating successfully the perfection of the Son of God.

"With the aid of His grace." That phrase at once explains their success and shows us the only possible way to achieve it. That their judgment is so correct in matters of conscience, that their goodness is so consistent, and their resistance to temptation so steadfast, that they, with limited intelligence and few opportunities for study or reflection, have learned the highest science ever vouchsafed to man, the science of the saints, this is no accident nor the result of mere human effort; it is the work of the Holy Spirit, whose grace is a light in their mind and a warmth in their heart.

But there is a still more intimate invitation, to follow Him still more closely, which
Christ Our Lord gives to certain favored souls. We term it a call to Christian perfection, which rather formal phrase means nothing else than the perfect imitation of Christ. This call of Our Lord comes to us also through the messages of divine grace, and those who receive it are moved to imitate Christ in a yet more perfect manner—to go to what the world will call extremes in becoming more like Him.

When they feel their souls set on fire with the love of Christ and burning to imitate Him, these specially favored souls begin to withdraw themselves from the pleasures of the world and to do penance, because this is the special teaching of Our Lord. They give themselves much to prayer and to communing with God. Their charity toward others takes on a heroic character, so that they are not deterred from loving and serving even the most repellent and the least amiable of mankind. It is obvious how all these practices make them more like to the Saviour of men. Many a man and woman, thus closely following Christ, has arisen, even in the midst of secular business, to great
heights of sanctity, so as to be declared and honored as a saint by the Church.

There is a yet more precious and intimate invitation, however, which singles out the happy souls who receive it for a distinction that the angels well might envy. It is the call to practise those three counsels of perfection, entire poverty, perfect chastity, and religious obedience, which Christ Himself gave to all those who wish most perfectly to resemble Him. Those who receive this call and heed it bind themselves by vow to the perfect imitation of Christ, so far as concerns the substance of these vows. Spiritual writers, with the approval of the Church, say that those who bind themselves by these three vows are in the state of perfection, because they have put themselves in a position where they are bound to seek perfection and grow more and more conformable to their perfect model, who is Christ.

Blessed are they who in any of these ways hear and heed the call of Christ to follow Him. More and more blessed are they in proportion as they approach closer and closer, with more and more generosity and fidelity,
to the footsteps of their Saviour. For, alas, we can be incredulous to the heavenly vision, and we can refuse to heed when Christ's invitation sounds in our ears. It is our glory, and it is also our peril, that our wills are free to answer or to deny. "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him." But that momentous "if" leaves us free to heed or to harden our hearts.

There is no excuse for us if we fail to hearken—our folly is on our own soul. What we are asked to do for the sake of Christ is not too arduous for our human nature, because a host of men and women, even of girls and boys, have gone before us, and their footsteps show us the way. The road to Christian perfection is well trodden by many generations of men and women like ourselves.

The example that Our Lord has left us is marvelously in accord with the needs of our human nature, and brings us the deepest peace and happiness even in this world. As a poet sings:
"O Christ, if there were no hereafter,  
    It still were best to follow Thee!  
Tears are a nobler gift than laughter;  
Who wears Thy yoke alone is free!"

To most of us Our Lord in His mercy repeats over and again the blessed invitation to follow Him. The breathings of His Holy Spirit pass again and again over the frozen waters of our heart, seeking to melt them to the love of God and the following of His Christ. If we fail to heed, it is because of the exceeding hardness and folly of our heart. It is for our own sake, not for His, that Our Lord calls us so insistently to follow Him. And if to do so we must do violence to our own inclinations and give up things that are dear to us, we buy thereby the pearl of great price that shall never be taken from us. As we have followed Our Lord in this world, so we shall rejoice with Him in the glory without end in Heaven.

Nor should it discourage us that we have often heard the invitation of Christ to follow Him and so coldly failed until now to answer Him. For He is great in mercy to pity and forgive, and the very fact that He repeats so often the offer of His grace, shows
how earnestly He is bent on having our whole heart, and how eagerly He will help us when we decide to surrender to His pleading. Even a St. Teresa, as we may learn from her own story of her life, was slow in heeding to the very full the call of Jesus to follow Him most closely in a life of fidelity and perfection; and St. Augustine, who afterward became so great a light to others and a model of heroic faithfulness in the imitation of Christ, hung a long time in fearful indecision before he abandoned the long career of sin in which his youth had been spent, to give himself whole-heartedly to Christ. Our Lord is bent on having us, and He pursues our heart with His graces. Let us this instant turn and follow Him.
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The battles of the Church will be fought and won in the next generation chiefly in the field of Catholic education. We shall inherit the land if only we keep our little ones safe in the Church and give them the training that will enable them to grow up good Catholics and persevere in the practice of their Faith. While the unhappy plague of non-religious education is weakening the sects, and making the vast majority of Americans Christian only in name, it is our Catholic schools that must keep our Catholic children faithful, by their influence now and by the long results of their training after their pupils have gone out into the ways of life. The welfare of the schools is therefore the welfare of the Church. In helping the Catholic schools, in planning for them, and aiding the increase of their efficiency we do a supreme service to the Church—and to the nation as well, for there is no influence that makes for good citizenship more constantly
and truly than does the training of the parish schools.

There are many ways in which we may aid Catholic education, but those who are its greatest benefactors are the teachers in the school themselves. The men and women who have entered the religious life to devote themselves to teaching have given to Catholic education its most effective and permanent endowment. While others have contributed money and possessions, they have given their own bodies and souls to be worn out in a lifetime of service, and the splendid work of the Catholic schools to-day is a monument to the fruitfulness of their self-sacrifice. What greater help can any one give to this cause than a whole lifetime spent in teaching?

In this connection one can not but regret that more of our noble Catholic girls do not realize the opportunity that opens before them of helping in the necessary work of Catholic teaching by consecrating themselves to God in the ranks of some teaching sisterhood. Many do, indeed, embrace that noble calling, and the ranks of the sisterhoods are
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growing year by year. But, considering the immense needs of the schools, the number of applications that come in to every superior for more teachers, and the thousands of Catholic girls who go out every year from the parish schools, one sees that it would be right to expect and desire far more recruits each year to the army of devoted women who have consecrated themselves to the work of Catholic education. Particularly does this become more clear when one considers the number of Catholic girls who become teachers in the public schools. The whole situation of our public schools as regards the Catholic pupils is a distressing one, and calls for effort on the part of Catholics. Plainly stated, the situation in many places is this: The State taxes Catholic parents for the purpose of building and maintaining schools. It uses the funds so collected to employ Catholic girls to teach Catholic children in the State schools. Then it forbids these Catholic girls, under pain of discharge, to teach the Catholic children their Faith.

Of course one does not wish to minimize the earnest work of that noble body of Cath-
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olic women who are now teaching in the public schools. But how much more good many of them would be doing, how much more merit they would be heaping up for Heaven, and how much more service they would render the Church if they were enrolled in the ranks of a teaching sisterhood, in Catholic schools, and giving the children a distinctively religious training in every department of the school. The objection may occur that to become a Sister one must have a religious vocation. But if one understands clearly the true meaning of a religious vocation it will appear very probable that many of the girls who now go into the public schools as teachers have really a vocation to become Sisters, and if they were instructed and encouraged betimes would heed the call of God to the religious state. The exaggerated and even erroneous ideas which many girls have of the true nature of a religious vocation is perhaps the reason why they do not enter into this heavenly way of life. The essentials of a religious vocation are in fact merely these: One must have no impediments, and must possess the necessary health, talents, and
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virtue; and one must have the grace of God. Given these, any one is free to enter the religious state and to serve God therein in poverty, chastity, and obedience. No voice of an angel calling one to religion, no exceptional talent, sanctity, or heavenly sweetness are needed to call a soul to this state.

Now, how many of our Catholic girls who go to teach in the public schools, or take up some other way of livelihood, have all the requisites of a religious vocation, if they only knew! Our Lord has really invited them to follow Him. He has given to all the general invitation—"He that can take let him take it," and He has mercifully provided for them all the talents and the graces that are required. They have no one entirely dependent upon them, which might constitute an impediment to their vocation; they have good health and capacity for teaching; they are pure and good and inclined to piety; they could easily bear the self-sacrificing life of the teaching sisterhood. The grace of God is ready for them. A little quiet and enlightened consideration, and they would see that they have no mind for marriage and for
the pleasures of the world. Both for time and for eternity they could do nothing wiser nor better than to enter a novitiate and test their vocation to teach for God.

Does a false humility and the conviction that they are "not good enough to be a Sister" keep them back? That is a false humility indeed, for they enter the sisterhood to become more perfect, and the religious life is called the state of perfection, not because it supposes perfection in its members, but because in the course of long years it leads them to perfection. Indeed, a little reflection should convince any sensible Catholic girl that such diffidence is foolish, because the great body of devoted and successful Catholic teachers are recruited from just such as themselves—good, pious, average Catholic women, that is to say, possessed of ordinary talents and health, and willing to devote themselves to teaching for God instead of teaching for the schools of the State. If exceptional talents or exceptional virtue were required for becoming a Sister, the ranks would not number hundreds of thousands, as they do now. It is the great glory of our
Catholic women that their general average of goodness and self-sacrifice is so high that one need not be extraordinary in any way to be able to lead the angelic life of a teaching-Sister.

From the standpoint of personal advantage, if our Catholic girls would quietly compare the rewards of the Sister's life with those of their probable career in the world, they would be strongly moved to enter religion. How many, and what an increasing number, of our girls settle down quietly, almost from the start, to a life of single blessedness. Society has few charms for them. They find their chief satisfaction in their work and in helping others. It is fairly clear from the start that they will live a life of virginity, even in the world. Now, though this state of virginity in the world is a truly blessed state for those who are hindered from entering religion, it is not to be compared in merit and blessedness to the holy state of the religious vows. The amazing and glorious merit of poverty and obedience is added to virginity in the state of religion. The rules and the example of others, the
good of a regular order, the comfort of daily Mass and Communion, the complete and constant consecration of the religious life make every moment full of a splendid merit, and all that distresses and worries those who remain in the world, misfortunes that may come, old age and death, are robbed of their sting in the earthly paradise of the religious life.

But if those noble-hearted Catholic girls of whom we speak realized the need that God and the Church have of them, they would be all the more ready to embrace the life of a religious teacher. What an eager welcome they would meet in the teaching sisterhoods! Truly, the fields are white for the harvest; but there is need to pray the Lord thereof to send laborers for the harvest. Fifteen hundred thousand of our Catholic children here in the United States are in the public schools, and though this is in many instances the fault of the parents, the truth remains that if they all wished to enter the parish schools we should not have room to shelter them, or, what is of more consequence, Sisters to teach them. The schools
we can build, for our people are becoming better able year by year to bear the expense of Catholic schools for all. But where shall we find teachers unless more of our Catholic girls will volunteer to teach school for God? There is an increasing demand on all sides for teaching Sisters. The superiors of the teaching Religious are praying and striving for more novices to fill up the ranks of needed teachers. Where all else goes prosperously, they feel a constant anxiety on this one point: how shall they enlist more of our Catholic girls in the glorious and most fruitful work of the teaching sisterhoods?

That word, "enlist," suggests a significant comparison. The Government in the present national crisis has issued a call for volunteers, and, as is just and fitting, our generous-hearted people are making an admirable response to the summons. Money and men are ready for the asking, and what is still more significant, a very army of women have responded to the call. They are enlisted in the Red Cross and in a variety of private enterprises to help the nation. They are even joining the navy, and setting
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men free for more active duty by taking their places at the desk and in the stores. It is right that our people should show this generous willingness at the call of duty. The old spirit of patriotism is still healthy and strong. But has not God’s Church as good a title to call for volunteers for the great struggle for Catholic education? And will not many thousands of Catholic women just coming to maturity and prepared to choose their life-work hearken to that call? The Church has done much for them. From the instant of their baptism her loving protection has been over them, her sacraments have nourished them, they have received their training in the parish schools, which now look to them and appeal to them for their very existence and for the means of carrying on and widening out their activities. Magnificent opportunities for service open out before them, and a long life of holiness and usefulness in the most meritorious state of religion; and the superiors of the sisterhoods and the Sisters themselves look eagerly and with outstretched arms to see who shall hearken to God’s call and come to teach His
little ones. What Catholic girl on the threshold of her life will not hearken to the call, and search her heart and ask prudent advice to learn whether she may not be one of those whom God wishes to answer the appeal and come to the aid of the Church in her battle for Catholic education.

The fallacious warning is too often given, sometimes by those who should know better, that a gifted and zealous Catholic girl who has the necessary qualifications for the religious life would do better to stay in the world, because "she can do so much more good by remaining out in society and exercising her influence as a lay person." The givers of such counsel are for the most part extremely ill-advised. The girl who makes her own living in the world must give most of her time to purely secular affairs, and it is only by way of exception that she can directly benefit others in a spiritual way. Moreover, she lacks that special grace of God for moving souls and exerting a spiritual influence which comes with a religious vocation faithfully followed out. Her chief business must be to make a living, and her work
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for the Church is only incidental. Whereas one who enters religion gives not only the fruit, but the tree, and her every thought and act are directly for God's Church. Indeed, the very sight of her, clothed in the livery of Christ and marked as His spouse and handmaid, is a silent sermon; and she preaches the gospel of devotion and fidelity as the Blessed Virgin did, in a lowly round of faithfulness and self-sacrifice that is more eloquent than the spoken word. We must not minimize the admirable work done for God by holy and zealous Catholic women in the world. Their works are glorious and many, and their self-devotion and unwearying zeal may even put some among those consecrated to religion to the blush. But it remains true that the holy state of religion is both more blessed in itself and more profitable for God's service, the help of the neighbor, and the good of the individual soul. The Church is great in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and it is not in vain or without reason that she encourages her children to enter the religious state.

Finally, if the fear of making a wrong de-
cision still haunts one after prudent reflection and experienced counsel has pointed the way to a religious vocation, one should remember that, unlike matrimony, there is for the religious life a time of novitiate during which one tests one’s vocation and prepares to make the final decision. During the years of novitiate one can find out quite definitely what is expected in the religious life, and can prove one’s own fitness to embrace it. Just as the volunteers are taken first to the training camps and taught there the elements of military duty, so the novitiate is the training-school of the religious life, and in this training-school the novice is both trained and tested for the great work before her. There is, then, no career into which one can enter so confidently and happily as that of a Religious, for if one is fitted for the life, one is assured of a heavenly life, both here and hereafter, and if one is not adapted to persevere, at least the effort is most meritorious, and one has ample opportunity to test and to consider before taking the final step of the vows.

The comparison of the entrance into re-
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Religion with the enlisting in an army has more than a superficial value. It may serve to clear up still more the true nature of a vocation. For just as the nation issues a general invitation to enlist, so also Christ has issued a general invitation to the life of the counsels. But those only are accepted for the army who are found fit and without impediment. So also in the religious life. And finally, whoever with true and patriotic purpose feels drawn to volunteer, and is accepted and sworn in as a soldier, may feel quite safe about his vocation to the army, for in this a soldier's vocation consists; so also the one who experiences the movements of God's grace inclining her to enter a sisterhood, applies for admission, is accepted and takes the vows, may feel entirely safe about her religious vocation, for it is in these things that a vocation is made plain and consummated. Not visions and ecstasies, not melting devotion and the visits of angels, not even, sometimes, a very happy feeling in one's choice determine a vocation. It is decided by one's fitness and the willingness to volunteer for God's service, it is ratified by
the acceptance into some religious sisterhood, and it is consummated by faithfulness and sacrifice; for one enlists for life in these armies of God.

What we have said of vocation is true of every sort of religious life. We have applied this in particular to the teaching sisterhoods because in those there is most need of volunteers, because a greater number of our Catholic girls are probably called to the teacher's life, and because it is just now of such importance to the Church. Many a good girl who has spent her life in teaching in the schools of the State begins to realize when old age draws nigh that she might, after all, have joined a sisterhood and have done all this work directly for God. It is then too late to hear the divine invitation. She needed only a word of explanation and advice in her younger days, but the word was never given, and hence, through no fault of hers, the opportunity was lost. The more reason, then, for telling our Catholic girls who are just entering on life, of the blessings of a vocation to the teaching sisterhoods, and how easy it is to secure for themselves a share in
the life, the work, and the rewards of those admirable and devoted women who with truly apostolic fervor are giving their lives for the education of the Catholic child and in so doing are serving the Church in a signal way, making themselves and others as happy as this earth will bear. And they are laying up for themselves the reward which is for those who instruct many unto justice—that, in the faithful words of the Prophet, they shall shine like stars for all eternity!
ON SAYING THE BEADS

In the fine old days of Catholic homes nothing was finer than the quiet, reverent group each evening, when all the family said the beads together. The old folk let their worn rosaries slip through their fingers, saying the old prayers over with sweet monotony, dwelling with unconscious emphasis on "at the hour of our death." The youngsters prayed in a childish monotone, dwelling on no words in particular, but with such a sense of reverence, and confidence in the protection of their Mother Mary as would go with them and safeguard their souls from evil all their lives. The Blessed Mother was a member of the family in those good Catholic homes where there were nightly beads; and the children loved her as truly and said their good night to her as affectionately as they did to their earthly mother who was for them a proof and picture of their mother in Heaven. In how many Catholic homes of the present does this holy practice prevail of saying the beads every evening? Who can tell but God, and Our
Lady of the Rosary! The census does not deal with such things. Yet the answer to that question is of more importance to the Church and the State than most of what the census deals with, because devotion to Mary and her answering protection make the best of citizens both for earth and for Heaven.

Why not begin, this October, if you have not begun it already, the practice of saying the beads all together every evening. Choose some fixed time—a convenient time for every one in the family (let us say after supper, before any one goes out for the evening), and keep to it as part of the inviolable order of the household—at least as inevitable, let us say, as the daily meals. At the chosen hour, gather the children together, and let father or mother or one of the children in turn say the beads—and the rest of you answer. It will take but ten minutes or so, but they will be the most profitable and also the most consoling ten minutes of your day.

It may be a bit hard, of course, at first to introduce this most Catholic and venerable
practice into your household. When there is question of prayer, and especially of prayer all together, we are all apt to think that we haven't time, or that "if only things were different——" But of course the real merit of living is in making the most of things as they are. And there are very few Catholic families in which family beads would not be practicable and welcome if only some persevering member of the family were interested enough to make a beginning. Indeed, some one was relating not long ago a rather touching story, and a true one, of a little lass just six years old who got the whole family to have prayers in common every evening by her sweet insistence that, "Sister at school had said that it was nice to."

Why do not you, then, make this one of your personal offerings to your Mother in Heaven, to begin the daily saying of the beads by all the family? How it will console you, when the years have ebbed away and left you on the shores of Eternity, to think that you have been the means of this family act of devotion to the Mother of God. What a consolation and a stay it will be in
family anxieties and troubles to remember that for years and years you have all joined together in a daily chorus of praise and be-seeching to the Virgin most faithful and most powerful. We expect the Blessed Mother to help us and get us favors or protection at very short notice sometimes, and with very little previous devotion on our part to justify our urgent pleading—and she hears us not because of any desert of ours, but because she has the heart of a mother. But if we are faithful to some devotion like the family beads, we shall have a special claim on the all-powerful help of our Mother Mary. Our family will belong to her in a special way because of this public and daily act of devotion. She will keep the little family circle in which she has so daily and intimate a part secure and safe because it is her very own.

And what we have said of the daily family beads applies with still more force to our personal devotion. Even where it is truly impossible, for one reason or another, to have beads in common, we should at least say them every day by ourselves.
On Saying the Beads

One hears from time to time the complaint: "It is hard to say the beads with devotion; saying the same thing over one gets so distracted. I find it hard to think of what I am saying." To begin with, the mere fact that we are not thinking of what we are saying is no sign that our prayer is not pleasing in the sight of God. Provided some devout thought is in our minds as we pray, we need not think of the precise words we are uttering. When both our lips and our mind are lovingly busy with God, we are praying well, even if lips and mind are not praying together. A little child, its arms about its mother's neck and murmuring all sorts of childish petitions, pleases the mother's heart and gains good things from her, even though it does not in the least think of what it is saying.

But to pray well we should at least try to keep our mind and our heart busy with God while we pray. One excellent means to secure this reverent attention while we pray, is to try for a moment or two before beginning the beads to realize vividly whom it is that we are to address, and before whom
we shall stand. We are about to appear at
the Court of Heaven and to address its Queen
and our Mother. Through her intercession,
we are to ask her Divine Son for help in all
our needs of body and of soul, now in this
present life, and at the all-important hour of
our death. If we once realize this vividly,
we shall have little trouble in keeping the
recollection of those to whom we are speak-
ing, and if your attention begins to wander
as the beads go on, then before each decade
sweetly recall before whom you stand and to
whom you are venturing to speak with words
of such affectionate confidence and petition.

Another excellent means to keep devout
and recollected as we say the beads is when
we begin to put very clearly before our minds
the thought of some special favor we very
much want to get from God, and to bend
our prayer to the gaining of this particular
intention. In proportion as we are in ear-
nest about getting what we ask, and confident
that God will give it to us if only we ask
earnestly enough and with the right inten-
tion, our prayer, too, will be full of earnest-
ness and confidence.
There are, besides, a number of devout customs which have helped men and women to say their beads with greater devotion. First of all, of course, we are strongly recommended to meditate as well as we can on the mystery proposed to our consideration at each decade, and it is well to make a tiny pause, at least after each "Glory be to the Father," to recall the scene suggested to our contemplation. Again we may think during each mystery of the meaning it had to the Blessed Virgin, and of how her mind and heart were busy at the time. We may offer up each mystery for some different intention, or for some new individual for whom we wish to pray. At one decade we may pray for the missions, at another for the conversion of sinners—always taking care, however, that we do not fatigue our head while we are trying to inflame our heart.

It is quite evident how interesting we may make our beads by such practices as these, and we must not forget with it all, that merely to whisper over and over the divinely beautiful prayers, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory be to the Father, even
though we think of nothing at all but of saying the words and slipping the beads through our fingers, is devotion enough to please our gentle Mother and draw down on us the tenderness of her pitiful love. She knows as well as we of what weak stuff we are made, how hard it is for our thoughts to keep long in the ways of contemplation, and she is more indulgent to us than we are to one another. The little child, slipping the beads through its fingers, with scarcely a thought of what it all means, wins a smile from that Mother in Heaven, and so does the quavering voice of the old, come to a second time of childish weakness and dependence, when "now" in the Hail Mary has come very near to mean "at the hour of our death."
OUR CHRISTMAS GIFT TO CHRIST

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." The eternal Truth has said so, and all generous and great-minded souls experience often the piercing truth of the saying. And this is particularly a motto for Christmas, when we are all busy giving our little gifts in memory of the Greatest Gift which the Father gives us in Jesus, which He gives us in Himself, which the Holy Spirit gives us in the Infant of Bethlehem, conceived by His power and born our Brother according to the flesh.

Indeed, the entire universe seems bent on pouring gifts upon us, if only we have a comprehending and grateful mind to see them, and the tiny gifts we give one another are only a graceful gesture, so to say, by which we, who are so encompassed with generous giving, wave on some small part of all we have received to some one else, in token of our indebtedness to God and man.

"What have you," says St. Paul, "that you have not received?" He speaks of the
great gifts of grace and faith, but we may echo the question concerning all possessions whatsoever. We are indebted to God for our body and soul, and our debt to our fellow creatures began with our being, and will be completed only with our death. Truly, a generous spirit becomes us, for however lavish we are in giving, we only give back a little part of what others have given to us.

Let us enter on the holy time of Christmas, then, with a careful and calculating spirit—but let all our calculations be how much we can give to our neighbor and to God. To our neighbor, besides the more obvious gifts of greetings and presents, of all the lovingness and cheer that we can procure for them by our efforts or spare from our possessions, there are finer and more enduring gifts that a little ingenuity and self-examination will disclose to us. Charity to the poor at Christmas is one of the commonplaces—the blessed commonplaces—of the season. But there are deeds of charity at home that we well may look on as part of our Christmas giving.
Sometimes even the best of Christians, Sodalists even, and those who honestly desire to serve God with particular faithfulness, cherish some little faults that annoy and disturb the home circle and cause more suffering to those about them than one would ever dream. Sometimes it is a disobliging spirit that refuses those acts of kindly service that so brighten the day and cost so little while they are valued so dearly. Sometimes it is an undue insisting on one’s own prerogatives and conveniences, so that the patience of those about us is unnecessarily worn out with many small exactions which a little thoughtfulness and forbearance would so easily have spared them. Sometimes it is a bit of rigidity and insisting on our own way and our own opinions, so that others must take care to agree with us or suffer unpleasant consequences.

What an excellent Christmas gift it would be to select some special defect or deficiency in our character which results in suffering and harm to those about us, and resolve to correct or supply it as a Christmas gift to the home circle and an offering to the
Our Christmas Gift to Christ

infant Saviour. We may begin on Christmas day, and make the matter a subject of our particular examen. Then we shall be giving to our family and associates, and to the Lord of Christmas, and to ourselves as well, a gift whereof the savor and the blessing will endure throughout the years.

And this brings us to another thought that finds too little place sometimes in our plans for the Christmas season. What gift in particular shall we offer to Christ Himself upon His joyful birthday? To be sure, every gift we give out of Christian charity is offered for His love and is in a true sense a gift to Him, just as all that we give to the children of a family is a gift to the loving parents as well. But it is of the spirit of this loving season to give each one we love some special token of personal affection, something to express our individual and particular remembrance and love. What shall we offer to Our Lord as His very own?

We can give Him nothing that will please Him more than the pledge and resolve, which we shall forthwith carry into execution, that we will henceforth receive Him in the
Blessed Sacrament, often and even every day. And, if we have already this blessed and delightful practice, then we may offer Him for the ensuing year a special faithfulness in its observance, and a constant, quiet, loving effort to receive Him ever more and more worthily, and to love Him more and more devotedly.

We like to suit our gifts at Christmas to the desires of our friends, and nothing pleases us more than to have some one tell us that our present was just what he was wishing for. We even go to great trouble and use ingenious subterfuges to discover what our friends desire. We need go to no trouble to discover what Our Lord much wants of us. Our Holy Father, Pius X, in his encyclical on frequent Communion, has told us that it is the wish of the Holy Father, of the Church and of Our Lord Himself, that we should receive Holy Communion often and if possible every day.

The conditions on which Our Lord invites and exhorts us to go often and daily to Holy Communion are very simple and easy. The Holy Father states them clearly in
his encyclical. All that is required, says he, is the state of grace and a right intention. He explains that a right intention means to go not merely out of routine or from human respect, but to please God and to profit our own soul; and, of course, all that is required concerning the state of grace is that we should not know of any mortal sin that we have committed and that has not been forgiven. So on these easy terms Our Lord wishes that every one of us who can do so should go to Holy Communion often and every day.

Just at this season of the year we rack our brains to think what hints our friends have dropped during the year that would help us guess what Christmas gift might please them most. Our Lord has given us such a very clear intimation of what He most wishes, that we need not be long in choosing His Christmas gift. It will be a very great self-sacrifice and devotion to go often and, if possible, every day to receive Him in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and to offer Him each time, in return for the great gift of His body and blood, the little gift of our whole heart and soul in His service.
Our Christmas Gift to Christ

Do difficulties and excuses arise straightway in your mind when you think of frequent Communion? Consider the numberless men and women and children all over the world who have heeded the invitation of Our Lord, and are now going to Communion every day, sometimes at the cost of the greatest inconvenience and self-sacrifice. Some of them rise very early and begin a toilsome day by fasting for hours to receive Our Lord before they go to work. Others can snatch only a scanty and hurried breakfast after Communion before they hurry to their daily toil. Any missionary can tell you of the heroic sacrifices that these lovers of daily Communion make cheerfully to receive often and every day. Now, at this generous time of Christmas, shall any small personal inconvenience, or discomfort, or scruple even, deter us from giving to the Heart of Our Lord a Christmas gift that He so ardently desires, and that will mean the most intimate friendship with Him and a constant increase of our love and service to Him for the entire year?
ENTER—THE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

There is something disconcerting and unexpected in the coming of New Year for the man or woman who is sincerely bent on making the most of this very brief affair called life. The days slip off so nimbly and seem to leave behind so little of real achievement that when the pausing and accounting time comes suddenly on us we gasp to think that another year has really got away. Twelve months! Three hundred and sixty-five whole days since last we sat, on New Year's eve, and soberly considered what should be our New Year's resolutions! How have the hours all stolen by, and what have we done with them?

The comical contrast between the great things we meant to do, when the year was new, and our actual achievements has made a jest of New Year's resolutions. The comic papers, which move in well-worn grooves and have long ago exhausted the possible sources of their inspiration, will probably continue
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to poke fun at them as long as ink drips or presses have to be fed with thirsty paper. But, for all that, he is no wise man who gives up making his New Year's resolutions.

Our human nature is singularly made. We partake of the limitations of the material things around us. In order to keep its course of spring-time and seed-time, the world about us must put forth a thousand seeds for every one that is to take root and flourish. The sea teems with the innumerable spawn of fish, of which only one in ten thousand will mature—it would be closer to the truth to say, one in a hundred thousand. To spin its web a spider must make trial after trial and beginning after beginning. And so, to pass by a thousand other obvious instances, to achieve anything worthy and noble in his life a man must make and break and make again many, many resolutions.

But it is a very silly thing to think that even the resolutions that we make and break are of no account and do not help us forward to better living. It is the man who makes no resolutions who is a pathetic or a funny spectacle, just as you choose to laugh
at or weep over him. For he has compromised with life, has given up sowing, and is content, or despairing, in his own poor level of achievement. It is a folly to give up making good resolutions merely because we have not kept our good resolves of the past. Those who do so betray their lack of knowledge of the soul of man. For the value and efficacy of a good resolution is not merely in the actual accomplishment, in the immediate good actions which follow the resolution. Besides this immediate accomplishment there are two extremely precious fruits which follow upon every sincere and holy resolution; first, the merit which one gains by making the resolution itself, independently of its fulfilment, and second, the training and discipline of the will, by which the good resolve ennobles and dignifies, strengthens and trains that lordly faculty.

When you say to yourself with sincerity: "I will serve God better this year, will be more helpful to my neighbor, and more loyal and active in my service to the Church," this resolve of yours is in itself a meritorious action in God's sight and pleases His
Enter—The New Year’s Resolutions

fatherly heart. When you then go on to specify in your good resolve the particular ways in which you mean to carry out this good purpose, and make specific and detailed resolutions, God is still more pleased at your good will, and gives you the precise degree of sanctifying grace which that good intention merits, whether He foresees that you will actually be strong enough to keep the good resolve or not. The making of it is in itself an action of great and special merit, and the fact that we afterward leave off trying to do the good thing we planned does not detract from our merit at the time we made the good resolution—it merely shows, perhaps, that we did not make our resolution strong enough to stand the wear of life nor foresee the difficulties that would rise up in the way. But whether we keep them or not, God is extremely pleased to see us make good resolutions, because it is a proof of our will to serve Him more faithfully. Besides, the making of new resolutions is a sure sign that we have not surrendered utterly to that demon of tepidity which is the snare of middle life, when those who have had ambitions
in their youth to serve God worthily are tempted to leave over trying, give up the practice of making good resolves, and surrender ignobly to tepidity and sloth.

By a terrible and vivid saying God has expressed His loathing for those who thus surrender: "I would," says He, "thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth." Those who have given up altogether the holy practice of making good resolutions, who rest supinely in the low places, without even looking upward with longing eyes at the heights of the saints, would do well to search their hearts to see whether they are included in this saying. They should begin again to make sedulous resolutions, to warm and strengthen their heart with good resolves, and use some diligence to climb out of the mud of tepidity and sloth.

The masters of the spiritual life have all realized and asserted many times and in many ways the importance of making and renewing good resolutions, and their systems of asceticism, which means the gymnastics of
holiness, are all built in great measure on this principle, that we must often make new resolves and recall the old ones, if we would advance in the service of God. The making and renewing of resolutions is a chief part of the practice of the particular and the general examen, which we have explained more than once in these pages and which are among the most potent aids to sanctity. And the reason is excessively simple. The will, like every other faculty, is strengthened with exercise. When we make a good resolve we exercise our will, and in proportion as our resolve is stronger and more definite, the value of this exercise to the will is greater.

Hence the reasonableness and efficacy of making special efforts of the will and formulating particular resolves at the great feasts and at the turning points of the year. For it is natural in us at these times to feel a stirring of the will and to desire to turn over a new leaf to match the new and hopeful season. Therefore our resolves are apt to be the more earnest, strong, and sincere.

Never give over then, gentle reader, the making of your New Year's resolutions. Let
neither the grin of the cynic nor your own sloth and weariness discourage you from this time-honored and most profitable practice, in honor both with God and men. For New Year's resolutions are the cure of evil custom, the spur of tepidity and sloth, the earnest of a good will, and an antidote of that old age of the soul which deadens hope and resolution. For the soul that has ceased to hope and to resolve is slowly dying—in deed and in truth, to have quite ceased res- solving is to be already dead.
THE ART OF FORGIVING

To be resentful and sore and revengeful, when some one has done us a wrong, is the easiest thing in the world. Our wounded feelings, our outraged honor, our natural desire for redress, all give us strength and assurance, to wreak some sort of vengeance on our foe. We are hot and ready—woe betide him if he should come across our way!

Oh, of course, we remember all those solemn things which are said in the Gospels about forgiving—but they are not pertinent now. This case of ours calls for justice and stern redress. It is all very well to be forgiving—but we must not let ourselves be walked over and trampled in the mire. Those Gospel sayings will do very nicely for another time, and for lesser injuries—we prefer to forget them just now, because they are really most uncomfortable and inopportune!

So we fall to thinking of our wrong, and turning it over in our minds and chewing the
cud of bitter reflection and perhaps even meditating ways of "getting even" and "giving him as good as he gave" until our minds are full of gall and bitterness, and we have made ourselves twice as unhappy as even our worst enemy could have desired, when he did us the wrong. Then, perhaps, we go foolishly forth in our anger, and put our unkind purpose of revenge into execution and stir up an answering flame in the breast of our offender—who perhaps injured us first more from thoughtlessness than from malice—until we have war on our hands in earnest, and must give a good part of our days to the pleasant and profitable business of taking and giving injury and offense.

Then we must needs draw our unfortunate friends into the matter, and make them sharers in the unpleasant feud, until perhaps a whole neighborhood is party to the affair in one way or another and the venom which had its fountain in our breast, has spread, and poisoned scores of innocent lives.

This is, as we know, the natural way, and a very easy course to follow, at least in the
beginning. After the silly and useless fight is well on, we would give a great deal to be out of it—but to begin a quarrel needs no skill nor talent at all—we need only to give our ugly passions full swing.

But ah, the art of forgiving! That is a rare and beautiful attainment, only to be got by sedulous care and practice—an art so rare and unearthly, that it needed a God made man to teach it to the world. Any fiend of the pit can stir a man’s soul to ugly revenge. It is Christ Himself who persuades our hearts to forgive.

It is very well worth our while, then, to take great pains to learn this art of pardoning offenses. We shall all of us need it sorely many times in our lives.

Let us suppose, then—for this art is best taught in examples—that some one has done us an unprovoked and serious wrong. It seems to us in the first hot flush of anger, that the offense was malicious, unprovoked and hateful in the last degree. We are almost irresistibly impelled to resent the outrage, and meditate revenge. But let us pull up a bit, before our feelings have quite got-
ten the better of us, and ask ourselves a very pertinent question.

"Did our offender really mean to injure us?"

If he did not, why, what cause is there for getting into such a fury? An unintentional offense is really no offense at all. He or she may indeed have been careless, thoughtless, tactless—what you will; but if there was no malice in the thing why should we make much of it or let it cause us so much pain? We have been thoughtless ourselves and so given cause for offense many a time. It would have seemed hard to us on such an occasion to be taken to task as though we had committed a crime. So dwell deliberately on the motive rather than on the unpleasant consequences of the action. Tell yourself over and over again, if you truthfully can, that nothing evil was meant, that it was all thoughtlessness and no malice; and gradually that first unreasonable wrath of yours will cool away into a milder mood. After all, we every one of us have our own shortcomings, which may at times be intensely disagreeable to other folk; and so we must
bear one another's burdens in return when they hurt us by thoughtlessness, carelessness, haste.

But suppose with all our good intentions we find it quite impossible to persuade ourselves that the injury offered to us was not deliberate and malicious, what then?

Our offender has consciously wished and planned to injure us, that is clear. He or she is deliberately bent on doing us a harm. Then let us ask ourselves another question, most weighty, but which angry men are always unwilling to ask. "Do I propose to let this enemy of mine truly succeed in injuring me or not? Shall I lend myself to his wicked will, and take the hurt he means to do me, or shall I foil him effectively and turn his wicked action to my good?"

"Why," I fancy some one saying, "what in the world is the use of a question like that? After the wrong is once done you can not commonly choose whether to take it or not!"

But yes one can; one can always choose whether or not an offered offense shall really injure him. And this is the reason. When
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an offense is offered to you, an insult given, an injury done, let it be what it will—the harm is at first altogether outside you. I mean it does not touch or soil your soul. The evil, whatever it is, may still be kept at a distance. It has not yet got into your own very self.

But now dwell on the injury, yield to your anger, brood over the harm, wish the wrong-doer evil, meditate unjust revenge—and what are you doing? Allowing your enemy to disturb your inmost being, to destroy your peace of mind, to sink his shaft into the inner parts of your soul? You have helped him on to do you a real and dreadful injury.

Nay, more, if you suffer the wrong to stir up the sinful anger and revenge within you you are doing yourself a far greater ill than even your evil wisher thought of. He has meant only a limited and passing harm and you have foolishly gone on, perhaps, even to imperil your eternal salvation.

Above all, avoid if you can that sort of imaginary dialogue which men sometimes fall into when they think themselves offended, wherein they conjure up to them-
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selves what they will say to their enemy when they meet—what he will answer in return, how they will retort with withering sarcasm, until they have worked themselves up into a fine theatrical fury. Is not this a sad, schoolboy-like proceeding? For what if we do vent our spleen and ease our minds for the time by these fancied, fierce encounters, we really only increase our resentment and after all, when the meeting comes, things go off quite otherwise perhaps than as we had boldly imagined in our vapors.

Brooding on an injury, imaginary or real, is often very, very much worse than going at once to have it out with our offender. An explanation, even though it be a little stormy, clears the air. But brooding resentment is like a dull, leaden sky; it chills, depresses, does all manner of harm, and shades the soul to fitful fever.

When we grow angry, sore, and revengeful, then, we do ourselves more harm than even our enemy had intended. But if we take his insult as a Christian should, if we practise for a while the gentle art of forgiving, we turn his wrong into our benefit, surely
a blessed and Christian way of seeking our revenge. Suppose, at the very first instant when you became aware of the ill-will of your offender, you had used his action as an occasion of being magnanimous and Christian-minded. Suppose you had said to yourself: "I will bear this thing for the love of Jesus. He has forgiven me my sins many a time, though they have done Him such grievous wrong and He commands me in return to be ready to forgive my fellow-men who may offend me. I even pray every day, as He desires, to be pardoned as I pardon others. Lord, forgive me my trespasses; because, hard as it is to me, I forgive this fellow-servant who has trespassed against me." If you had said this, and meant it, would your enemy's evil attempt have succeeded in doing you any injury? Of course not; it would have been an occasion for a glorious victory. Which do you think that the devil would rather see in you, a furious resentment or a generous and Christian forgiveness?

And what we have just said suggests another thought which will go very far toward moving us to forgive, if we dwell on it man-
fully just when the wound smart most and the grievance rankles. Have we never, alas, needed very sorely to be forgiven ourselves? In many things we all offend. It is the sad weakness of our poor fallen nature to find it easy to offend and hard to make redress. But when we do offend, even though we own up to our sin, how fruitful we are in excellent and glib excuses! How eloquent in explaining to ourselves the many palliations that there are to lessen our true responsibility. We sin less from malice than from weakness. We didn't realize the harm we were about. We were led into the fault by some one else's incitement—we repented of it almost as soon as it was done.

All very well, and perhaps very true. But why not apply all this to the poor fellow who has been so unfortunate as to do you this present wrong. Is it not a real misfortune to wound one's fellow-man? Is it not a far worse thing for him to have done you this injustice than it is for you to have received it? Your resentment should really turn to compassion, when you think what excuses he may have had, and even though
he had no excuses what a real evil it is to him to have done you the wrong. For you have only suffered at the hands of a man. But your offender has called down upon him the anger and punishment of God. You should even find it in your heart to pray for him a little. Does he not need it? Could you do a better deed?

Again, think to yourself how many times you have wounded the heart of your Redeemer, and how often and with what gentle patience you have been forgiven. He has overpowered you with benefits and favors—and you have offended Him so grievously. Had your own offender received as great benefits from your hands and then injured you as deeply you would have reason to feel sore indeed. But now, you who have so often needed to be forgiven, and will doubtless, alack, so often need it again, how can you refuse to pardon your fellow-man? With what face will you seek to be forgiven the thousand talents—you who find it impossible to forgive the hundred pence.

These are some of the general heads, so to say, of the great art of forgiving—one of the
dearest of arts to the loving Heart of Christ. We have been able indeed to go over them only very briefly, but they will bear and require much earnest thought and honest prayer if we are to practise this difficult and necessary art in our daily lives.

Be ready, then, for the very next occasion which presents itself, to forgive. But do not wait for next occasions to use the thoughts we have been going over together. Begin at once, and clear away all the old dregs of resentment, spite and ill-will which former offenses have left smarting in your soul. We have a half-conscious way of saving up old offenses, even when we think we have forgotten them, and these remains of past resentments spoil and sour the temper of our minds. There are some men who have a guileless and delightful frankness and candor in their youth, who come by degrees to a crabbed and unpleasant cynicism in their middle ages, merely because they have saved up old grudges, and let the crust of half-forgotten resentments and dislikes settle and harden on their soul. The discouragement and heaviness which sometimes sadden later
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life, are often only the sour ferment of old offenses unforgiven. Oh, by all means clear the ugly rubbish from your soul by a full, frank generous pardon to all your former foes.
A SUGGESTION REPEATED

It is always necessary to repeat the same suggestion many times in order to change any old and established custom. And so it would be well to recall, over and over, the remark that our Catholic people will greatly oblige the Holy Souls in purgatory by getting into the way of sending promises of Masses for the departed, instead of heaping the coffin and the grave with perishable and very ineffective flowers. A blossom or two is well enough to console the living and to typify the loveliness of the resurrection, when we shall all, please God, blossom forth with Our Saviour from the tomb and amaze our own souls with our risen glory. But consider—what consolation do these heaps of flowers bring to the departed souls who are now fasting in fires until their eager longing is filled with the vision of God? The flowers lie there and wither. They have no efficacy to ease the pain and hasten the glory of the suffering soul. But one holy Mass
offered for that soul brings it, in God's mercy, a hastening of its release and the comfort of drawing nearer to the smile of its Heavenly Father in its eternal home!

In one parish that we know of, the priest has encouraged this practice to good purpose by keeping on hand a supply of elegantly printed cards on which his parishioners may send the announcement of the Masses they have had said for their departed friends. The death notices and the announcements of funerals give the total number of Masses thus offered for the dead, and it is a most edifying item to read how many Masses are offered up through the generous contributions of these true friends of the poor souls, contributions that would otherwise have gone to pay for some withering blooms whose memory would have departed with their perfume.

The perfume of the Mass is everlasting. One Mass is more precious and availing than all the blossoms that ever withered on a tomb. To give the alms that will ensure one Mass for the departed soul is a better and more sensible act of aid and solace, both to
the dead and, therefore, to the living, than to heap a costly pyramid of bloom over the grave every day for a thousand years. Let us act on our knowledge of the teachings of our holy faith and get into the habit of sending to the homes that death has saddened the assurance that we have asked a priest to say ten or twenty Masses for the departed—giving, in alms for these, what we should otherwise have spent uselessly on flowers.
TIRED

"H ow our graduates do suffer for want of something definite to do!" said a teaching Sister the other day. "They go out from school, bright, lively, hopeful girls, full of alertness and vigor. They come back to see me, some of them, looking desperately weary. 'What's the matter, child?' I say, 'you look tired to death.' " 'Oh, um-m-m, I am—I got up at eleven o'clock this morning.' " 'Patience,' I laugh, 'then you shouldn't be tired.' " 'Oh, but I was up so late the night before!' " 'Did you stay up to read?' " 'Read? The idea! No, it was a dance, and before that I had been to the theater and to a tea! Oh, what hard work it is to keep up with the whirl!' " 'Dear child,' I tell them," the little Sister continued: "'I don't wonder you are tired—tired in body, but much more tired in soul. To try constantly, day and night, to have a good time, is the most wearisome
thing in the world. Why don't you read? Why don't you do some work for your neighbor, or for the poor? You are wasting your life with all this frivolous folly. Look about you, at all the good works that are ready and crying to be done. Help the sick and the needy. Teach the wretched children their Catechism—your time is not given to you to do as you please—it belongs to your neighbor and to God.'

"Then they look at me dolefully," went on the good Sister, "and say: 'Oh, I can't be a freak. If the other girls would do those things—so would I. But they won't.'"

"Why won't they?" said I.

The Sister looked at me.

"If you asked each one of them separately, each would give the same answer," she said.

"Then why not ask them all together," said I, "haven't they a Sodality, or an alumni association?"

"Of course—that is an idea! But what shall I tell them to do?"

This is a typical instance of what many devoted educators of our young folks are saying and thinking. Meanwhile, our young people are sorely in need of direction as to
how to employ their abundant energy and leisure. Left to themselves, they will run to seed in one way or another. It is not bad will—it is not merely laziness that keeps so many good people from working for their neighbor and the Church. It is the lack of any definite help and suggestion. But the time is at hand when we simply must give them that help and suggestion.

A world of energy and industry is going to waste among our Catholic girls of means and leisure. They are actually less energetic in good works than some of their Protestant countrywomen. They are suffering, too, from a lack of occupation, and are weary with worldly amusements. On the other hand, a whole universe of profitable and interesting labors is open before them; the poor, the sick, the ignorant are waiting to be befriended, cheered, and taught.

Let us introduce them the one to the other; our good energetic capable young people to the blind, and the halt, and lame, who are the Providential objects of their care. Let us show them the work ready to their hands and encourage them to begin in God's dear Name.
THE CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT

The Catholic Church is on trial before the people of America. Ours is a naturally religious people, and the public schools and the breaking up of the sects have starved their souls. Everywhere, the sober and pious-minded are looking about wistfully for the sure and true religion, which will bring them consolation, light and peace.

They eye the Church, these thirsty souls, with mingled hope and suspicion—as the traveler on the sands eyes the distant oasis, misdoubting. Is it a mirage or a well of rest?

How shall we reassure them—we, who are already safe in the shelter of the Church? What is the most effective means to lead them to embrace the one true Faith?

Kindly controversy still has its uses here among our American people; so have courteous refutation, and apt retort, and polite denial. There is more room still for clear explanation and instruction concerning the truths of faith and Catholic principles and
practice. But perhaps what we need more just now, than any of these things, is the Constructive Spirit.

When Our Lord declared: "By their fruits you shall know them," He laid down a rule for telling the true from the false prophets, which commends itself mightily to the common sense of our countrymen. They judge men, movements, officials, inventions, by their fruits. "Results," so reads their simple motto, "is what we are all running after," and whatever brings results, wins their approval and esteem.

It is this shrewd appreciation of results that has done more than any one other thing to raise the Catholic Church in the estimation of our countrymen. The strong, slow logic of results has conquered much prejudice and refuted many calumnies. A faith that can keep its hold on the common people, can fill its churches, week after week, with crowds of men, can stand against evil morals with a consistent front, and keep its devoted priests and its thousands of Religious, men and women, working unselfishly, unpaid, unhonored, unrewarded, for the citizens and the
State—that Church, so says the American, is worth considering. It brings results. "It delivers"—to use the crude and forcible phrase of the street, "it really does deliver the good things which we require!"

But this same efficacy of the Church's action—to disarm prejudice and win allegiance—points to the need of still more of the Constructive Spirit. If active, practical good works are the most efficacious of all arguments nowadays, all the greater need for the upbuilding of such works amongst us.

We lose sight, sometimes, of the need of positive action to cure a positive evil. The times are out of joint. The social body is sick, and requires some definite cure. It will not do to give all our energies to opposing this or that quack remedy which officious college professors or violent socialists propose. We must apply some cure ourselves. Talking, writing, are good—but action is better. The age needs a remedy much more than refutations, and the surest refutation of the quack, is the skill of the true physician.

Let us evidence more and more in action, the healing and saving power of Christian
charity. Let us build up good works. Let us expand in effort and achievement. Let us employ the vast, effective energy of our Catholic people, in the manifold charities for need of which the age is languishing away.

We have the organizations ready to our hand—the Sodality amongst them. We have the field, the workers, the supernatural incentive, the grace of God and the good will of men. Pastors and people, Sodalists that are and Sodalists to be—in God’s name, let us all help to build!
THE PRICE OF A BOY

Nearly every man has his definite valuation. You can cast him up and estimate his worth, and fix a price upon him—so much industry, so many talents, so much capacity, so much intelligence, and energy and power of will.

He is formed, his worth is fixed and established—his efficiency will not grow much greater or less, for all the days of his life.

But it is not so with a boy—and that is just the consideration which makes a boy so interesting and precious a part of God’s plan of things—his valuation is still undecided, still in the making. His worth is still dependent on his own will, on others’ wills, and on the shifts of time.

He is like a cheque, drawn blank—duly signed and of exhaustless credit—but with a blank where some one is to write the fateful figures. No one can be quite sure as yet whether these figures will make him pass current for a paltry sum, or for vast and mighty treasure, with men and God.
And who is to fill the space left empty; who but the boy himself? This is what makes his young days of tragic interest. The boy himself, light, changeable, and uncertain—full of undeveloped virtues and budding and waking vices—he himself, with his schoolboy hand, must scrawl in the first faint figures which, in all likelihood, will deepen and darken to the sum total of his after worth.

True, he writes as young lads do when they form their earliest characters, with guiding lines, and the schoolmaster's firm, cool hand to steer the cramped fingers safely along the copy. But what blurs and blunders they make, these poor boys, even with such kindly aid.

Be careful of the boys! Don't let them cheapen themselves forever by early follies, which only a miracle from Heaven can ever erase in after days. Don't give them reason to point to you, in after time, as the idle or careless cause of their youthful errors—who let them write ciphers into the fair cheque of their future goodness and greatness. It is so easy for the poor little fellows
to waste their glorious possibilities, and spoil their lives.

If you wish to invest your kindness and your care where they will bring great returns and develop great possibilities, invest them in the receptive mind and the docile heart of a boy. If you wish to befriend some one to whom your friendship will mean unutterable things and who will repay your kindness with a life-long gratitude, befriend a boy. When you find some young lad in need of aid, to set him right from some wrong start which he has made in the world, to rub out the ciphers which he has begun to write on the fair cheque of his soul, and write in some figures of worthy merit, seize that opportunity. Think of the days when you yourself were a boy, and estimate, if you can, what a mighty change it would have made in your life and your fortune if some one had befriended you when you were but a lad, full of glorious possibilities, a blank cheque, newly drawn by the hand of God.

You can not any longer erase from your heart and soul those lines which your boyish hand has written there. But all about you
lie young lives, young fortunes, which you can help and aid as no one helped or aided you. If you miss the opportunity, if you let the chance go by, these boys, when they are old, will have occasion to look back upon your dealings with them with sorrow and perhaps with anger. Do not do as you, perhaps, have been done by, but do by these lads what you would wish that some kind friend had done by you. Help and cheer, advise, encourage the boys!
“In my city,” said a priest who was traveling, “there is a dreadful loss every year of young men to the Church. They come to town, bright, energetic young country fellows looking for work, and get into new environment, new associations, far other than the Catholic atmosphere which surrounded them at home. A strange carelessness about Sunday Mass and the sacraments sometimes creeps over a Catholic young man when he is away from home. He no longer has the family atmosphere, full of faith and practical good example. His mother and his sisters are no longer near, to get him up of a Sunday morning, and start him off to church. If he stays away from Mass he will not have to meet the surprise and comments of his Catholic friends, as he would at home.

“Worst of all, many of these Catholic boys fall in with a fast set, and that finishes them. Business and amusements take up all their time and thoughts, bad habits fasten
on them in every leisure hour, and they wake from their pre-occupation—if they wake at all—to find a year's neglect and sin upon them. They come to me,” the priest continued, “usually at Easter, or after a mission, and I ask them, ‘What's the nearest church to where you live?’ They hesitate and stammer: ‘Why, honestly, Father, I don’t really know!’

"Of course it is very easy to advise such straightforward young fellows, when they really wish to reform. ‘Get away from your present associates, and get into good Catholic company.’

"But what of the many thousands of Catholic young men in all our large cities who never muster up courage enough to come to the priest?

"There are some few Catholic young fellows, I know,” the priest went on, "who are doing real rescue work in the true sense of that much abused word. They make it a point to get acquainted with these lost sheep and bring them into better company. But how few they are—these rescuers—and how many fine, sturdy young fellows are being
hopelessly lost to the Church. A year or so of religious drifting, a mixed marriage—and another non-Catholic family with a Catholic family name.

"A great deal of attention and sympathy is being given, and rightly, too, to the dangers which beset young girls who come from the country into our larger cities. But is it not true also that our Catholic young men from the country need some help and saving, too? The perils which lie in wait for them are not so spectacular and thrilling, not of such blood-curdling horror, as the perils of the unprotected young women. But for all that, their dangers are real and terrible enough to stir us up to a sense of our obligations to help them.

"How many of our Catholic Sodalists, with a very little care, could befriend some young fellows of their acquaintance and lead them out from evil association, into the clean ways of Catholic living. It would need only a little extra friendliness, a little tactful talk, an invitation to attend a sermon, a hint about the sacraments. Every one is willing to be befriended, and these young fellows are
many of them sick enough of their evil ways, but they lack the courage to amend them. Begin, our Sodalists, and help to save these needy souls; put a stop to this squandering of young men!"
SPLendid MATERIAL

IT {w}as, to be precise, the first presentation of the St. Louis Pageant, and close to one hundred thousand souls were seated in the great hollow of the hill watching that spectacle. But I confess that, for me, the immense stage with its great troupe of players, their bright costumes reflected in the lake, was of but secondary interest. My imagination was caught and held by that immenscr throng upon the hill.

The strong arc lamps behind glittered upon the crowd, and showed a shoreless sea of heads and shoulders. Like a huge, hollow shield, they stretched from where I sat, curving up to the farthest summit of the hill. And what a crowd! They embodied in themselves the best characteristics of our American people. They were cheerful, good humored, friendly to one another, courteously silent while the performance lasted and quietly chatty in the interlude.

But what impressed one most in the crowd, was its quiet autonomousness—its
self-possession and capability of keeping its own self in order. There was not a trace of loudness, selfishness or violence there. The very sight of a hundred thousand people all together fills a thoughtful man with a vague sense of apprehension. What if some sudden panic seized them? What if some lawless element chose to make a demonstration there?

But this great crowd had in itself, the principle of its own security. It was a sovereign crowd—self-disciplined and self-contained. The sentiments of patriotism and religion with which the Pageant and the Masque were greatly colored, gave evident satisfaction to the crowd—but its applause was never boisterous. It enjoyed discreetly, applauded temperately, conversed becomingly and was silent in due season. When all was over, there was no headlong scramble to be gone, nor selfish racing for the cars. The huge assembly melted away with no more noise or confusion than if there had been a few hundreds there instead of many thousands.

I remembered another great crowd I once
had seen—which produced upon me a very similar impression. It was the great multitude that greeted Admiral Dewey in New York, when he came home after Manila Bay. Then, the green stretches of Riverside Park had been the setting, and the multitude had stretched up and down the Hudson River, past Grant’s statue and far along the shore. There was the same display of the social virtues, the same good humor, temperate enjoyment, and capacity for self-direction and control. The whole crowd behaved like a gentleman!

As I sat under the calm summer sky and watched this crowd at the pageant and thought of that crowd of Riverside Drive, a certain shame and longing possessed my soul. What magnificent material, I thought, would not these cheerful, temperate, energetic, self-possessed and whole-hearted people make to build up and fill out the Church of God! If we could turn their temperateness into self-sacrifice, their energy into supernatural effort, their whole-heartedness into zeal for the kingdom of God—what splendid sons and daughters of the Church would rise up
from among them? Now, they are exploited by knaves, misled by false teachers and allured away by specious theories. And the shame of it and the blame rests upon us, who have the fulness of the truth. If the good and sound and sturdy non-Catholic element among our people—and who doubts that it is very great?—is to be led to the truth, we must all take our share in the leading. If converts are to be made, we are to do the converting!

It is quite useless to discuss where the blame lies most for the slow progress of conversions—whether on this class or that, on this act or that omission. The blame sifts through all distinctions of classes or groups of persons and falls straight on you and on me. It is we, as individuals, who are making or unmaking our native land. There were a hundred thousand souls there before me that night, and of these, no less than half were Catholics. Suppose to-morrow, every one of them was to begin a life of high and consistent fidelity to his faith; how long would it be before their non-Catholic friends would be impressed with the sublime efficacy
of our faith? We Catholics are responsible for our whole noble country. If we are false to our faith, we are traitors to our native land!
“JUST LYING AROUND”

"O ne of the most dangerous things that Catholic parents do," said a good old pastor the other day, "is to leave all manner of newspapers and magazines ‘just lying around,’ where the little folk with their sharp eyes and inquisitive minds can find them and read through every page. How much harm has come to children—and to grown folk, too, for that matter—because some careless person left a bad paper or a bad book ‘just lying around.’ It is the things that just lie around, always ready to our hand, always under our very eyes, that stand the most chance of being picked up and read at any idle moment; and the longer they lie around, the more sure we can be that every inch of them will be scanned by idle or by curious eyes."

That is the dark side of the picture, and there is a great deal of truth in what the old pastor said. We should clear away the mental rubbish from our reading tables and our book-shelves, with even greater care than
we clear out the harmful dust from our dwelling place. This mental and moral rubbish does a great deal more harm in its way than the rubbish that hurts our fastidious eyes.

But then there is another side to this same reflection. If bad literature does a great deal of harm by just lying around, good literature does a great deal of good, when one has it always at his elbow ready to pick up at a vacant or a weary hour. Why not have some good Catholic magazines and books "just lying around"? These piles of secular literature on our study tables and library shelves need to be diluted a little with some positively Catholic reading. See to it that there is some attractive reading matter of a Catholic tone, within easy reach of your children. If you bring it near to them, they will read it.

It is human nature, and especially present-day human nature, to pick up and glance over any bit of reading matter that comes our way.

Of course, it will not be enough merely to bring Catholic magazines and books into the house. You must remove them from their
wrappings, and spread them out for eyes to see. There is something desperately doleful about a magazine swathed in its wrapping—and gathering dust unopened. It is distressingly suggestive of a mummy in its case. Break the seal. Remove the wrapping and make it easy for members of your household to pick the paper up, or open the magazine during some leisure hour. Human nature seeks the lines of least resistance. If you make it easier and more pleasant for those about you to get at good literature, than to read the indifferent and bad, you will be helping them along the way of profitable reading. Truly an excellent means to that desirable end is to have a store of Catholic literature, books, papers, and magazines, invitingly open and spread out to the light, and "just lying around."
SOME POINTS OF PRACTICE IN RECEIVING

Now that the blessed practice of frequent Communion is happily gaining ground, a few suggestions as to the manner of receiving the Sacred Species will be useful to not a few readers. To begin with, there is the way of managing one’s lips and tongue when receiving. Some persons have an awkward manner, which embarrasses the priest, and endangers the Host. They hold the tongue too far back, or lower the head so that the priest can not see where he is placing the Blessed Sacrament; or they stiffen the tongue and stretch it out so far that there is danger of dropping the Host entirely. Other communicants move the head nervously forward at the moment of receiving, or withdraw the tongue too quickly. All these things are quite wrong, and put the Sacred Host in peril.

Then, what is the proper way? One should keep one’s head and eyes slightly lowered until the priest comes near. Then,
still keeping the eyes cast down, tilt your head a little upward, extend your tongue until it rests quietly upon your lower lip, with its tip protruding a trifle beyond the edge of the lip, and wait for the priest to place the Host upon it. He will press the Host lightly upon your tongue. The moisture of your tongue will hold the Host safely, and you must then gently and quietly withdraw your tongue, close your lips, and swallow the Sacred Species, without any sudden or jerky motions, but reverently and calmly, as befits so great and holy an action.

Then leave the Communion-rail (it is not necessary to genuflect as you go, for you carry with you the King of Kings) and return to your place with the inward and outward reverence and recollection which should spring naturally from the thought of the great action you have performed. Keep your eyes modestly lowered as you go, and let your veneration speak in all your actions, as becomes a man or woman who has received the very body and blood of God made man.

How often does one hear Protestants and unbelievers comment upon the behavior of
the faithful in receiving **Holy Communion**. They look with anxiety sometimes, to see whether you really believe that Christ is present there. So that your outward reverence and devotion in receiving is to their eyes a declaration of your faith.

One should swallow the Sacred Species as soon as one comfortably can, lest by keeping the Host too long in the mouth, it should dissolve and lose the appearance of bread. If the Host adheres to the roof of the mouth, loosen it with your tongue—if you can not do so at once, wait quietly for a moment and then try again—there is no need of being disturbed at an accident which happens without our fault.

Finally, we should remember how precious are those first moments after we have received, and not allow any distracting thought to enter into our soul, where the **King of Glory** has come to dwell. In a quarter of an hour the Sacred Species will very probably vanish away, and then Christ’s bodily Presence ceases within us. Let us use well each instant of that most happy and blessed quarter of an hour!
A Catholic young man who has been doing a great deal of work in the way of getting subscriptions for magazines, and who has consequently seen a great deal of Catholic parish life, was telling the other day of a rather pathetic experience.

His canvassing had led him to a parish in the outskirts of his city—one of those new parishes formed by the moving out of a number of Catholic families from the less desirable downtown residence districts. These families came, of course, from various parts of the town, and, naturally, when they arrived in the new parish, had few acquaintances there. But some of them had already been established in their new homes for several years, and so the young solicitor was a bit surprised to hear their universal wail.

"They were all complaining," said he, "of the want of sociability among the Catholics of their parish. They said one and all
Lonely

that it was the loneliest place they ever lived in in their lives. One good housewife com-
plained that she had been in the parish three years, and there were Catholics all around,
and no one had ever called on her nor said a word to her. Another declared that she had
had more visitors from among the Protestants in one month than from the Catholics in a
year.

“And what made it worse in her eyes was the contrary practice of the Protestants of
the neighborhood. If a Protestant family moved into the neighborhood, a whole swarm of
people from the Protestant church descended upon them with friendly visits and
offers of assistance in getting acquainted in the neighborhood. Indeed, one good woman
related how she had been mistaken on her first arrival for a Methodist, and, until the
Methodists discovered that she was a Catholic, her days were brightened by many
friendly visits. Then the visits ceased and since that time, when she wanted a bit of
friendly chat, she had to go downtown to her former parish, where she had some
friends.”
I give this little experience for what it is worth, without trying to decide whether it is characteristic of many Catholic parishes or no. This much is certain, that even in one parish such a state of things is rather saddening. If there was one thing which the Founder of the true Church impressed upon His people, it was His earnest desire that they should love one another and that all men might see that they were His disciples by this great mark—their love for one another.

Of course, the conventionalities of our city life and the little differences of social station make it hard sometimes for neighbors to become acquainted. But where the non-Catholic people can show such cordial friendliness and sociability surely our Catholic neighbors can find a way to be friendly and sociable, too.

II

New York City, as one comes into it in the daytime, is commonplace enough, a matter of cliff-like buildings crowded together at the tip of the island, with roaring streets that
pass like ravines under the frown of the towering mountains of brick and of stone. But New York, as one comes to it at night on the ferry from Jersey City, is no more the merely colossal and obvious mart as one sees it by day. The inky waters of the river, shot with golden reflections and dancing with the wash of countless tugs and ferries, merge insensibly to the eye into a dark mass of black walls and towers lifted unbelievably high into the other inky spaces above. And all through the heavy bulk of the buildings the windows gleam yellow with lights, glittering in startling and vivid gold against the dead black of the night, where late toilers are bending over desks or fingerling papers in the eyries and nooks of a thousand towers. In the day these great buildings with their thousand windows merely loom in stolid bigness on the sky and give no hint of the swarming life within. But the night reveals the intensity of life within them, for beneath each one of those numberless sparks of light tense brows are leaning over vexing ledgers, and nervous fingers are busy with stubborn sheets.
Lonely

As one looks, a pity grows for all these lonely workers. They are in a solitude worse than the loneliness of country places. For there every one whom one does meet is a friend; but here the vast loneliness of great crowds oppresses the spirit. There are thousands of young girls working under these glittering lights who have come from the friendliness of a small town to the gigantic coldness and huge indifference of this Babylon of cities, and their hearts are sore with the undefinable hurt of this aching and peopled loneliness. There are young lads, too, under those cold bright lights in the towers who are suffering from the want of a confidant and a friend. And how many of these lonely and unfriended young folk are our own people, Catholics whom the glamor of the great city has drawn from safe homes in little towns where their kinsfolk surrounded them with friendliness and protection? They chafed under the limits of their town and came here to New York seeking easy fame and fortune. They drifted hither, drifted into cheap lodgings, drifted into this huge and widespread net of the lighted win-
dows. Whither are they drifting now? They are our own people. They are the dear sons and daughters of the same Mother Church which bore them and us in the holy waters of Baptism, nourishes them and us with the same holy Sacrament of the Altar, and would have them and us gather about the same Holy Sacrifice. But many of them have grown so distracted by the whirl of the city, so weary with the struggle for bread, or so embittered by constant drudgery, that they have given up the Sacraments, prayer, the Sunday Mass, in a word, everything but the name of Catholic.

They work there, thousands of them, behind that network of lighted windows that rises like a huge web of gold swung against the sky. And to those of us who know the city, its dangers, the snares it lays for souls, and, alas, the little care that we Catholics take of our own, the lacing of golden windows seems in very deed a great net, swung across the tides of men and holding in its glittering meshes many forlorn, entangled and pitifully neglected souls.
NEW USES FOR OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

After a century of effort, the Catholic parish-schools of America represent an investment of many millions of dollars. During the busy school-year they are used for some eight hours a day, while the children are at class, and this goes on for nine or ten months of the year. But there are many hours of the school-year, and at least two long months of the summer season, when these splendid buildings are for the most part empty, and the great investment which they represent is profiting no one. On the other hand, in nearly every American parish, there is a whole range of possible activities which could most profitably employ the room and shelter and accommodations offered by the parish-school building to the great benefit of children and adults.

The classrooms with their equipment for study could be employed for night schools for those adults who wish to perfect their education and for the immigrants who, in citi-
zension classes and classes in English and commercial law, may be taught their duties and opportunities as Americans and incidentally brought in closer contact with the Church. Then, too, with a little direction and encouragement, study classes may be formed which will meet in the parish-school classrooms for mutual improvement and the discussion of current topics. Academies, so earnestly approved by the rules of the Sodality, in which the members devote themselves to useful studies, prepare papers and conduct debates along almost any lines of profitable information, might also use these rooms during vacant hours. With a little system, a bit of initiative, the parish-school might become a center of information, interest and sociability, not for the school children alone, but for almost every member of the parish.

Again, during the long vacation the parish-school lends itself admirably to the activities of a Vacation School. As we once showed in an article on this subject, Protestant Vacation Bible Schools may be traced to a wish on the part of the ministers to use their churches,
vacant all during the summer season, and to give poor children a place of refuge from the dangers and temptations of their summer playgrounds, the city streets. We have no less than half a million Catholic children in the slums of our cities who are in danger of body and mind during the summer. Our vacant parish-schools offer a splendid opportunity to bring them in from the street and occupy them in pleasant and profitable ways during the dangerous season.

But where are we to obtain the directors and workers for these manifold activities? We have them at our door. The Catholic laity numbers many a young man and young woman of comparative leisure or who could at least find time to give a few hours a week to one or another of these activities. Our Sodalists are called by their very rules to partake in some such personal service of the neighbor. All we need is suggestion, initiative, organization, to induce a great number of people to do each a little bit, and we shall make up an immense sum total of effective effort. But who is to systematize all this work, keep the workers interested,
and prevent overlapping? Who is to instruct the newcomer and enlist the willing but bashful worker in the task? There are two possible solutions. Either we must find volunteers among our young men and young women who are rich enough and generous enough to give a great deal of their time gratis to acting as organizers, and who have the talent and training to make the work a success, or else we must come to the idea of employing trained workers—one in each parish, where the parish is large and the activities various, or one for several parishes together, where a single parish is not able to bear the expense of such a paid worker.

Already here in America more than one pastor is employing a trained social worker to systematize the activities of his parish, and with excellent success. It would be a profitable undertaking on the part of the Sodalities of the parish to pay the salary of such a one, and as time goes on we shall see an increased number of such trained workers bringing to the volunteer efforts of the Sodalists the system and suggestions of truly scientific effort. Unhappily, the fads and
fancies of some extremists have made the term "Social Worker" odious to many ears, but as His Holiness, Pope Pius X, intimated in a famous letter to the Italian Bishops, there is a solid residue of true discovery in modern methods of work for the poor which we Catholics will do well to study and make use of in ministering to the needs of our own people in all the lines of social work.
COMMERCIALIZED AMUSEMENTS

As I write, by an accident of location I am looking from the vantage of one of the office buildings of Detroit upon the Campus Martius. It is the hour when from stores and factories and offices a host of men and women are pouring into the streets, tired from the grind of the day, and craving not so much for amusement as for the distraction of some new sensation to ease the throbbing of their brains and change the rhythm of their thoughts. They come by thousands, even as I look at them, and meanwhile from innumerable offices and stores and factories, in a thousand cities, similar throngs are pouring, all intent on some amusement, something distracting, light and merry that will rest the tired cells of their brains and loosen the taut muscles of their minds.

It is out of this universal demand for evening amusement that has arisen in great part the commercialized entertainment of our
Men and women require amusement that they can buy as they buy a cooling drink to soothe their thirst just when they crave for it, or a pleasant book to amuse an idle hour. Amusements must be, to use a current phrase, "on tap" for them. Time was, in simpler days, that men and women turned to the calm delights of home for all the relaxation they needed after a strenuous day. But of these throngs that swarm beneath me there is not one in ten that would not smile at the thought of a mere quiet evening at home to offset the weariness of the working day.

Commercialized amusement—the sort of entertainment that is forever "on tap" and for sale to the casual buyer, has become altogether a feature of our time. It remains true, now as always, that the very best place for men and women to find consolation and forgetfulness of the troubles of the day is home—but it is less possible than ever before to persuade them of this very obvious truth when there is question of their individual selves.

Meanwhile, looking from this same point
of vantage, one can see the amusements that shrewd providers have got ready for this swarming multitude when they shall have snatched their hasty supper and come downtown again to slake their thirst for entertainment.

Just across the street is a "Family Theater"—significant name!—which, as someone at my elbow remarks, pays four hundred per cent a year on its investment, though property here is fabulously dear. And in truth one can not doubt that this theater is well named, and that there are many families who do make the building their evening rendezvous and gather there more faithfully than around the family hearth.

Looking down the street to the right I see a bold sign, "Billiards," and to the left another brief announcement, "Bar." There is a café just across the street, and a yellow building down the block proclaims—I copy its signs literally—"Gayety Burlesque, Higher Grade Burlesque, Popular Prices." Just across the street, to the left, there is a building of white stone which bears on its top the inscription, "Detroit Opera House";
but the signs below confess that it is now devoted to the exhibition of the all-devouring, ever-present movie. Finally, as one leans out of window and looks far to the right, one sees the Detroit River, which, a few months from now, will carry steamers, ferries, and every sort of pleasure craft on its bosom, offering to this weary crowd another various field of commercialized amusement, in Belle Isle, Lake St. Clair, Bois Blanc, and all the summer excursions near and far.

From this one window, then, one gets a panoramic view of the amusements of a whole city and of the multitudes who throng these pleasure places. Of the crowd that drifts along under this window full a half are Catholics, and perhaps even more; for these shop-girls and factory hands are mostly of our Faith. Where are they going to spend this evening's hours? It is a most vital question to all who love the Church and long for the salvation of souls.

For in the hours of recreation and pleasure come the most insidious and dangerous temptations to the young. Their imaginations are set glowing with relaxation and
pleasure and take easily the bad impressions offered to them in the name of fun and amusement, which they would repel indignantly in more sober and thoughtful hours. Sly hints of evil, loose pictures of indulgence and license slip by the unguarded doors of the senses and corrupt their unsuspecting hearts. Therefore, it is in the hours of recreation that our young people need most sorely to be protected from the taint of bad amusements, from the unscrupulousness of libertine "entertainers," and even sometimes from their own foolish selves.

It would be a very profitable work, then, on the part of those who have the care of souls, Directors of Sodalities, heads of Catholic Societies, parents and teachers and pastors, to make themselves familiar with the commercialized amusements that gather in so many of our young folk—and old folk, too—night after night in every great city and in most little towns. It is in the nature of things that grave abuses occur from time to time, and there is a constant swarm of minor evils that infest such places unless the vigilance of careful eyes is on them. No one
who has the responsibility of souls upon him can neglect or disregard the commercialized amusements of the time, for they are a mighty influence—for good and, even more, for evil.
THE LOSS

The American pastor of an Italian parish was speaking the other day of the great need of work for the children of the Italian immigrants. "I have in my parish," said he, "a strip seven blocks long by ten blocks wide, in which there are seven hundred Catholic families. These families average three children each, so that twenty-one hundred Catholic children live in that narrow strip of city. And now comes the tragedy of it. Only a bare two hundred of all these children are going to a Catholic school. The other nineteen hundred are going to perdition."

"Couldn't you form Cathechism centers there?" we asked, "and keep the children to the Faith by means of these?"

The pastor sighed. "Catechism centers there would be only a very partial remedy," he said. "What we need is parish-schools for our Italian children. They require a careful daily training to offset the bad influences of the slums and to implant in their recep-
tive hearts the principles of Catholic virtue. Nothing but schools will save them, and our great effort must be to provide the schools."

The pity of the situation—and this instance is but a typical one of many throughout our large cities—is that the times will not stand still and allow us to plan and decide how we shall meet the urgent need of these poor children and then take leisurely steps to provide for it. The little ones will grow up fast, and they will soon be beyond the reach of that help which in their tender and impressionable years would be so effective and comparatively so easy. These children are full of promise for the Church, if only they are got now in the freshness of their youth and taught the religion of their fathers. But in five years they will have grown beyond our influence, and we shall have to bear the thought that girls and boys who should have been the good and solid material of a new generation of American Catholics have been quite lost to us, and lost sometimes as well to decency and honor and to all that would have ennobled and sanctified their lives. We spend great sums every year on painful
efforts to help and save poor, ruined people who, for want of early training, have wasted their own lives and corrupted and spoiled many other lives besides. What an even better charity it would be to save these little ones before their course of ruin is well begun!
A MODERN UNIVERSITY

PERMIT me to take you on a stroll through one of our great universities. We are, you perceive, in the entrance to the magnificent grounds that contain the forty-odd buildings palatially built and furnished to house the classes—and the professors—of this modern Athens. Everywhere one sees evidence of prodigal expenditure, for this is one of our many State universities; and golden streams, in great part from Catholic taxpayers, refresh the greenness of these lawns and enrich the walls that you see rising about you. Please notice that they never finish building here, for beside the completed structures others are always in course of erection, and the newer buildings are ever the more rich and splendid. Obviously, here they have funds enough and to spare. Now listen a moment to the old resident who is doing the honors. He tells you that no less than five thousand students, from all parts of the world, inhabit these shades, and drink in various doctrine. Nearly three
millions of dollars come from the State's coffers every year to keep up this vast institution. So you will conclude that each student costs the State every year something like five hundred dollars, at a moderate estimate, exclusive of the vast investment in grounds and buildings. Our cicerone is a Catholic. So we ask him:

"How many Catholics are there in this university?"

"About three hundred and fifty."

"And how many Catholic professors?"

"None that I know of."

"What sort of principles and philosophy are inculcated here?"

"Every sort except the Catholic viewpoint.

"You know about the run of university professors. Pseudo-scientific rationalism is in the air, and all these young people are exposed to catching the disease of modern materialistic thought and principle. Here in this hotbed of infidelity, and during the most impressionable period of their lives, they are preparing for their lifework, and laying the foundation of their whole future career."
“But,” you exclaim, “is this the way the State provides for the coming generation of its leading citizens?”

“Precisely so. This is the official training place for the most intelligent, the most ambitious, and the destined leaders of thought for the next generation. They are brought here from every corner of the State and from far-off places. They come trustingly seeking the truth. They are met with a miscellaneous crowd of professors, many of them good enough in some particular specialty, but infected themselves with the cheap agnosticism of the times, and blind leaders of the blind when it comes to right principles or correct philosophy.

“And we Catholics throughout this State,” continues our guide and informant, “are tamely paying our taxes to support this iniquity. We are feebly allowing any sort of philosophy, any color of ethics to be taught to the young folk of our State in the official center of the State’s higher education. Yet we are perhaps the strongest single interest in the vast population of this State. We only can remedy the evil and save our
helpless young people from this continual pollution. Shall we not have something to answer for to God if we make no effort at reform?"
THE CATHOLIC HERITAGE

One wonders, seeing the activities of non-Catholic organizations and of the sects outside the Church, how very much they succeed in accomplishing with so slender an outfit of teaching and tradition. With the bare word of the Bible and the warring history of the sects they go forward under serious handicap to sometimes surprising achievements. How rightly envious they would be if they could realize how rich we Catholics are in divine truth and inspiring history! We literally are the heirs of all time. With the tremendous vitality of a living organism whose life is of God and guaranteed by Him, the Church has taken from every age its choicest essence, its sterling and permanent gift of goodness and truth, and nourished herself upon it; she has possessed the greatest art, the most enduring literature, the sublimest examples of human heroism. The great originals of Christendom are hers, stamped with her impress, and no one can take her glory from her.
But is it not sometimes a reproach to us that we make so poor a use of all these, our ancestral treasures in the Church? The children of the world prize every slight advantage of history or tradition. Their heroes are remembered and honored in effective ways. The heroes of the Church are too often only names upon our lips. We allow strangers and aliens to write our histories. Even the text-books of history which we sometimes put into the hands of our children, to form their young ideals, are the work of men and women whose attitude toward the Church's heroes is very often one of indifference or hostility. What do these little ones know of Brébœuf or Champlain or Marquette or Madame Duquesne or the other great-hearted men and women whose names should be household words with us because of their heroic service to our country and the Church? The more remote heroes of Church history, the sainted men and women of other lands, are often less than names to our little ones. We teach them wearisome details of bloody wars—how like these battles are!—but leave many of them in the mental atti-
tude of the little Catholic girl who, when told that Joan of Arc might some day be canonized a saint, exclaimed: “Why, we read about her in our history book, but I never knew that she was a Catholic!” An exception? Perhaps. But where a million and a half of our Catholic children are in the public schools, the exception is in danger of growing to be a rule.

Again, we of the Church have fallen heir to the most sublime and exquisite in art. The Madonnas, the master works which illustrate every detail of the life of Christ, shine with most tender devotion no less than with a matchless artistic perfection. Modern processes make it cheap and easy to multiply these lovely paintings, yet our houses, our schools, even our churches sometimes, are “decorated” (not adorned) with cheap and ghastly chromos, which are put upon us by the doubtful taste and commercial shrewdness of non-Catholic (one thinks sometimes they must be anti-Catholic) speculators. Did you try again last Christmas to get a tasteful and religious Christmas card? One Catholic did, long and perseveringly, in
many stores, and was at last offered, as "the most Catholic thing we have," a card bearing within an arabesque design the mild and non-committal wish, "May Heaven Bless You this Christmas Morn!" For one Christ or Madonna on Christmas cards there are ten thousand Santa Clauses.

Nor are some of us sufficiently in love with Catholic literature. Dante, it is true, loses in translation, as do all great masters, but even in translation he is sublimely superior to the best of modern authors. That Gothic cathedral of song, those three great poems which he has built up with their foundations in Hell and their summits rosy with the light of the empyrean, should be as familiar as household words to every educated Catholic. Not to love Dante, not to study him, is to lose a dear part of our Catholic heritage.

And so we may say of the other Catholic poets, and of all our masters of literature, who have enshrined Catholic thought in imperishable verse or prose. These men are the voices of the great Catholic tradition of culture coming to us across the ages, preserving
through the years the heritage of Catholic feeling and Catholic thought.

Again, we Catholics too often squander and debase the rich gold of the Church's ceremonial. By the loving and patient care of the ages of faith there has gathered about the Mass, about the Vesper song, about the consecrating of churches, the christening of children, the blessing of altars, about all the holy sacraments and sacramentals of Mother Church, a rich incrustation of rite and ceremonial and the melody of sacred music which weds to prayer a holy and moving harmony of sound and makes vocal the pious aspirations of the heart.

The solemn splendor of Catholic ceremonies has moved the envy of other creeds. They so admirably express the most sacred and intimate tendernesses of the heart. But let us consider with what observance and precision we conduct these splendors of the divine service. The gorgeous patrimony of worship which we have from our sainted forefathers is worthy of much care and sacrifice to preserve and carry out in all its majesty. Our choirs should deem it a point of
sacred honor to learn well and to give as perfectly as they can the great music of Catholic worship.

In fine, we must awake to a sense of our own vast riches. The world is sick and hungry for the Faith, though it knows not what it desires. The heart of the world is craving, too, for the satisfying truth and beauty which has come to Catholics from the ages. What a great folly in us to let ourselves go astray after the tinseled heroes, the tawdry art, the hysterical literature, and the empty mummeries of the world, when the heroic figures of the saints, the splendid art of the ages of faith, the great literature of the Catholic Renaissance, and the magnificent ceremonials of the Church, stand, as it were, begging our notice and our love. The world offers us husks, but the banquet of delight waits in Our Father's dwelling.

Nor are all these things, our art, literature, majestic ceremonies, or the heroic tales of Catholic tradition, mere affairs of unpractical emotion. It is not for the gratification of a sentiment or a fancy that God has given His Church the greatest fruits of human
genius and the sublimest types of heroism. These things are of priceless use in arousing the intellect and elevating the heart. The traditions of great families, their ancestral heroes and tales of old-time achievement and of service, stir the hearts of the scions of the house and set them aspiring to be like the men they spring from. So it should be with our Catholic heritage. Our boys and girls, if they grow up in loving familiarity with their great inheritance, will be molded into some worthiness of such traditions. Their minds will be enriched with noble and honorable rules of action, their hearts will stir with generous ideals, with the chivalry of those great lovers of God and men whom we call saints.
"It is quite comical," said a pastor, "how all the people have engagements. They are signed up, even the youngsters, for weeks ahead. The President of the United States isn't near so much engaged as some of these little whippersnappers of eighteen and twenty. If there's something to be done for the Church, they can't possibly do it—they're too much engaged."

It is a bit comical, isn't it? If only we could see how very funny we are! We are amused at little children when they make a solemn fuss about trifles, making believe that their little enterprises are things of great pith and moment. But all this rush after amusement, with "something every night," is a childish game, after all. And while it is amusing to see children busy with trifles, because after all they are only children, isn't it pitiful and distressing to see grown-up men and women acting as though they had never truly grown up at all?
INTRODUCING THEM

It becomes increasingly clear that half of the work of organizing Catholic activities in the United States will be over when we have gotten past the difficulties of introducing the workers to the work. There is no lack of good will and interest on the part of our Catholic people, and a number of men and women are growing exceedingly anxious to do something for their neighbor. The social activity about us fosters this eagerness, but what keeps the workers from the work is the uncertainty, first of all, as to what they can do, and secondly, as to how to set about doing it. Almost any beginning is a step in the right direction. To find the work and set about doing it is a simple recipe for eventual success. Now the work lies before us. In our great cities the need is of more sociability, of getting those who are well-to-do to help those who are not. In the country places the same need exists, but in a different form. If we can only introduce the workers to the work and encourage
our good and zealous people to set their hands to some needed task, they will soon discern for themselves the organization and means of accomplishing it most perfectly.

In many instances it really does not make so much difference whether one starts according to the very best and most suited plan. What makes the difference is that one should have, first of all, practical wisdom and a resourceful mind, and adapt one’s methods accordingly; and, secondly, an enduring grit and superlative tenacity to persevere through everything until one does find the right way to bring success. Blessed be the man or woman who takes the first step in any locality toward introducing the workers to the work. There is a proverb in most languages, which the French perhaps turn most neatly, to the effect that it is the first step that costs. There is a certain inertia in every one of us which makes it difficult in each enterprise to come bravely forward and take that first step with energy. Once begun the work gathers its own momentum and in the end succeeds. For that very reason there is special merit in being the one to make a brave beginning.
Pioneers are always looked back upon with reverence, because they have had the courage to take the first step that costs. This should be an incentive to all right-minded people to take the first step whenever prudence and need point the way. With many it seems to be almost a set principle never to be the first to do anything, and so they never gain the glory and merit of pioneers. Others are very rash, and so take the first step without looking whither they are stepping. It is a combination of bravery and prudence which looks ahead, counts the dangers and difficulties, sees the objective, and then has the courage and strength to take the first step that costs.
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