

**THE
SPIRITUAL TEACHING
OF St. JOHN EUDES**

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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PREFACE

FOR a long time past the writing of this study of the spiritual teaching of St. John Eudes has been contemplated, but hitherto other preoccupations have made it impossible for me to accomplish it. Now, thanks be to God, it is concluded, and I am happy to offer it to the priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, to the religious of Our Lady of Charity, to the members of the Society of the Heart of the Admirable Mother, and to the numerous admirers and friends of St. John Eudes. In enabling them to become better acquainted with his doctrine, may it also cause them to be permeated with his spirit and assist them to walk faithfully in his footsteps.

In writing this work I have made frequent use of the introductions with which I prefaced the Saint's writings in the *Oeuvres complètes* and the *Oeuvres choisies*; and I have also profited by the labours of M. Letourneau, M. Bremond, and M. Pourrat. But the most systematic and the most complete exposition of the teaching of our Saint is to be found in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, and that book has been my chief guide. I have not, however, neglected the later works of the Saint, in which his doctrine is presented to us in its definitive form.

PREFACE

In conclusion I would add that this study is but an essay. A definitive synthesis of the teaching of St. John Eudes will not be possible until all its details have been minutely studied. I have only attempted to show the path that must be followed.

CH. LEBRUN Versailles, July 8, 1932.

CHAPTER I

ST. JOHN EUDES: AND HIS WRITINGS

ST. JOHN EUDES wrote many books. His Oeuvres Complètes, published some twenty years ago, ran twelve octavo volumes, and yet we are without certain number that were never printed, the manuscripts of which were lost in the Revolution of 1789. Not that the Saint was primarily a writer; he was an indefatigably zealous apostle with no other ambition than that of promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and throughout his long life he occupied himself to that end in numerous ways.

Possessing extraordinary aptitude for missions, he did not cease to preach until he was at the end of his strength. Above all, he was convinced that what was chiefly lacking in the Church of France was a supply of virtuous and zealous priests, and it was for that reason that he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the principal object of which is to labour at the training of the clergy in the greater seminaries; while to assure a shelter for girls and penitent women he founded the Order of Our Lady of Charity, which is vowed to their relief. In addition, from 1643 onwards, he used all his powers for the establishment and propagation of the public cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. And finally he instituted for persons

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in the world several associations intended to honour these Sacred Hearts and to occupy themselves with good works, especially in coming to the help of the ecclesiastical seminaries.

The works written by the Saint were bound up with his apostolic labours, and their only object was to ensure the success of the latter. They were not learned works but popular books intended as propaganda, written to meet the needs of his institutes and to help his priests, pious souls in general, and even ordinary Christians to lead a life conformable to their vocation. Written simply and clearly, without any literary object, they are permeated with his penetrating unction and delicate piety, and therein is the secret of their success. But before studying the teaching that underlies them all, it will not be without value to draw up the list of these works and to show their subject-matter and the work on behalf of which they were respectively composed.

A. ST. JOHN EUDES AT THE ORATORY:

Le Royaume de Jésus

John Eudes was born at Ri, in the diocese of Séez, on November 14, 1601. From his tenderest years he was notable for his piety, and especially for his devotion to the Holy Virgin, so that at the college of Caen, where he studied under the Jesuit Fathers, his fellow-pupils called him "Eudes the Devout." He was admitted into the congregation of the Blessed Virgin in 1618, and therein, as he tells us, received great graces, and when his school days were over he decided to enter the ecclesiastical state, and for two or three years he

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attended the course of the theological faculty at Caen.

The Influence of the Oratorians

It was in 1623 that he asked for admission to the Oratory, into which he was received the by

Père de Bérulle himself on March 25th. Ordained priest on December 20, 1625, he was sent to Aubervilliers, in the solitude of Notre Dame des Vertus, to recuperate his failing health, and remained there two years, during which he spent his time in prayer, spiritual reading and other pious exercises. During his sojourn at Paris and at Aubervilliers he was able to profit by the instructions of both Père de Bérulle and Père de Condren and was so stirred by their teaching that he mastered it completely and made it the very essence of his piety and of his apostolate.

There is no need for us here to set out the teachings of those holy men; suffice it to say that they delighted to concentrate their devotion on the Incarnate Word and on His Most Holy Mother, that they looked upon the Christian life as a continuation and an extension of the life of Jesus in each one of us, that they stressed the virtue of religion and the supreme worship of adoration that we owe to God in union with His Divine Son, and finally that they held an extremely lofty view of the priesthood, being accustomed to consider it the Order of Jesus Christ and as such the greatest and the holiest of all the orders.(1) We will

(1). This school of thought is very dogmatic and is particularly insistent on the dogma of the fall of man by the sin of Adam and his restoration by the Incarnation. The followers of Bérulle delighted in meditating on these great mysteries in the light of St. John's Gospel and of St. Paul's Epistles. We look in vain in their work, for those moral studies that attracted Other writers whose doctrine is ordinarily less theocentric.

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constantly find these ideas, so dear to Bérulle and his disciples, in the writings of St. John Eudes, for they constituted the basis of his spiritual teaching. It is true that he sets them forth in his own way, and often draws upon the words of St. Francis of Sales, Rodriguez, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. Brigid and many other writers of various schools, but in all essentials his teaching is certainly that of Bérulle and Condren.

In 1627, after devoting himself for several months to the service of the plague-stricken people in the neighbourhood of Argentan, he was sent to the Oratory at Caen, where he began to preach missions, employing his free time in the direction of souls either at the Oratory or amongst the religious communities of the town, especially the Carmelites and the Benedictines of Holy Trinity. The letters exchanged during this period between him and the Carmelites and the Benedictines, respectively, show that his wisdom and holiness were already held in high esteem; and it is to this period of his life that one of his best works belongs: *La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes Chrétiennes*. It was published in 1637 and dedicated to Madame de Budos, Abbess of Holy Trinity in Caen, and to her religious. It was also dedicated to all those souls who desire to love Our Lord, and especially to those of whom he had charge.

Le Royaume de Jésus

At that period books of piety were numerous. Not to mention the works of Grenada, at that time very popular, there were available for the faithful St. Francis of Sales's two works: the *Introduction to the Devout Life* and the *Treatise on the Love of God*, which were praised by everyone. But those books, excellent

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though they were, did not completely satisfy our Saint. He did not find in them, at least to the extent he would have desired, St. Paul's noble teaching on our incorporation with Christ by baptism and our obligation to live with His life and to act in His spirit, which is the logical consequence of it. Not that St.

Francis of Sales (to name him alone) ignored this teaching or failed to recall it, but he treated of it only incidentally and in passing, whereas our Saint, like Bérulle and Condren, looked upon it as fundamental and made all his instructions converge upon it. Thus in writing *Le Royaume de Jésus* he believed that he was filling a gap: he wished to bring home to all pious souls the principles of the French School.(1)

This had been attempted in the previous year by one of his colleagues, Père Jean-Hugues Quarré, in his *Spiritual Treasure*, a first-rate book totally inspired by Père de Bérulle, and our Saint thought highly of it and recommended it to his readers in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. But he dreamed of a manual that would be simpler, more practical and more complete, and it was for that reason that he wrote *Le Royaume de Jésus*, in which are to be found, together with very precise ideas on the Christian life and virtues, exercises to be practised every day, every week, every month, and every year for the leading of a truly Christian life and for preparing for a holy death.(2)

(1). It is not merely in this respect that *Le Royaume de Jésus* differs from the works of St. Francis of Sales. Its teaching is more austere in every respect.

(2). In 1662 the author added to his book the *Méditations sur l'humilité* and the *Entretiens intérieurs* which comprise the eighth part of it; and already in 1648 he had inserted in the sixth part a long discussion on *Dévotion due aux saints lieux*, the oratorical style of which contrasts with the remainder of the book.

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In writing the book the author strove to be clear. As he was not writing for the lettered, he spoke the language of the people without any other care than to be understood by everyone; and in his desire to be useful he did not content himself with indicating the manner of making the various pious exercises, but frequently put forward ready-made aspirations which, none the less, he recommended should not be made use of hastily, but should be read slowly, savoured, and meditated upon so that the mind and the heart might be thoroughly pervaded by them.

"Most of these exercises," he says in his Preface, "are in the form of aspirations to Jesus, in order that every type of person can make use of them, for there are many who cannot easily use the truths of Christianity in their devotions when they are simply put to them baldly or by way of mere instruction. None the less this will not prevent those who prefer this latter method from extracting from the aspirations the various points and truths to enable them to meditate on the different subjects therein contained, according as the spirit of God shall work in them.-

The practical nature of the book.

Furthermore, in the interest of his readers, the Saint did not hesitate to repeat himself: "I have made use of repetitions in some places," he says, "but I have purposely done so, nature of the partly that you should more clearly understand certain things which seem to me of great importance, and that they should be the more impressed upon your minds, and partly so as to avoid giving you the trouble of having to refer back, since certain truths and practices have a bearing upon several subjects and exercises.

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For this reason I have inserted such passages in several places so that if you should wish to read and to make use of exercises or subjects to which they apply, and either cannot or do not wish to read the other portions, you will not be deprived of a knowledge of these truths or practices, nor will you have the trouble of bunting for them in other parts of the book."

There we see his character and the nature of his apostolate. He was an entirely practical man, not

concerned with speculation, and solely occupied in teaching his readers how they should live. But this he did excellently, for his book is remarkably detailed and souls of good-will find in it everything that they need for raising themselves to the highest perfection. And indeed, *Le Royaume de Jésus* has always been popular with the pious. Concerning it Henri Joly wrote in *La Croix* of October 5, 1919: "*Le Royaume de Jésus* is a book of Christian prayer and practice applicable to all times and all needs. Not merely does it serve to mark a memorable date, it is of definite value by reason of its fundamental, universal, and (one might say) eternal qualities. Like the *Imitation*, or St. Bonaventure's *Life, of Jesus*, like St. Ignatius's *Exercises*, or the *Introduction to the Devout Life* of St. Francis of Sales, it deserves to be in everybody's hands."

And Père de Jaegber, S.J.(1) has written: "In the spiritual life one cannot do better than make use of St. Paul's great doctrine of life in Jesus Christ, the Head of the mystical body. Now that teaching, already so well treated of by St. Augustine and St. Thomas, in their works, has been made by St. John

(1) *La vie d'identification au Christ*, ch. 1V.

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Eudes, more than any other, the centre of his sublime spirituality. . . . And we could not wish anything better than to see the Eudist form of spirituality propagated everywhere and his noble book *Le Royaume de Jésus* in everyone's hands. If this magnificent teaching were better known, if this book were in the hands of those who direct souls towards the loftiest form of divine union, and who instruct priests, monks and nuns, then undoubtedly many souls would be raised higher and would be favoured by various degrees of mystical union who now can only vegetate in mediocrity."

B. THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY

(Les Règles et Constitutions. Le Manuel de Piété. Les Offices Propres.)

In 1643 St. John Eudes left the Oratory to found the Congregation of Jesus and Mary at Caen. In many respects the new Society resembled the Oratory, but it had more specialised aims. Its objects were the professional formation of clerics in the seminaries and the re-awakening of the Christian spirit in the laity by the preaching of missions. Despite incessant difficulties it succeeded in firmly establishing itself in Normandy and Brittany, and at the death of its founder it possessed "greater seminaries" at Caen, Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux, Rouen and Rennes.

But while founding seminaries and preaching missions the Saint also laboured at the organisation of his Society, and for this purpose he wrote *Les Règles et Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, *Le Manuel de Piété à l'usage d'une Communauté Écclésiastique*,

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and a collection of *Offices Propres*. These works, which are mutually complementary, are a rich spiritual patrimony wherein the Saint's children find all that they need for their instruction in the true priestly life in accordance with the spirit of their Founder and the nature of the works entrusted to them.

The Rules of the Congregation.

In the mind of the Saint the *Rules*, which are drawn of the up in Latin, are one with the *Constitutions* , but they can be separated and, in fact, since the nineteenth century, they have been

habitually published separately.(1) They were taken by the Saint from Holy Scripture. In place of the vows of religion the members of his Institute are bound by what are termed the vows of baptism and of the priesthood, and for their more perfect practice the members are subjected to the demands of the common life. Thus St. John carefully gathered together the noblest teachings of the Bible on the duties of the Christian life, the obligations of the priesthood, and the special virtues required in community life; he then grouped them methodically, connecting them together so as to form a continuous text, and it is this choice collection of maxims from Holy Writ that he placed at the beginning of the *Constitutions* of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary under the name of *Rules*.

The *Rules* merely contain the principles of Christian and sacerdotal life; the *Constitutions* point out the method of putting them into practice, and are divided into thirteen sections.

(1) *These Rules* were recently republished under the title of *Regulae Vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, and they comprise the third volume of his *œuvres choisies*.

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The Constitutions

Of these the first treats of the state of the Congregation, its objects, its foundations, its spirit. It is the shortest but the most important part, for the determining element in a society, that on which all the rest depends, is its object. Since it is intended chiefly for the formation of clerics in the seminaries, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary had to be a purely sacerdotal society; it is composed of priests and of aspirants to the priesthood, and its spirit is solely that of the supreme Priest which its members must possess "in its plenitude," so as to be able "to communicate it to others."

The second section deals with general discipline and daily routine.

The third treats entirely of the virtue of religion and the exercise of sacerdotal duties, such as the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Divine Office, preaching, and hearing confessions.

The fourth part concerns the charity that all members of the Institute must have for each other and for strangers. St. John dwells on that at all the greater length in that he makes charity "the rule of rules."

The fifth part is about humility, obedience, poverty, chastity and other moral virtues; while the sixth is devoted to the recruiting and training of subjects of the Congregation.

The seventh, eighth, and ninth parts have for their subject the works of the Society, the seminaries, missions, and the college at Lisieux of which the Saint had accepted the direction, but with the express intention of accepting no others.

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The tenth part speaks of general assemblies, the eleventh of the superior general, the twelfth of particular superiors, and the thirteenth of the principal officials in each house.

Thus we see that the *Constitutions* are very complete, and in them full consideration is given to everything that concerns the intimate life of the Congregation. In drawing them up the Saint made use of the constitutions and rules of other ecclesiastical societies, notably the Oratory and the Society of Jesus. He borrowed from the Oratory all that concerns the condition of the Congregation and its administrative organisation; and he took from St. Ignatius a large number of the rules relative to general discipline and the exercise of authority. Similarly he profited by a certain number of ascetical works, especially

the *Spiritual Conferences* of St. Francis of Sales. But with such discernment did he select the material that he borrowed from his predecessors, and so thoroughly did he augment it with the fruit of his meditations and his experience that one is struck by the unity of thought and of style that runs through his whole book. In short, from one end of it to the other, one finds that deep religious spirit, ardent zeal, compassionate yet steady charity, and entire abnegation that characterised the Saint. Moreover, from end to end are to be found in it the prevailing qualities that characterise all his books, a happy union of lofty principles and practical detail, of eloquence with precision, of energy and gentleness, of simplicity and powerful analogies. We believe, in fact, that the *Constitutions* is one of the best books that issued from his pen, for from the ascetical point of view it is incomparably rich, and

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from the literary aspect it is superior to most of the Saint's works by reason of the largeness and regularity of its plan, the true proportion of its parts, the unvarying precision of style, and the purity of its language.

Nor are the Saint's spiritual children ignorant of the value of this book. "It was in the year 1654," wrote Pierre Costil, "that Père Eudes sketched out the complete constitutions that he has given us and for which we cannot doubt that he received particular lights from the Holy Spirit (apart from those parts that he borrowed from the constitutions of other communities noted in his day for their regularity), so much good sense is there in them, so much of the Christian and priestly spirit, and of all that is necessary for good government and the maintenance of fervour in the body of the Congregation. That is the verdict of all his children down to the present day, and they themselves realise that they can read nothing more useful to them than the particular constitutions that deal with the virtues, and that the holy man had forgotten none of the motives or practices which display the necessity or advantages of such reading, or which demonstrate its scope and its operation."

M. Mollevaut, a priest of Saint Sulpice, who had examined these Constitutions, found them "admirable," and Cardinal Pitra stated that he "knew no rule that led to a greater self-denial and a more priestly life."

The Manual of Piety.

The *Manuel de Piété* is a collection of prayers for rounding off the exercises of piety and other actions of the day. It can be useful to everyone, especially to priests, but the Saint wrote it for the members of his

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Congregation. "Receive this book, my dear Brethren," he says to them in his preface, "not as from the hand of a despicable man and a miserable sinner, such as I am who, being of myself mere nothingness and an abyss of darkness and sin, can produce nothing else; but receive it as from Him Who is the absolutely unique principle of all good; let it be to you literally a manual, i.e. have it frequently in your hands, read it attentively, and put it into practice faithfully."

In the *Manuel* we find prayers for reciting every day before and after morning prayers, four ways of beginning and ending this morning prayer itself, litanies and other prayers to be recited before midday together with four ways of making the examen which should follow; also prayers to be said before the Blessed Sacrament after dinner and supper, litanies in honour of the Blessed Virgin for recitation after Lauds, night prayers, preparations for the Divine Office, and for meals, conversations, etc. In it also are exercises for each week, each month, each year, as well as others for things that have

no fixed time, such as sickness, travels, deliberations, and so forth.

And so it is plain that the Saint forgot nothing and left to his children a complete and eminently practical manual. It goes without saying that it is animated by the spirit of the French School, but with those special additions which provide the particular features and devotions preferred by our Saint.

A large number of the prayers in the *Manuel* are taken from the Liturgy or from earlier writers, and sometimes the Saint reproduces them in their original form; but frequently he makes additions or modifications in the spirit of his own devotional outlook. And

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side by side with these prayers are others composed by himself, such as the *Ave, Cor Sanctissimum*, the *Ave, Maria Filia Dei Patris*, the *Ave, Joseph Imago Dei Patris*, prayers to be said in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. In general they are notable for their conciseness, precision, and vigour, as also for their sweet and impressive unction.

In addition to the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus and that of the Blessed Virgin, there are in the *Manuel* Litanies in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Heart of Jesus, the Holy Childhood of Our Lord, the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion, the Heart of Mary, her Holy Childhood, the Holy Angels, St. Joseph, St. Joachim, and St. Anne. Those of the Holy Childhood of our Lord, the Passion, and the Blessed Sacrament are not by St. John, but, in accordance with his custom, he has remodelled them. It is believed that the remainder were written by him, though they are taken partly from Holy Scripture and partly from the works of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers.

The fourth part of the *Manuel* contains also thoughts for certain feasts and ceremonies such as renewal of baptismal vows or of clerical promises, and these were written by the Saint and are full of wealth of teaching and of piety. In short, St. John delighted to express

1 The *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, which dates from 1643, contains the germ of all St. John's spiritual teaching, for in it are to be found: (a) his devotion to the Sacred Hearts which he did not separate from one another and which he honoured "conjointly"; (b) consideration of the Christian virtues in these Sacred Hearts; (c) the acts which go to make up prayer as understood by the Saint; (d) the complete consecration and immolation of self to Jesus and Mary; (e) fidelity, of which we treat further on; (f) the Saint's views on the life and reign of Jesus in souls: *ut in ipso vivas et regnes!* The *Ave Cor* is in the (*Oeuvres Complètes*, and in the present writer's book on *Devotion to the Heart of Mary*.

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the lofty thoughts and sentiments of his mind and heart in either Latin or French prayers, and it was a work in which he excelled.

New Feasts offices.

But precious though this manual was, it was not enough for the Saint, who was convinced that the best means of developing devotion and making it produce all its fruits was to make it the subject of a liturgical feast, and accordingly he introduced into his Congregation a number of feasts already established in some dioceses or Religious Orders, and in doing so frequently touched up or completed its liturgy. Examples of this are the Feasts of the Holy Name of Mary, of her marriage Espousals with St. Joseph, of the Expectation, of Our Lady of Pity, of the joys of the Holy Virgin, of Our Lady of Victory, of

St. Gabriel, and of St. Lazarus. And the Saint went yet further: with permission of the bishops concerned, which at that time was sufficient, he instituted several new feasts for which he wrote the Masses and the Proper Offices; the best known examples are the Feasts of the Heart of Mary (1643), of the Heart of Jesus (1672), and of the Priesthood (1652); but there were others, for instance, that of the Holy Childhood of Jesus, of the Holy Childhood of Mary, and of the Apparition of Our Lord to His Holy Mother after His resurrection. The collection of Offices re-fashioned or composed by St. John fills a large volume printed for the first time in 1652 and republished in 1668 and in 1672.

There is no need to praise the Masses and the Offices written by the Saint in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary; everyone recognises their perfection

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and beauty⁽¹⁾; and the Office of the Priesthood is not inferior to them. Without being perfect, the other Offices are far from devoid of merit. In all of them there is one of the most striking characteristics of St. John's work: a piety that is gentle and tender, ardent and enthusiastic, that penetrates and soothes the mind with its sweet perfume. What the Venerable Père Boudon said of the Office of the Heart of Mary might also be said of them all: "It is almost impossible to read them attentively without one's heart becoming more tender," which is very similar to the decision of the doctors who approved it in 1651: "These Offices," they said, "are entirely suited to nourish faith, to inflame charity, and to develop Christian piety in souls."

From the doctrinal point of view they are remarkable in that they constantly evoke in the mind the Saint's great and noble teaching on the Word Incarnate and His union with His Holy Mother and with all the members of His mystical body. In short, St. John chants in these Offices what he has explained at length in *Le Royaume de Jesus*, the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, *L'Enfance admirable*, *Le Cœur admirable*, and in his other works, so that if one is not familiar with his writings it is difficult to understand fully his Offices. But when once his beautiful teaching has been savoured, one is delighted to see it expressed with such simplicity and piety in the Offices.

Of these the hymns form the most original part, they reveal the Saint as having a wonderful facility. "They show him," says M. Joly, "as having broken

(1) See the present writer's *Bl. John Eudes and the public Cult of the Heart of Jesus, as also Devotion to the Heart of Mary*.

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with the exigencies of rhythm and with the resources of a latinity which he scarcely bends to the requirements of his subject in ingenious neologisms." But that does not apply to all. There are some that the Saint chiselled with particular care and has transformed into veritable jewels. Others are less finished and in these there are thoughts, expressions, and sometimes even verses that are taken from earlier Offices, a fact that should hardly surprise us when we realise that the author's work is relatively considerable and that, furthermore, his subject was almost always the same: Jesus and Mary and the links that exist between themselves and with us.

C. THE ORDER OF OUR LADY OF CHARITY: ITS CONSTITUTIONS

It was in 1641 that St. John laid at Caen the foundations of a Congregation of women intended to labour for the conversion of penitents, and this institute was authorised by Royal Letters Patent, dated 1642, and approved by the Bishop of Bayeux on February 8, 1651, and by Pope Alexander VII on January 2, 1666. The Saint consecrated the new society to the Heart of Mary and placed it under the protection of Our Lady of Charity. The titular Feast of the Order is that of the Heart of Mary which, as in

the case of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, is kept on February 8th; but the sisters observe with equal solemnity the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, which is kept on October 20th in the institutes founded by St. John.

He gave his nuns the rule of St. Augustine and the

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Visitation Constitutions, but these last he modified and augmented to bring them into harmony with the spirit and end of his institute. They open with a preamble which sets out the humble glory Of the society and the founder's desires and recommendations for his daughters.

The spirit of his

nuns.

The humble glory of the nuns of Our Lady of Charity. is to be the *Daughters of the Heart of Mary*. It is true that all Christians can claim this title, but it belongs in a very special manner to these nuns by reason of their vocation which has its origin in the heart of her who is the Refuge of Sinners, by reason also of the signal benefits they received from the Heart of Mary during the bitter trials that marked the beginnings of their institute; but above all by reason of the consecration of the Order to the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin. "For," says the Saint, "when it pleased God to put the idea of this community into the hearts of those whom His divine mercy made use of in order to found it, He also gave them the thought of consecrating it to the honour of the most worthy Heart of His well beloved Mother, to which it has been effectively dedicated and consecrated so that those received into the Order should strive to impress on their souls a perfect likeness of the most holy life and excelling virtues of the Most Holy Heart of their good Mother, and so by this means make themselves worthy of being true *Daughters of the Adorable Heart of the Mother of Dilection*."

After that the holy founder besought his daughters to dwell in the Heart of Mary and in that of her Divine Son, and therein to seek "their place of repose, their

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city of refuge, their impregnable fortress, their garden of delights, and their earthly paradise."(1)

"Live," said he, "the life of this blessed Heart, share its sentiments, enter into its dispositions, follow its inclinations, love whatever it loves, hate whatever it hates, desire only what it desires, rejoice only in that in which it rejoices, fear only that which it would fear if it were still subject to fear, be grieved only by that which would grieve it if it were yet capable of grief, labour for the accomplishments of its designs, give yourselves unceasingly to the spirit that animates it, so that this same spirit may possess you and may lead you in all things, that its grace may sanctify you, that its love may inflame you, that its charity may embrace you, and above all that its zeal for the salvation of souls may devour you."

"Finally," continued the Saint, "treasure in your hearts the fact that you are the *Daughters of the Most Holy Heart of the Queen of Heaven*; never forget that glorious name, have it ever before your eyes, engrave it in your minds, imprint it upon the inmost recesses of your souls, and let it be ever on your lips. In this way ~all your thoughts and affections, all your words and actions, will tend to make you worthy *Daughters of the Most Holy Heart of the Mother of Jesus*."

We see, then, how imbued is this preface with ardent piety, and it must ever be very dear to the Religious of Our Lady of Charity, for therein they find their titles of nobility, a pledge of the tender

affection of their founder, and an exposition of that devotion which must be the life of their institute.
(1). *Preface: To the Religious of Our Lady of Charity.*

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Object of the nuns.

We have said that the real end of the Order is to the labour for the conversion and instruction of penitent women. This the Saint explains in the first constitution, and having done so, he proceeds to display the excellence of this work and the motives that must move the sisters to devote themselves to it entirely. He would have them regard this first constitution as the soul of their institute, and employ their minds, their hearts, their care, and their industry to ensure the salvation of the unfortunate sinners committed to their charge, embracing with joy all the trials and difficulties they encounter in this thankless task.

And thereby it is made plain that if, in many respects, the Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity are but reproductions of those of the Visitation nuns, yet they have not the same end, and the spirit that animates them is not absolutely identical. The Visitation is a contemplative Order, instituted for the purpose of bringing the advantages of religious life to those who, by reason of advanced age or delicate health, cannot undergo the austerities of the older Orders. It aims only at the perfection of divine love. "It is," says Mgr. Bougaud, "a sweet sanctuary of interior recollection . . . a silent communication with the cherubim in prayer." But the nuns of Our Lady of Charity, although subjected to solitude and silence, are vowed to an active apostolate. They can only sanctify themselves by devoting themselves to the salvation of souls, and everything in their lives (vows, labours, prayers, sacrifices) is a condition and a means of their apostolate, whereas the same observances and 1 *Life of Bl. Margaret Mary.*

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the same exercises are for the religious of the Visitation Order only a means of mortifying nature and of acquiring union with God.

The Constitutions for the nuns.

In the constitutions relative to the exercises of the religious life, administrative organisation and employments, St. John only very slightly for the nuns. He changed what was laid down by St. Francis of Sales. But in those parts that deal with the Christian virtues he rarely on the contrary, held to the text of St. Francis. Almost always he mixed therewith his personal views and added detailed instructions the importance of which he had been taught by experience. Especially is this the case in the constitutions on obedience, chastity, humility, and silence; those portions are largely the work of St. John Eudes, while those dealing with gratitude and charity are almost entirely from his own pen. The second is admirable; we believe there is not another in the whole book which bears the mark of a more exquisite gentleness. Fraternal charity, indeed, together with zeal for souls, was the virtue that the Saint wished to see supreme amongst his children. He wanted "charity to be the queen, the rule, the soul and the life of the institute; that it should unite all hearts, minds, and spirits in the Order so closely that there should be but one heart, one soul, and one mind; and that it should be manifest from their countenances, their conversation, their labours, in all places and in all things." But this ~benevolent and gentle charity need not prevent that fraternal correction that the sisters owe to one another, especially when they have been given authority; for, as the Saint justly remarks, "one of the most Outstanding effects of true charity is that it helps

others to conquer their faults by pointing them out and correcting them in a spirit of gentleness and benignity.

In writing the life of the Venerable Mother Marie de Ste. Euphrasie Pelletier, founder of the Good Shepherd of Angers, Mgr. Pasquier and M. Portais were led to appreciate the Constitutions of Our Lady of Charity, and they wrote a high eulogy of them that we cannot forbear to quote.

Père Eudes," says Mgr. Pasquier, "adopted the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Nuns of the Visitation for his own daughters, with the exception of certain changes made necessary by the particular end that he proposed for them. He added to the three usual vows that of working for the souls of sinful women. In a limpid style, that is as fresh as that of the best writers of the seventeenth century, he pointed out to the Sisters of Refuge the supernatural beauty of their vocation. His views were so profound, and his exposition of them was so luminous, one might have supposed that they were meditations by Bossuet on grace and the ministry of the priest. With him, as with Bossuet, we are on the solid ground of the most trustworthy theology, and we follow him without weariness in his simple yet attractive dissertations. Even the professors of St. Sulpice had no other language and no loftier outlook when training the clerics they received in their first seminaries to meditate on their vocation."(1)

And M. Portais writes that "Père Eudes imposed on his Religious the Rule of St. Augustine as St. Francis of Sales had prescribed it for the Daughters of
(1). *Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier.*

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the Visitation, adding thereto Constitutions conformable to the especial needs and works of his Institute. It was only after the approbation of the Order by Alexander VII that he could prepare the *Rules and Constitutions* for the printer, but then he gave the matter his whole attention assisted by M^{re} Mère Patin and the two superiors who succeeded her. Out of respect for St. Francis of Sales he changed nothing in the *Spiritual Directory*; and, even if he did not follow the same order, yet he did not modify the Visitandine Constitutions more than was absolutely necessary. But he placed at their head, together with certain *Desires and Prayers for the Religious of Our Lady of Charity*, an admirable *Constitution on the end of the Institute and the motives which should lead those who Profess it to carry out its undertakings with all their hearts*. Finally he drew up *Rules for the girls and the Penitent women*, desiring above all that they should be kept entirely separated from the Community. Taken as a whole this work is a veritable masterpiece; everything in it is regulated in detail with a wisdom, moderation, tact, and foresight that are incomparable."(1)

D. ST. JOHN EUDES AND THE MISSIONS

L'Exercice de Piété. Le catéchisme de la mission. Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême. Le Bon Confesseur. Le Prédicateur apostolique.

11 St. John was a born missionary. He had all the Natural and supernatural qualities necessary for success in that ministry in which he laboured throughout his life and in which he was so extraordinarily successful,

(1).1 *The Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier.*

as his contemporaries unanimously proclaimed. "I have listened to many preachers in my life, some of

them the most skilful in France and in Italy," said Pierre Camus, sometime Bishop of Belley, "but I never heard one who worked more potently upon the heart of man than this good Father.»(1)

And St. Vincent de Paul, writing on June 18, 1660, states that "certain Norman priests led by Père Eudes have just given a mission in Paris with wonderful success. The *Cour des Quinze-Vingts* is very large, but it was too small to contain all those who came to hear the preaching.(2) And similarly M. de Renty wrote to M. Olier on June 16, 1648, that "Père Eudes labours here with incredible results. His ability in setting forth the truths of salvation, in displaying the love of God for us in Jesus Christ, and the horror of sin, has so penetrated hearts that all the confessors are overwhelmed. . . . His sermons are thunderbolts that give no rest to consciences till they reveal their secret sins, so that the confessors have to toil rather at consoling than at striving to move to repentance."

Even M. Olier himself applied to Père Eudes when he wanted to procure the benefit of a mission for his parish of St. Sulpice; so that M. Faillon tells us that M. Olier "knew of no one with a greater gift for preaching the word of God and bringing about remarkable conversions than this extraordinary man whom he called 'the marvel of his century,' and whose labours had been blessed with such abundant fruits by God."(4)

(1). Costil, *Annales*, I, p. 37.

(2). Quoted by Maynard in *St. Vincent de Paul*, II, pp. 422-423.

(3). Faillon, *Life of M. Olier*.

(4). Faillon, op. cit.

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The Saint's missionary books.

To ensure the success of his missions St. John wrote several books, including three for the faithful: *L'Exercice de piété*, *Le catéchisme de la mission*, and *Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême*; and two for his missionaries: *Le Bon Confesseur*, and *Le Prédicateur apostolique*.

Of these, *L'Exercice de piété*, the first edition of which appeared in 1636, is an entirely practical volume in which the author sets out to teach the faithful how to pray morning and evening, to sanctify the actions of the day, to hear Mass, to confess and to communicate fruitfully. He made use of this little book himself in his missions, in leading the morning and evening prayers, and he recommended parents to use it for family prayers. To it he added an excellent summing-up of the Christian life in eight articles and, under the title of *Paradis sur Terre*, a resumé of Christian perfection which is a masterpiece.

Very often the people evangelised by the Saint were extremely ignorant, and to instruct them he soon to teach the catechism to the children, and it often happened that adults also attended on these occasions. St. John attached great importance to this work, and he was accustomed to take with him such priests as had a special aptitude for teaching the 'Catechism, and these were of great assistance to him.

But there was need of a handbook in which would be found a brief exposition of Christian doctrine, for use by the Children, and it was with this end in view that he wrote the *Catéchisme de la Mission*, which appeared for the first time in 1642 and was subsequently frequently republished. Other more learned catechisms

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have appeared since then, but that of St. John remains one of the most practical and most pious.

Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême appeared in 1654, and has been recently

republished. Though very short and very simple, it is rich in doctrine, and treats of the excellence of baptism, the graces conferred by it, the relations established by it between us and the three Divine Persons, the happiness which it contains in germ, the holy and divine life that it obliges us to follow, the means and the easiness of attaining to that, and the mysteries contained in the ceremonies of baptism. All these great questions are discussed with remarkable lucidity and precision. But what gives the book a particular savour of piety and makes its reading the more profitable, are the numerous texts borrowed by the author from Scripture and the Fathers for the purpose of supporting his arguments. In fact the *Contrat* is in some parts no more than a string of Scriptural texts which mutually complete and explain each other. Yet this little book, written for the simple, has been much appreciated by priests and religious of acknowledged learning and sanctity.

In 1644 St. John published a small book called *Avertissements aux confesseurs missionnaires*, which he wrote for his colleagues and the auxiliary priests who accompanied him on his missions, that it might guide them and help to maintain amongst them uniformity of method in the tribunal of penance. In its contents, as also in its title, this book recalls the *Information for Confessors* of St. Francis of Sales, but St. John had taken care to add to the meekness of the Bishop of Geneva the firmness of St * Charles Borromeo whose regulations he followed on the delaying or refusing of

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absolution. St. John's book had a rapid success and appeared in a second edition which, since 1644, has been followed by several others.

But this volume was only an essay, and the day came when its author wished to complete it by adding to it the fruits of his long experience. He quickly realised that the only way of doing this successfully was to remodel his work completely; and so he produced an entirely new book which he called *Le Bon Confesseur*, and this work, which appeared in 1666, was given a most cordial reception by the clergy and was frequently re-issued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

"Of all the books," says Martine, -given by Père Eudes to the public, *Le Bon Confesseur* brought him most honour. He received from all sides the thanks and the just praises that he merited by a work of such great utility."

And a little later Pierre Cousin wrote: "We might say that this little book, the first that has appeared in France for the reform of the confessional, has two advantages over most other works on the same subject. The first is that the method that it teaches is so easy that no one could fail to understand and to practise it faithfully. And the second is that the duties of confessors are therein exposed, not drily, but with a devotion that arouses that of the reader even as it instructs him. "

During his missions St. John did not fail to give conferences to his assistants on how most usefully to preach, and in order that these rules might be conserved in the society and that even after his death his missionaries should never neglect them he decided to bring

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them together into a volume with the significant title, *Le prédicateur apostolique*. But though he toiled at it for a long time he could not complete the work till the end of his life, and it was his successor, Père Blouet de Camilly, who published it in 1685.

In this book the author insists on the supernatural character of preaching, and he urges the preacher to raise himself above all thoughts of vanity and of self interest and to aim solely at instructing and touching his hearers. He also goes into numerous details on the preparation and composition of sermons and of how to deliver them: but what he desires above all else is that the

preacher be a man of prayer and that he be the first to practise what he preaches to others.

E. ST. JOHN AND THE PRIESTHOOD

Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique

The main preoccupation of St. John and his favourite work was the elevation and the sanctification of the clergy, and he employed himself on it to the best of his ability during his missions by giving conferences to priests on the holiness and obligations of their state. He did more: he wrote for priests a certain number of books which between them cover all the functions of the priesthood. Besides *Le Bon Confesseur* and *Le Prédicateur apostolique* of which we have just written, he composed a treatise on the Divine Office and another on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which have not yet been printed; and finally the *Mémorial de la vie, ecclésiastique*, which was published after his death by Père Blouet de Camilly.

The *Mémorial* is not a treatise, and we must not

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seek therein a complete and methodical exposition of the duties of a priest. The seventeenth century has left us several very valuable books of that nature, of which the best known and the most valuable is the *Treatise on Holy Orders*, by M. Olier, which appeared in 1675. St. John did not profit by it in writing the *Mémorial*, for by that time it was almost completed, but he must have read it, and presumably he greatly appreciated it for, on the priesthood as on the Christian life, his ideas fully corresponded with those of the venerable founder of St. Sulpice.

Previous to the *Treatise on Holy Orders* there had been available for the clergy the *Instruction for Priests*, by the Carthusian Molina: a justly celebrated work which has been republished in our own day. St. John thought highly of it, and recommended it in his *Mémorial*; indeed he was helped by it several times.

A handbook for the clergy.

None the less, books of this type, excellent though they might be, were not, in the eyes of the Saint, sufficient for the clergy. They needed shorter and more practical works which they could have always at hand and which would briefly sum up their duties and tell them how best to carry them out. His *Mémorial* was intended to fill this need. In it he paid homage first to the holy priests of the Church Triumphant who are, after Our Lord, the models of the clergy; and then he dedicated it to all priests of the Church Militant. The address in which he offers it to them contains a very fine panegyric of the priesthood; it concludes with these words: "After consecrating this little work to the saintly priests of the Church Triumphant, I wish equally to dedicate it to all good pastors and to all holy priests

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of the Church Militant, as a slight testimony of the respect that I cherish for the Royal Priesthood of my Lord Jesus, whom I honour in my dear brethren. And I wish to place this book in your hands so that it may serve as a reminder of all the qualities and the merits, the obligations and the duties of your profession, as also the method of exercising in a holy manner all the priestly functions." There we have the object of the book clearly shown: it is a manual intended to help priests to correspond to their vocation and to carry out its duties in a saintly manner.

Of necessity a volume of that kind must be composed of very diverse elements. If it is to be practical it must contain both instructions and methods of work; and that, in fact, is what we find in the Memorial. The author himself tells us in a foreword that in it are five principal things, namely: considerations on the excellence of the priesthood, a summary of the duties of priests, exercises of piety for the various actions of the day, a guide for retreats, and a series of meditations for the use of clerics; in short, five sections of very unequal extent and of quite different natures. And now a short word on each of these.

So long as a priest cherishes only popular ideas of his state and his duties, such as those that are often to be met with amongst the faithful, he does not feel the necessity of aspiring to perfection and experiences none of the holy ardours of true zeal. St. John realised this better than anyone, and so he began the Mémorial by reminding priests of the sublimity of their calling, which we have already stated to be the theme of the long dedication in which he offered his book to his priestly colleagues; and without fearing to repeat

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himself he devotes the first part of his book to the same subject. In both sections the Saint's style is highly coloured and distinctly oratorical, and very possibly both sections (but especially the first) are merely extracts from conferences given by him to the clergy. At all events they are certainly faithful echoes of his conferences and enable us to have some idea of that ardent and devotional eloquence that so strongly impressed his hearers and communicated to them something of the apostolic zeal with which his own heart was filled. We cannot read them without being struck by the deep veneration with which the servant of God addressed priests and the admiration that filled his soul when considering the sublimity of the priesthood. Equally striking is the enthusiasm with which he spoke. It would be impossible to find loftier or more accurate ideas on this subject.

The second part of the book is a summary of the duties that devolve on the priesthood. It was drawn up for secular priests employed in the sacred ministry, and indeed some details in it apply only to them. It was this part that was called a "memorial" by St. John, but that word is now given to the whole book. And it would seem that this section is the oldest part of the volume, the primitive nucleus of the whole; in any case it is superb, and supplies fresh evidence of the Saint's ability to condense a whole programme for the life of perfection into a few pages. The thirty-four articles to be found in it contain everything essential about the priesthood. St. John deals with the necessity of aspiring to perfection, the fundamental laws of the ecclesiastical life, the principal vices that must be guarded against, the care that must be exercised over

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souls committed to one's charge, and the exercises of piety and devotions that are specially suited to the clergy: he forgot none of these things. And in these few pages one will look in vain for exaggeration, or even for hyperbole, so commonly used by orators; for the exactness and moderation of his teaching is matched by the precision of his style, so that together they make this memorial a model of its kind.

The book's third part contains a series of exercises or practices for sanctifying the actions and especially the priestly duties of each day.

The fourth part, which is the Directory for Retreats, is very short and contains the system followed by retreatants in the seminaries conducted by the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, and a few brief notes on the various exercises of the retreat. The chief interest of it is to be found in the "extraordinary examens" inserted by the author, which contain valuable instructions (notably on the Christian virtues) which find their fitting place in a memorial on the ecclesiastical life, but had till

then not been discussed.

The book ends with a series of meditations for the use of the clergy. They could be used during retreats, but they form no part of the Directory, and in the author's eyes they are a work apart, constituting the fifth and last part of the *Mémorial*. These meditations fall into two distinct groups, of which the first deals with the questions of vocation and Holy Orders, the material being extracted for the most part from the Roman Pontifical. It was evidently the Saint's intention that they should be used by those about to be ordained, and possibly they were even written expressly for them.

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The second group of meditations have as their object the chief obligations of a priest: hatred of sin, renunciation of the world and of himself, love of God, of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the Church. These are much the most attractive, at least to our mind, and they are as remarkable for the conciseness of their style as for the loftiness and solidity of their doctrine. With a little development they would make an excellent clergy retreat.

F. ST. JOHN AND DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Dévotion au Cœur de Marie. L'Enfance admirable. Le Cœur admirable.

All the distinguished priests who brought about the revival of piety and of the ecclesiastical spirit amongst the French clergy of the seventeenth century were faithful servants of Mary, but perhaps none loved her with so much zeal as did St. John Eudes. He himself would give way to none on this point. ---I willingly," he said, "give place to everyone in talent, knowledge, and all the rest, but I could not endure that anyone should surpass me in respect, confidence, and love towards the Mother of God."

We have already seen that he instituted several Feasts in honour of Mary; but he also wrote several works to propagate devotion to her, to wit: *La Dévotion au très saint cœur et au très sacré nom de Marie*, *L'Enfance admirable*, and *Le Cœur admirable*. In 1648 the Saint, who was then giving a mission at Autun, obtained permission from Mgr. Claude de la Madeleine de Ragny to celebrate solemnly in the Cathedral the Feast of the Heart of Mary instituted by

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himself in 1643, and on this occasion he published at Autun the Mass and Office of this Feast together with a Mass and Office of the Name of Mary. The book was called *La Dévotion au très saint cœur et au très sacré nom de Marie*.

This book he reissued at Caen in 1650, adding to it a *Discours sur la Dévotion au Cœur de Marie* composed of four chapters. In the first of these St. John shows that this devotion has its origin and its basis in the Holy Gospels. In the second, he exposes the main considerations which ought to move us to honour the Heart of Mary. In the third, he points out the object of this devotion by explaining what he means by the words «Heart of Mary»; and in the fourth, he indicates the means to be employed in rendering to this dear Heart the cult it merits. In short, the *Discours* is a small treatise on devotion to the Heart of Mary and, although very brief, it is still, we believe, one of the best that we have.

The childhood of our Lady

L'Enfance admirable appeared in Paris in 1676, and is in three parts, of which the first treats of the mysteries, the second the excellences, and the third the virtues of the admirable childhood of the Holy Virgin and of the means of honouring it. In the childhood of the Blessed Virgin the Saint enumerates twelve mysteries, as also twelve excellences and twelve virtues, therein evidently finding a reminder of the twelve stars that formed the crown of that woman in the Apocalypse in whom we are accustomed to see the Blessed Virgin.

The first three mysteries are the predestination of Mary, which is inseparably united to that of her Son,

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the promises that announced His coming, and the figures by which it pleased God to manifest in advance some of His perfections. St. John passes quickly over these three mysteries. But, on the other hand, he dwells at length on the Immaculate Conception, beginning by establishing the dogma which at that time was not defined and which still found occasional adversaries; then he relates the origin of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception; and he ends by setting out the privileges attached to the Immaculate Conception. With regard to the birth of Mary, St. John comments with much knowledge and piety on the twenty-fourth chapter of *Ecclesiasticus* and the eighth chapter of *Proverbs*, which are applied by the Church to the Holy Virgin. Then the Saint considers the name of Mary, explaining its various meanings, showing its excellence and pointing out the ways of honouring it.

The last mysteries of the childhood of Our Lady are her life for three years with SS. Joachim and Anne, her departure from her father's house, her presentation in the Temple, the sojourn that she made there and the life she led there. Holy Scripture tells us nothing of these, but certain ecclesiastical writers give comparatively circumstantial details of them, and these St. John repeats and comments upon with his accustomed piety.

The excellences in the childhood of Mary on which the author dwells are first the nobility of her parents, their eminent sanctity, the fervour of their prayers (of which the fruit was the conception of Mary), and the announcement made to them by St. Gabriel of their miraculous fecundity. At this point he pauses to narrate the praises of the Archangel Gabriel, whom he

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looks upon as "the angel of holy love," since it was his mission to announce the mystery of the Incarnation to mankind, and he was the guardian angel of «the Mother of Dilection.» Then he shows that Our Lady's birth was, as the Church sings, a subject of joy for the entire universe.

The excellences mentioned up to this point by the Saint are extrinsic to the person of Our Lady, and relate to the circumstances accompanying her conception and birth; but in the chapters that follow he fixes our attention on Mary herself, and discourses to us on the incomparable beauty of her virginal body, the perfection of her holy soul, the lofty knowledge communicated to her by the Holy Spirit from the moment of her conception, the plenitude of grace with which her heart was from that moment enriched, and the wonderful sanctity of her life even during her infancy. Many of these questions had already been touched upon in the first part, but here St. John treats of them with greater fullness and, so to speak, *ex professo*.

In the last two chapters of this second part the author establishes the fact that Mary was already from her infancy, at least morally, Queen of the Universe and Mother of Christ and of all the members of His mystical body; for in the mind of God she was already adorned with all her titles, and the wonderful privileges with which she was favoured in her conception and throughout her childhood were

intended to prepare her for the supereminent dignity for which she was destined. Consequently the Saint was not wrong in enumerating the royalty and maternity of Mary amongst the favours of her holy childhood, and in so

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doing he considered himself but the interpreter of Catholic liturgy.

The third part of this book considers the virtues which shone with peculiar brilliancy in the Holy Childhood of Mary, and the means of showing fitting honour to them. It also contains eight meditations on the Holy Childhood.

St. John's book on *Devotion au très Saint Coeur de la bienheureuse Vierge* was only a little book of propaganda; there was still need of a comprehensive work which set forth devotion to the Heart of Mary with all the fullness demanded by such a subject; and despite the labours of all sorts that overwhelmed him, the Saint decided at an early date (1652) to undertake a work of which he, more than anyone else, understood the importance. It required laborious researches, and the task of putting together the material collected called for much time, great mental activity, and a robustness of health that would not break down under the strain of the labour. All these things were vouchsafed to the Saint. He was given the time and the necessary strength to bring the work to completion, and on July 25, 1680 he could write in his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*: "To-day, July 25 of the year 1680, God has given me the grace to finish my book on *Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu*." Shortly after this he was taken ill, and he died on the following August 19th at the Caen seminary. "We cannot wonder," says Boudon, "if the death of the Venerable Père Jean Eudes was so precious, so sweet, and so full of heavenly consolations. It seemed as though heaven were wide open to him, and the hour of death, which is generally so formidable, was for him

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a time abundantly filled with delight and spiritual consolations. He spoke of Paradise as though he were already there, and his words were charged with unction and with life for those that were present. It is the privilege of devout servants of the Blessed Virgin not only to die in a Christian manner, but with sweetness and peace. It is no cause for wonder, then, if she caused a stream of peace to flow into the heart of him who was one of her most zealous servants of this century, and the *blessed child of her Heart*." (1)

The author, thus, had not the consolation of seeing the publication of his book, but it was brought out in 1681 by Père Blouet de Camilly.

The Sacred Heart of Mary.

Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu is the largest of St. John's works, for it is divided into twelve books, of which the first explains what is meant by the Heart of Mary, and the second and third lead us to contemplate in the physical world and in the Mosaic Law twelve tableaux in which God the Father deigned to prefigure its perfections in advance. The fourth and fifth books show us the Word imprinting upon the heart of the Blessed Virgin a perfect reproduction of the divine attributes and a wonderful participation in the properties of each of the three Divine Persons. In the three books that follow we are taught devotion to the Heart of Mary by the sayings of Holy Scripture, by the writings of the Fathers and Doctors, and finally by the teaching of popes and bishops and the example of the saints. The ninth book is very long and deals with the merits of the Heart of Mary, while the tenth contains an explanation of the

(1). *Devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, I, 111, ch. iv.*

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Magnificat, which St. John calls «the canticle of the Heart of Mary.» The eleventh book is entirely practical, the author recalling therein at some length the reasons that should lead us to honour the Heart of Mary, and pointing out the method of so doing. It concludes with two series of meditations for the Feast and the Octave of the Heart of Mary. The subject of the twelfth book is the Heart of Jesus and for the most part is devoted to explaining the saying of St. Bernadine of Siena that the Heart of the Divine Master is a furnace of love for the whole universe. It also concludes with two series of meditations for the Feast and the Octave of the Heart of Jesus.

And so the author has planned the book on a grand scale, and though based on mystical reflections it is not lacking in logic. By it the Saint is enabled to consider in all its aspects that devotion of which he had made himself the apostle. All such matters as the perfections of the Heart of Mary, its relations with the three Divine Persons, its union with the Heart of Jesus, its joys and its sorrows, its part in the work of redemption and of the sanctification of the human race, are discussed very fully by the author, and he has neglected nothing that could contribute to making that adorable Heart better understood and more fervently loved. After setting clearly in relief the precise subject of the devotion, he shows the grounds for it, and traces its history from the beginnings of Christianity; he then produces the literature that has enabled it to take its place in Catholic liturgy, and he explains how to reduce it to practice in the ordinary course of life. And so *Le Cœur admirable de la très Sainte Mère de Dieu* embraces the theory, the history and the practice of

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devotion to the Heart of Mary, and each one of these questions is treated therein with such knowledge and sureness of touch that to this day nothing notable has been added to the Saint's teaching on the subject. And it is no less remarkable that he treats of these matters in language so simple and so full of unction that, despite the treasury of doctrine and erudition to be found in it, this book is yet a work of piety easily understood by everyone. We have to confess, however, that the plan followed by the author has several times led him to discuss again questions already dealt with, and that at times he allows himself to be led into digressions that prove fatiguing to modern readers.

But in spite of these failings we believe that any who give themselves the trouble of reading the book with the attention it deserves will agree with M. Joly that "it has raised up to the Heart of the Blessed Virgin a monument stamped with her image and worthy of perpetuating her memory by itself alone."

In this study of the Saint's works we have already mentioned certain aspects of his spiritual teaching, but now we must pass to a direct study of it in which we shall strive to set out its principal points clearly and precisely, and in the course of this exposition we will deal successively with devotion to the Incarnate Word, the life of Christ within us, prayer, the Christian virtues, and finally the priesthood.

CHAPTER 11

DEVOTION TO THE INCARNATE WORD

THE object of the Christian religion is God in the unity of His nature and the Trinity of His Persons. But since the Incarnation it is principally to Jesus Christ that the religious life of humanity has been directed. That is easily understandable. The God of Heaven rules us from his lofty throne, the spirituality of His nature conceals it from our sensible faculties, the infinity of His perfections disconcerts our intelligence, and when we reflect on Him what impresses us most is His majesty, which dazzles us, His omnipotence which overpowers us, and His justice which terrifies us. The God of the crib, of Calvary and of the altar is, on the other hand, more within our grasp. In making Himself our brother He permits us to approach Him with all the powers of our nature, and above all He is as it were stripped of everything that could overawe us, so that nothing is allowed to appear in Him but an infinite goodness that draws us to Him. Moreover, since the Incarnation the centre of attraction for religious souls has been changed, as the Abbé Lejeune puts it, not in order to separate us from God but to enable us to go to Him by an easier way and to know Him in the Person of the Incarnate Word.

Germain Habert, the first biographer of Cardinal de Bérulle, remarked on this subject:

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The Incarnate Word.

"Although the Holy Trinity is the greatest of all the mysteries that we adore, although it Word. is the principle and end of all, and although all things exist but to honour It . . . yet I venture to say that in the course of this present life in which we proceed by faith the chief attention and the greatest devotion of the Christian is given not to the Trinity but to the Incarnation. And that is the spirit and the practice of the Church which, in this as in all other devotions, faithfully follows the very spirit and practice of God. For in fact God, in His divine Providence, only reveals the Trinity to us in relation to the Incarnation; He unveils the Three Persons to us only so far as is necessary for our better understanding of the Second Person; and whereas He reserves the manifestation of this first and greatest mystery till we attain to glory in Heaven, it might be said on the contrary that He takes pains to depict amply for us the Incarnate Word. That is the aim of all Holy Scripture . . . to give us a perfect knowledge of His various states, offices and qualities. Holy Writ instructs us on these points on every page, and all the time that the Eternal Father speaks to us He sets His Son before us, we might say, and in doing so proclaims as on Thabor: 'This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.'"

So impressed with this idea was Cardinal de Bérulle, and so enthusiastically did he propagate it that he deserved to be styled by Urban VIII "Apostle of the (1). *Avant et après la Communion*, p. 2, ch. i, n. iv.

Quoted by Bremond in *L'École française*, p. 44. It is for this reason that St. John Eudes, instead of speaking simply of the Father and the Holy Ghost, often calls them the *Father of Jesus* and the *Holy Spirit of Jesus*.

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Incarnate Word." He had a "singular devotion" to Jesus Christ, Whom he strove to see and to honour in all things; and St. John Eudes, as a faithful disciple of that illustrious master, invites us to concentrate all our devotional efforts on the adorable Person of the Saviour. He would have us find "all our delight" in Jesus after the example of our Heavenly Father, and make Him "the sole object of our thoughts and our affections, the end of all our actions, our centre, our paradise, our all in all."(1)

Relations of the Incarnate Word with the Blessed Trinity.

But we should not get the idea that the worship of the Incarnate Word, understood in this sense, is in any way prejudicial to that which we owe to the other two Persons of the august Trinity. Jesus cannot be separated either from the Father, from Whom He proceeds, or from the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from Him. He is but one and the same God with the one and with the other, and therefore the homage that we give Him is addressed equally to the Father and the Holy Ghost even though we perhaps have not the explicit intention of honouring them with Him and in Him.

"When I exhort you," says St. John, "to kneel every morning in adoration of Our Lord Jesus Christ to thank Him and to offer yourselves to Him, I do not mean that these acts should be made only in regard to the Person of the Son of God, but in regard to the Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And this, in fact, is always infallibly done, even though one has not always got this expressly in mind. For since Jesus is but one with the Father and the Holy Ghost,

(1). Royaume de Jésus, Part I, n. vii.

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and since all the Most Holy Trinity, or, as St. Paul puts it, all the fullness of the divinity dwells in Jesus Christ, we must necessarily conclude that to adore and to glorify Jesus is to adore and to glorify the Father and the Holy Ghost; to offer to Jesus all the glory rendered to Him in heaven and on earth is to offer this same glory to the Father and to the Holy Ghost; and to beg the Father and the Holy Ghost to glorify Jesus is to beg them to glorify themselves."(1)

For the rest, our Saint's habit of making the Incarnate Word the preferred object of his devotion had nothing exclusive in it, and frequently he addressed himself directly to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (2) He loved to contemplate the divine perfections, and he had a particular devotion to the divine will. He consecrated Sunday to honouring the Blessed Trinity; and he delighted in meditating on the relationship that baptism and the priesthood establish between us and each one of the Divine Persons, often addressing himself to the Father and to the Holy Spirit and beseeching Them to love Jesus on his behalf.

A. THE GENERAL DEVOTION AND SPECIAL DEVOTIONS

The cult of the Incarnate Word extends to all that He is in Himself, in His two-fold nature, divine and human, and to all His operations in heaven, on earth, and in hell.

(1). Ditto, Part 1, n. iv.

(2). Worship of the Most Holy Trinity holds, of course, a prominent place in the life of the faithful and in Catholic liturgy; as, for instance, is testified by the Gloria Patri, the doxology that concludes the hymns in the Divine Office, and also by the sign of the Cross, the use of which is so frequent.

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The praises of Jesus.

"Consider," writes St. John, how Jesus is infinitely worthy of praise, glory and benediction, and for an infinity of reasons.

For He deserves infinite praises for all that He is and for all that He does in regard to His Eternal Father, glorifying and loving Him infinitely and continually from all eternity to all eternity. Also for all that He is in Himself, in His divinity, in all His divine perfections, in His divine Person, in His sacred Humanity, in His body and His soul, in all the parts of His body and soul the least of which merits infinite praise, in all His mysteries, qualities and offices, in all His words, thoughts, deeds, and sufferings, in all His - virtues and in everything that is in Him, the smallest of which is so worthy of praise that though all the angels and saints are occupied throughout eternity in praising and glorifying it with their whole power yet they cannot give it the glory it deserves.

"Moreover," he continues, "He merits immortal praise for all that He is and for all that He does in regard to His Holy Spirit, His Holy Mother, all the angels, all the saints, all mankind and all the creatures on earth and even in hell. For he merits no less praise for the consequences of His justice than for those of His mercy, everything that is in Him and from Him being equally holy and adorable. How many subjects and reasons there are for blessing and glorifying our Most Adorable and Most Lovable Jesus! But . . . you ought to be much more impelled to praise and love Him for what He is and does in regard to His Father, Himself and His Holy Spirit, than for what He is and does in regard to yourself and other creatures; for

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the interests of God must be infinitely dearer to us than our own."⁽¹⁾

Now Cardinal de Bérulle instituted a Feast of Jesus, the precise aim of which was to honour the Incarnate Word in all His perfections, divine and human.

"The particular purpose of this Feast," said the Cardinal, "is primarily to consider, love, and adore the Son of God as regards what He is in Himself, in His two natures, His divine Person, all His glories, His powers and offices, His benefactions and operations, but chiefly in what He is in Himself and in all His glories known and unknown. . . . And this solemnity is the more reasonable and Christian because if particular mysteries, such as the Incarnation, the Nativity, and others, have each their Feast, it is right also to allot a day of solemnity to Him Who is their principal, subject, and end; to the Word made flesh considered, not in the operation and accomplishment of His mystery, but in His permanent and eternal state as the Man-God."⁽²⁾

And Quesnel has written that "those who call this Solemnity the *Feast of the Glories of Jesus* do not give a sufficiently comprehensive and extensive idea of it,

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, Part IV, n. 111. The principle expressed at the end of the paragraph was dear to Bérulle and his school. Cf. Bremond: cf. *École française*, p. 29. It is to be found also several times in the *Royaume de Jésus* and other works by St. John.

(2). *Oeuvres*, Migne, col. 99 sq., 1070 sq. Bérulle assigns two other ends to this feast: "Secondly," he says, "we ought to be in contact with the Son of God Who is connected with us in His Person and in the Person of the Father to Whom He refers all that He is in His two essences, eternal and new, and generally all that appertains to him. . . . In the third place, we should unite ourselves to the sacred Humanity of Jesus, just as it is united to the Divine Nature in the unity of the Person of the Word, and thus bind and unite ourselves to the Divine Person subsisting in that Humanity."

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for it includes His humiliations just as much as His glories, and is properly the particular feast of neither the one nor the other, but of Him Who is the adorable subject of it. In fact, Jesus Christ is the object of this feast to the same degree as He is the object of the adoration of the angels and saints in heaven, wherein we hope some day to celebrate the Feast of Jesus in its perfection, adoring therein not .

. . certain particular actions of Christ, but the whole Christ Who is consummated in God His Father and Who there consummates with Himself His complete human nature, His mysteries, perfections, and qualities."(1)

During his sojourn at the Oratory St. John specially loved this Solemnity. Thus he wrote in 1634 to a Benedictine nun of the Holy Trinity at Caen: "I give you for this month (January) and for your eternity the great Solemnity of Jesus that we are keeping on the 20th of this month. It is one of the three great Solemnities . that are continually kept in heaven. . . . And until you go to keep it in heaven, I want to celebrate it for you on earth, or rather I beg Jesus that He will honour Himself and glorify Himself in you in the way that He desires. I beseech Him to grant that all that has ever been, or is now, or ever shall be, in you . . . may give homage and glory to all that is in Him, in His body, in His holy soul, in His divinity, in His humanity, and in His temporal and His eternal life."(2)

And when he left the Oratory he did not renounce the Feast of Jesus; he had it celebrated in the Congregation of Jesus and Mary with the Mass and Office written by Cardinal de Bérulle. He only abandoned it

(1). Quoted by Bremond, *École française*, p. 78.

(2). *Oeuvres complètes*. XI. p. 22..

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in 1672, when he instituted the feast of the Divine Heart of Jesus.(1)

The mysteries of Jesus.

But he did not stop short at honouring Jesus in His perfections considered as a whole; Jesus. he strove to give a particular cult to each of the mysteries of His life, and he believed he was obliged to this for various reasons that he sets out in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. In particular he calls to mind the example of the Heavenly Father continually occupied in contemplating and loving Jesus in Himself and in all his states and mysteries, and the authority of the Church which constantly brings these mysteries to our notice, and also the honour given to God by each of them, as well as their own intrinsic excellence. "We have," he says, «a very special obligation of honouring all that is in Jesus, for all greatness deserves honour, and infinite greatness deserves infinite honour. But Jesus is the greatest of the great, He is greatness itself: an infinite and incomprehensible greatness. And everything in His divinity and His humanity, all His states and mysteries, and the smallest things that happen in connection with Him have a greatness and an infinite dignity of their own and comprehend an infinity of marvels: for that reason they merit infinite honour and glory.» (2)

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint indicates the order to be followed in honouring every year all the mysteries of the life of Jesus in the closest possible conformity with the order followed in the liturgical year of the Church. He omits none of them and, after enumerating them all, he adds by way of conclusion: "Thus we should leave nothing in Jesus to which we do not render

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, XI, p. 591.

(2). *Oeuvres complètes*, I, p. 313 sq.

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some particular honour. In this way we should consider and honour Him everywhere, at all times, and in all things."(1)

But there were certain mysteries for which he had a marked preference because of the love

shown to us therein by Jesus and the spirit of grace contained in them, and by which we must profit if we would perfect the Christian life within us. These mysteries were the Holy Childhood, the Passion, the Eucharist, and the Priesthood.

The Holy Childhood and the Passion.

What impressed him most in the Holy Childhood was the abasement of the Incarnate Word and the beautiful virtues of simplicity, humility, gentleness, innocence, and obedience of which He gives us so many admirable examples in this mystery. St. John considered this state the apex of wisdom and of Christian perfection, and he spared no pains to capture its spirit and to communicate it to his disciples. And not content with honouring the Holy Childhood from Christmas to the Purification, he also consecrated the Monday of every week to it.(2)

The Passion is a mystery of humiliation, suffering, and death, and has ever held a prominent position in

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 316 sq.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, pp. 335, 405, 423; III, pp. 325, 455. This is the collect of the Office of the Holy Childhood: "Domine Jesu, qui non solum homo, sed etiam infans pro nobis fieri dignatus es: da nobis, quaesumus, hunc humillimum exinanitionis tuae statum summe venerari, sapientissimo Infantiae tuae spiritu repleri, ac divinam ejus innocentiam, simplicitatem, atque puritatem, mansuetudinem, humilitatem, obedientiam, charitatemque perfecte imitari; ut quasi modo geniti infantes, sine dolo ac malitia lac concupiscamus, mites et humiles corde fieri a te discamus et, sicut parvuli coram te effecti, te parvulum sequamur in terris, te magnum glorificemus in caelis. Qui vivis et regnas.

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Christian piety. Fully entering into the spirit of the Church, St. John set apart Friday in honour of this great mystery, and he strove to draw thence, along with a love of the cross, a spirit of death to sin and to the old man, so as to participate more and more abundantly in the life of the Risen Christ.(1)

The Eucharist and the Priesthood

The Eucharist is the very centre of the Christian life, and procures for us the sweet consolation of rejoicing in the presence of the Incarnate Word and of nourishing ourselves with His Body and Blood. To It St. John devoted the Thursday of each week, and he found in It both a lesson on sacrifice which led him to immolate himself generously for the glory of God and a lesson on charity for his neighbour. In fact, he applied to this mystery of love the words in which our Divine Master so strongly recommends this virtue: *Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos.* (2)

As for the Priesthood, every one knows in what esteem it was held by Cardinal de Bérulle. "Of all the qualities and distinctions that the Son of God acquired in our nature," says Bourgoing, "the highest and the most marked is the dignity of sovereign priest. . . . Now that union and fidelity to the Person of Jesus that was always so marked in his faithful servant (Pierre de Bérulle) also united him to the unction of His sovereign Priesthood, as was shown by the expressions and lofty thoughts that he showed forth in various treatises, in his whole life, and by establishing in His Church a Congregation of priests whose principal aim was to make themselves worthy priests of Jesus Christ, to

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, I, 318, 406, 430; III, 335, 391 sq.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, 318, 319, 427; III, 332, 410.

adore His Priesthood, to honour and to augment the dignity of the priesthood and to carry out its duties in a holy fashion."(1) And on this point, as on so many others, St. John entered fully into the views of his master, and it was to labour more efficaciously for the improvement or the advancement of the priesthood that he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and instituted a feast in honour of the Priesthood of Christ and of all holy priests and levites.

We will see later, when treating of prayer, what precisely the Saint invites us to consider and to honour in the mysteries of the Incarnate Word. For the moment we may merely note that, following Bérulle and his school, he exhorts us chiefly to consider the *interior* of the various mysteries, and by that he means «the virtue, the power, and the particular grace that resides in the mystery and that is proper and peculiar to it, each mystery having its virtue and its proper and peculiar grace; and also the thoughts and intentions, the interior affections, sentiments, dispositions and occupations with which it was carried out. »2

B. DEVOTION TO THE HEART OF JESUS

While he was still at the Oratory it does not seem that St. John rendered any particular cult to the Heart of Jesus. But possibly he felt drawn to it, for *Le Royaume de Jésus* was pervaded with that spirit of confidence and love that characterises devotion to the Sacred Heart. But the devotion itself, as the Saint later conceived

(1). *OEuvres d e Bérulle*, Migne, col. 103-104.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 324.

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ceived it, does not appear in it, though we can certainly say that it is to be found there in germ.(1)

Devotion to the Heart of Jesus.

The older biographies of St. John are unanimous in telling us that what attracted his attention to this devotion about the year 1643 was the reading of the works of St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. Teresa and certain other holy people, and this assertion agrees with what we learn from the Saint's own writings.(2) But it is obvious that these external influences did but second a special attraction of grace for, as Pius X states in the decree of the Saint's beatification, it was not without divine inspiration (*non sine aliquo divino afflatu*) that he first thought of rendering public worship to the Sacred Hearts?

However that may be, when he founded the Congregation of Jesus and Mary in 1643 he dedicated it to the Sacred Hearts and he stated in *Le Coeur Admirable* that "the chief aim for which it has been established is to honour specially that most august Heart which it looks

(1). In *Le Royaume de Jésus* St. John certainly tells us that Jesus is all love, but he never thinks of that love in its relations with the heart of flesh. He but rarely speaks of the latter. It is true that in one passage (*OEuvres complètes*, I, p. 320) he tells us that this heart merits a particular cult, but he is considering it in itself and not in relation to love. And so we see that the synthesis of the elements constituting the object of devotion to the Sacred Heart was not formed in the Saint's mind when he published *Le Royaume de Jésus*; that did not come till later.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 411 sq.; VII, p. 374 sq.

(3). Père Ange Le Doré has tried to prove that St. John received in 1641 the formal mission of establishing the public cult of the Sacred Hearts, through the instrumentality of Marie des Vallées. But this view, which is a novel one, does not seem to us to be well founded, and we have said why in our book

Marie des Vallées et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus. It is not impossible that the Saint himself received this mission by way of revelation, but his earliest biographers say nothing of this.

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upon and respects as its first and principal patron, and as the rule and example that it offers to its children that they may study to conform the sentiments and affections of their hearts to it."(1) To the Sacred Hearts the Saint also dedicated the Order of Our Lady to Charity and all the associations that he subsequently founded; and so that these divine Hearts should be given the adoration that is due to them he instituted in honour of the Heart of Mary (1643) and in honour of the Heart of Jesus (1672) a special feast, with proper Mass and Office, which he caused to be kept in his institutes as a double of the first class with octave. Moreover, he strove, not without success, to propagate them outside. Hence came the title of *Originator of public worship of the Sacred Hearts* conferred on him by Leo XIII, (2) and those of *Doctor* and *Apostle* of this same cult given to him by Pius X. (3)

There have been many discussions on devotion to the Heart of Jesus as conceived by our Saint, and we have

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, VII, p. 411. It is known that the Saint instead of saying, as we do now, "the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary," liked to say, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary," which expression is now never used. On the subject of this expression, cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, VI, p. 88 sq.

(2). "Auctor cultus liturgici Sacrorum Cordium. Jesu et Mariae." Decree on the heroicity of his virtues.

(3). "Verum enim vero ad Joannis in Ecclesiam merita cumulus accessit, quum ipse singulari erga sacratissima Jesu et Mariae corda flagrans amore, de liturgico eis cultu praestando non sine aliquo divino afflatu primus cogitavit. Cujus ideo suavissimae religionis tum *Pater* existimandus est, quippe qui usque ab instituta sacerdotum Congregatione solemnia sacrorum eorumdem cordium inter suos filios celebranda curavit; tum *Doctor*, nam propria officia et missam in eorum honorem composuit; tum denique *Apostolus*, toto enim est pectore nisus, ut saluberrimus ipsorum cultus in quemcumque locum evulgaretur." Decree of Beatification. On the significance of this Decree, see my book: *Le B. Jean Eudes et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus*, pp. 259 sq.

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dealt with the question several times.((1)) It would be useless to return to these discussions here; it will be sufficient to set out the Saint's teaching as it is to be found in his books and his Offices, for these Offices agree entirely with his theory of the devotion.

The theology of this devotion.

St. John was the first theologian to treat of the proper object of the devotion, and in doing so he could not fall back on any decision by the Church. In order to resolve the question he studied the various meanings that Holy Scripture gives to the word *Heart*. "This word *Heart*," he writes, "has several meanings in Scripture: (1) It means that material and corporal heart that we bear in our breast; (2) It is used to signify the memory; (3) It denotes the understanding by which we make holy meditation; (4) It expresses the free will of the superior and reasonable part of the soul, which is the noblest of its powers, the root of good or evil; (5) It refers to that supreme part of the soul that theologians call the highest point of the soul; (6) It sometimes means the whole interior of man; (7) It signifies the Holy Ghost Who is the heart of the Father and the Son, which they wish to give us as our spirit and our heart; (8) The Son of God is called the Heart of the Eternal Father." ((2))

The Saint did not ignore any of these meanings, but on the contrary tried to elaborate a theory embracing them all. For this purpose He distinguished three Hearts in Jesus, His divine Heart, His spiritual Heart and His corporal Heart, but he hastened to add that

(1). See my introduction to *Le Coeur Admirable, OEuvres complètes*, VI, my book just named above, and my brochure: *St. Jean Eudes et la dévotion au Sacré-Coeur, réponse au R. P. Auguste Hamon, S.J.*

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 33 sq.

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these three hearts make but one in the Man-God, "because, since His divine heart is the soul, the heart and the life of both His spiritual and His corporal heart, it establishes them in so perfect a unity with Him that these three hearts are but one absolutely single heart that is filled with *infinite love for the Holy Trinity and inconceivable charity for mankind.*" (1)

The divine Heart of the Saviour is His increased love, i.e. the essential love that He has in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost; but sometimes the Saint means by this phrase the *notional* love with which the Father and the Son produce the Holy Ghost, or the *personal* love which is the Holy Ghost Himself.(2)

The corporal Heart is the Heart of flesh which St. John considers as not merely the symbol,³ but also the organ of sensible love and the other passions.

But the spiritual Heart of the Man-God is, according to St. John, the superior part of His soul, which includes the memory, intellect, and will; but he at once adds, in speaking of devotion to the Heart of Mary:

"Above all (under the title 'Heart of Mary) we intend and desire to revere and honour primarily and principally that faculty and capacity of loving, both natural and supernatural, possessed by this Mother of Love,

(1). These words in italics clearly show that the object of our Saint's devotion is love.

(2). In this connection, M. Baruteil says in his *Genèse du culte du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus* (p. 99) that, "Père Eudes, when precisely defining the object of his devotion, attained to a view-point worthy of a great mystic, and especially of a great theologian, scrutinising in the light of the Holy Spirit the unfathomable mysteries of charity in God, in the Trinity, and especially in the Heart of the Son of God, both as God and as man."

(3). According to St. John the Heart of flesh is the symbol of the spiritual Heart and of the divine Heart of the Man-God in a twofold respect; viz. both as the principle of life and as the principle of love. Cf. *Le Coeur Admirable, Bk. I, ch. 111 and 1V.*

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and entirely used by her for loving God and her fellows, or rather all the love and charity of the Mother of the Saviour in regard to God and ourselves. . . . For, *while the heart represents the whole interior, yet it chiefly signifies love. . . . And so it is this incomparable love and ineffable charity that we specially regard and revere* in our Most Honoured Lady and our very dear Mother. It is this that we *principally* mean by her most holy Heart, and it is under this beautiful aspect and under this glorious title of MATER PULCHRAE DILECTIONIS, MOTHER OF LOVE AND OF CHARITY, that we wish singularly to honour and to praise this most lovable Virgin and admirable Mother.-

And then, as though he feared lest he might not have been understood, he adds a little later: "It is this *love, the miracle of divine loves, this charity, the most wonderful manifestation of holy charity, this virginal heart filled and running over with such love, such charity,* that we intend to honour, to

praise and to exalt in every way that we possibly can."

He continues in these terms: "In the most honourable and holy Virgin Mother of Jesus we desire to honour not merely some of her mysteries or some of her actions . . . not merely some of her qualities . . . not even simply her most worthy person(1); but *Primarily and principally* to honour in her the source and origin of the holiness and dignity of all her mysteries, actions and qualities, and even of her person, to wit, *her love and charity*, since, according to all the holy (1). We believe that here the Saint opposes his devotion to that of Cardinal de Bérulle which had as its object the Holy Virgin considered in all her perfections. Bérulle had, in fact, established a Feast of Mary corresponding to the Feast of Jesus.

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doctors, love and charity are the measure of merit and of all holiness."(1)

It is obvious that these principles are valid for devotion to the Heart of Jesus just as much as for devotion to the Heart of Mary; and so there is no possible doubt about our Saint's views. Although, in a wide sense, he extended devotion to the Sacred Heart to the whole interior life of the Saviour, what he *primarily and Principally* intended by the phrase "Heart of Jesus" was its love, all that love: divine, spiritual and sensible, of which His fleshly heart was the seat; His love for His Father, for His most holy Mother, and for us. And so for him the Feast of the Heart of Jesus was the feast of charity, as is plainly shown by the more important passages in the Mass and Office such as the invitatory, the collect, the introit, the Gospel, the hymns, versicles and antiphons. Notable in this respect is this antiphon from the First Vespers: *Cor meum caritas est: qui manet in caritate in Corde meo manet et Cor meum manet in eo*. And in the Office, in *Le Coeur admirable*, in his *Magnificat*, and in the picture of Our Lady of Hearts, St. John always presents the Heart of Jesus as *a furnace of love*, and on this point there is no difference between his devotion and that of Paray.(2)

Comparison with the oratorian Feast.

And thus the Feast instituted by him is quite distinct from the Feast of Jesus instituted by Cardinal de Bérulle, the object of which was not the love of Jesus, but the actual Person of the Incarnate (1) *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, pp. 431-435. The same doctrine is expressed in the same terms on p. 132.

(2). See my book, *Le B. Jean Eudes et le culte public du Coeur de Jésus*, pp. 53 sq., 267 sq., 273 sq.; and on *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, pp. 88 sq., 523-524.

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Word considered in His two-fold nature and in all His perfections, divine and human. No doubt there are characteristics common to both Feasts, and in fact St. John introduced into his devotion to the Sacred Heart the lofty views of Bérulle on the life of Jesus within us.(1) Furthermore, we might say of both that their object is all that is great and holy in the other feasts, for the Person and the Heart are, each of them, the prime agent of all the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, but by different titles and in different ways, just as the person and the foot are, each of them, the prime agent of walking, but by different titles and in a different way. But despite these common characteristics the two feasts are none the less distinct in their subject and in their spirit, and therefore M. Bremond is wrong when, in his *Histoire du Sentiment religieux*, he tries to link St. John's feast with that of Cardinal de Bérulle by maintaining that the subject of the former is not the Heart as a furnace of love (as is the case with the devotion at Paray), but what he calls the Heart-Person.(2) For the rest, the eminent academician

seems himself to have realised that his thesis is somewhat

(1). Moreover those views are always found in the Saint's devotion to the incarnate Word, whatever be its special subject; and that is natural since, whatever be the mystery in which He is considered, Jesus is always our Head, and our life is always a participation and a prolongation of His.

(2). Vol. III, pp. 645 sq. In order to support his thesis M. Bremond brings forward among other arguments the preoccupation of Bérulle and his disciples with the "interior" significance of the various mysteries, from which, according to him, it is but a step to the cult of the Sacred Heart. But we, on the contrary, believe that there is a very considerable distance between the two, and that several stages have to be traversed if that gap is to be crossed. It would, in fact, be necessary (a) to pass from the "interior" to love; (b) to consider love in itself, abstracting from every particular mystery; (c) to envisage it in relation to the Heart of flesh, which M. Bremond is wrong in neglecting.

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exaggerated, for, referring to St. John, he wrote to us on March 31, 1919: "Perhaps I Bérullise' him too much.'"

C. PURE LOVE

The feelings that we must have for Jesus Christ are those that, taken together, go to make up the complete religion of the creature in regard to his Creator. In the front rank must be adoration which is due from man by reason of his own nothingness and the absolute sovereignty of God. And to adoration must be added praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and especially confidence and love. Indeed, what struck St. John most forcibly in the life and mysteries of the Incarnate Word (even while the Saint was still at the Oratory) was not His greatness, but the love and the tender pity that He displays towards us. And therefore, in *Le Royaume de Jesus*, after summing up the considerations that oblige us to employ our whole life in the service of Jesus, he stresses the reflection that the Divine Master has given us all that He has and all that He is.

Reasons for loving Jesus.

"He has given us," he writes, "His Father to be our Father, making us children of the very Father of Whom He is the Son. He has given us His Holy Spirit to be our own spirit, and to teach, rule, and conduct us in all things. He has given us His holy Mother to be our Mother; He has given us His angels and saints to protect us and to intercede for us; and He has given us everything else in heaven and on earth for our use and our needs. In His Incarnation He has given us His own Person; He has given us His whole

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life, for every moment of it He employed for us, so that He never had a thought, said a word, or performed an action, even the least, that He did not consecrate to our salvation. And finally, He has given us in the Holy Eucharist His Body and Blood, and with these His soul and His divinity together with all the infinite marvels and treasures to be found in His divinity and His humanity; and all this He gives us every day, or at least as often as we choose to prepare ourselves to receive Him."(1)

And in *Le Coeur admirable* he adds: "But, besides that, Jesus gives us His most lovable Heart, which is the principle and origin of all His other gifts. For it was His divine Heart that made Him go forth from His Father's bosom and come upon earth to give us all these graces; and it was His Heart, humanly divine and divinely human, that merited and acquired them for us by all the sorrows and anguish that He bore while He was in this world.' (2)

And thence the Saint concluded that we in our turn are bound to give and to consecrate entirely to Jesus all the undertakings and actions of our lives. His *Royaume de Jésus* is full of the thought that Jesus is all love for us and that in return we must be filled with love for Him. In the fourth part of it there is a long chapter in which the author sets out with joy all the perfections of the love of Jesus for us and draws from his heart a magnificent chant of love for the divine Master.(3)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, I, n. 111.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 311.

(3) In the eighteenth century this chapter was applied to devotion to the Sacred Heart. In actual fact we believe it impossible to find a more beautiful commentary on Our Lord's words to St. Margaret Mary. "Behold the Heart which has so loved men."

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It has been remarked that, in concentrating itself on Jesus, love of God has acquired a tenderness unknown before(1); and *Le Royaume de Jésus* is a manifest proof of this. In it love of God overflows with a vivacity, a delicacy, an abandon, and an intimacy that carries one away, and this exquisite tenderness is revealed in the very terms that the Saint uses in connection with the Saviour. Not only does he never tire of repeating the name of his Well-Beloved (after the example of St. Paul), but when he directly addresses Him the most affectionate phrases flow spontaneously from his heart, and he calls Him his "dearest, best, most amiable, most desirable, most benign Jesus," while in another passage he hails Him as 'the desired of my soul, my life, my all, king of my heart, my sweet love,' etc. We would never finish if we were to enumerate all the phrases in which St. John expresses his tender love for the Divine Master.

How to show this love.

But true love does not stop short at affection, it translates itself into acts; if we would show Jesus that we love Him we must take pains to do what He expects of us; and it is not difficult to find out what that is. Jesus asks us to observe the evangelic precepts, and counsels, to fulfil the duties of our state, to obey those who are charged with our guidance, and to submit ourselves to the dispositions of Divine Providence which are manifested by the events, both great and small, with which our lives are mingled. In that programme we will find plenty to which to attend, but St. John would have us go further and place our whole being at the service of the Divine Master, spending

(1). Dalgairus: *Holy Communion*, ch. 111.

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ourselves, body and soul, in the interests of His glory and the salvation of our brethren. With Bérulle and his followers, he considers that we have pledged ourselves to this by our baptism; for, in receiving that sacrament, "We profess," he says, "servitude in regard to Jesus and to all His members. . . . And, in consequence of that profession, all Christians have nothing of themselves, any more than have slaves, and have no right to make any use of themselves, either of the members of their bodies, or of the powers of their souls, their lives, their time, or of the temporal goods they may possess, save only for Jesus Christ and for His members, who are all those who believe in Him."(1)

But the value of our works does not depend solely on their nature, it derives also from the motives for which we act. When it is charity and charity only that moves us the value of what we do for God is markedly enhanced, and that is why St. John exhorts us not only to serve Christ but also to do it with the sole object of pleasing Him, through pure love of Him, and without any motive of self-interest. "Of all the works of a truly Christian soul," he wrote, "the noblest, the most holy, the loftiest, and that which God chiefly demands of us, is the exercise of pure divine love. That is why we should take great

care in all our pious works and all our acts to protest to Our Lord that we wish to do them, not through fear of Hell, nor for the reward of Paradise, not for merit, nor for our own satisfaction and consolation, but for love of Him, for His pleasure, for His glory alone and for His most pure love."

And the Saint never ceases to urge his readers on to this pure love, which is why *Le Royaume de Jésus* is

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxviii.

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truly, as has been said, "the manual of perfect charity." (1) Indeed, the same might be said of the *Manuel de piété* and of the *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. In this respect the Saint's teaching is summed up in the phrase spoken by Our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena: "My child, think of me, and I will think of you.--- The Saint presses us to make our own this invitation by the Divine Master, and to do everything with the sole object of pleasing Him, abandoning the care of all our interests to Him. (2) Moreover, that is the best means of endowing our actions with all the perfection of which they are capable, and consequently of laying by treasure for Paradise. (3)

It was in this way that St. John thought of devotion to the Word Incarnate from 1637 onwards, and when later his piety turned specially to the Heart of Jesus he found nothing to change in it. His devotion was already so impregnated with confidence and love that, if it could grow in intensity, it certainly had no need to take a new direction; and when explaining the practice of devotion to the Heart of Jesus as conceived by the Saint, P&Pères Dauphin and Le Doré depended on *Le Royaume de Jésus* as much as, if not more than, on *Le Coeur admirable* and the Office of the Sacred Heart.

(1). The Rennes Edition, 1869, avant-Propos.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxx.

(3). We see thereby that the Saint's spirituality is strictly theocentric, in the sense that it is disinterested and directed entirely to the glory of God. On this subject see what he says in *Le Royaume de Jésus* on the end of man, prayer, the Christian virtues, confession, indulgences, aridities, etc.

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D. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN (The Cult of Jesus in Mary)

As is well known, St. John threw himself with ardour into propagating the cult of the Most Holy Virgin, and it would require a volume to study in detail his apostolate and doctrine concerning devotion to her. Here we can but sketchily indicate the way in which he thought of this devotion.

We have said that he was already completely devoted to the Blessed Virgin when he first entered the Oratory; but in the school of Bérulle his devotion became, if not more ardent, at least more doctrinal and more profound through being governed by his teacher's principles. And in fact his devotion to Mary is profoundly "Berullian." (1)

(1). In his study, *La dévotion à la Vierge au commencement du XVIIe siècle*, Charles Flachaire ranged St. John and M. Olier in a group apart, distinct from that of Bérulle; and in that he was certainly mistaken. Indeed, he spoke of them in strange terms. Read his own words: "The third current, derived from the preceding, took a very different direction. Those we encounter in it were *daily subject to visions, ecstasies and transports in God*. Marial piety with them was less a product of speculative mysticism than an experience lived through: it was *passionate, impetuous, tormented*. To understand it we have to know something of their ardent lives, and as regards M. Olier this is made possible for us by his *Mémoires*, which are still unpublished, and by the unpublished fragments of his writings on the Virgin. And Père Eudes, in some respects a disciple of M. Olier, made himself by unwearying propaganda the

apostle of a special cult: *that of 'the Holy Heart of Mary,' which is subject to the twofold Peril of materialisation and of being parcelled out into details in practice.*" Loc. cit., p. 7.

And elsewhere he writes: "The analysis we have just made of Sulpician piety and of devotion to the Heart of Mary leads us to guess at, if it does not demonstrate, the *dangers* and *extravagances* (!) which may result from the purest intentions. . . . M. Olier did not fear to indulge in theological adventures, and *Père Eudes, without expressly wishing it, ran the risk of entangling himself in pious materialisations.*

Speculative hardihood and mystical transports need temperaments of solid good sense. It is of importance that the privileges of the Virgin, the power of her intercession, and the nature of the bond uniting her to her servants should be examined *by calmer minds.*" Pp. 141-142.

And further on we find this: «It should be behind closed doors that contemplatives abandon themselves to *the spirit of a very infectious sentimentality and unusually sweet affection, to excesses of imprudently hyperbolic glorifications, and to the fever of waves of 'tenderness.'* . . . Several masters of the spiritual life amongst the Jesuits, then M. Olier, Père Eudes, and very many others gave themselves up *with far too little reserve to a devout dream; they flattered rather than honoured Mary; they loved and celebrated her less as a patron and queen than as a mother and a mystical spouse.* They entered upon this cult with the ardour of their feelings turned towards the invisible, but not destroy with the personal preferences peculiar to their theology, and the particular sentiments of the cherished devotions; they created, they overloaded, and they unwearyingly adorned with prodig complaisance a symbol which summed up all their piety.» Pp. 155-157.

It is truly surprising to see a Catholic write in these terms of two celebrated men universally esteemed, one of whom was beatified while de Flachaire was alive (though he seems ignorant of the fact), and was canonised by Pius XI. As for the cult of the Heart of Mary, which seems so dangerous to Flachaire, everyone knows that it has long been approved by the Church. Flachaire reproaches St. John with loving and honouring Mary less as a *queen* than as a *mother* or as a *spouse*. But what is wrong with that? Is Mary not the mother of all the faithful? Has she not a right to receive from us all the tenderest and most delicate marks of love? Following the example of many saints, St. John chose Mary as his spouse and drew up a contract of alliance with her which is definitely dated 1668. It is to be found in Vol. XII of the *OEuvres complètes*. Has Flachaire taken the trouble to read it? If so, he completely failed to understand it. M. Bremond tells us (IX, p. 248) that when Flachaire wrote his thesis «he was little familiar with really mystical matters.» In that case perhaps he would have done better not to write of things that he did not understand, or to write of them only with that reserve and modesty that is called for in such a case.

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It was in *Le Royaume de Jésus* that the Saint most precisely and succinctly set out the principles that should govern devotion to Mary as he conceived it. With Cardinal de Bérulle he taught first of all that we must not separate Jesus and Mary, but unite them in our devotions: "Jesus and Mary," he said, --are so closely connected that he who sees Jesus sees Mary,

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he who loves Jesus loves Mary, he who has devotion to Jesus has devotion to Mary. Jesus and Mary are the two chief foundations of the Christian religion, the two sources of all our blessings, the two subjects of our devotion, and the two to whom we must look in all our actions and devotions."(1)

Several times in his works the Saint set himself to display clearly the union of Jesus and Mary in the work of salvation. In *L'Enfance admirable* he rightly affirms that the Son and the Mother were the subject of one and the same predestination, since it is only as Son of Mary that Jesus has His place in the eternal designs of God .(2)

Inseparable union of Jesus and Mary.

In other writings, and especially in *Le Coeur admirable*, he bases his argument on the close union and perfect conformity of thought and feeling which always existed between Jesus and His divine Mother, and in giving expression to the perfection of this union he loved to repeat that Jesus and Mary always had but one mind, one will, one heart: "Although the Heart of Jesus," he wrote, "is distinct from that of Mary and surpasses it infinitely in excellence and holiness, yet God has so closely united these two Hearts that it may be truly said that they are but one Heart since they are always animated by the same spirit and filled with the same sentiments and affections. If St. Bernard says that he has but one heart with

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xi. The Saint expressed the same ideas in this anthem which he used for commemorating the Sacred Hearts: *Benedictum sit Cor amantissimum Jesu et Mariae, fons vivus benedictionis, fornax amoris, thronus divinae voluntatis, sanctuarium divinitatis.*

(2). *Oeuvres Complètes*, V, p. 77.

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Jesus (*Bene mihi est, cor unum cum Jesu habeo*), and if he says of the earliest Christians that they had but one heart and one soul by reason of the intimate union existing between them, how much more can we say that Jesus and Mary have but one soul and one Heart through the most perfect union and conformity of spirit, of will and of feeling which exists between such a Son and such a Mother!"(1)

The object of the union of Jesus and Mary is the glory of God and the salvation of the world. Scripture and Tradition rival each other in proclaiming this. St. John had studied both, and he delighted in showing the part, secondary, it is true, but none the less real, taken by the Holy Virgin in the work of redemption and the role played by her in the distribution of grace. He summed up his teaching on this point by saying, as we have just seen, that Jesus and Mary are "the two chief foundations of the Christian religion, the two sources of all our blessings,- and from this he concluded that they must be "the two subjects of our devotion and the two to whom we must look in all our actions and devotions."

It goes without saying that he added the force of example to that of precept. Sometimes he united the Son and the Mother in the same prayer, and we have an example of that in the salutation to the Sacred Hearts, *Ave Cor Sanctissimum*, which is addressed to the Heart of Jesus and to the Heart of Mary, though the praises rendered "conjointly" to one and the other have not the same significance.(2) And we know that when he established the Feast of the Heart of Mary in

(1). *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII, p. 129.

(2). *Oeuvres Complètes*, VIII, pp. 490-491.

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1672 he gave an important place therein to the Heart of Jesus.

At other times he added to the prayers he addressed to Jesus an analogous prayer addressed to Mary, and examples of this abound in *Le Royaume de Jésus*.

Finally he recommended that all the mysteries of the Blessed Virgin should be honoured in the same way as those of Jesus, due proportion being, of course, preserved. And so he wrote litanies, and established a Feast, in honour of the sacred childhood of Mary, which corresponded to the litanies and Feast of the Sacred Childhood of Jesus; and similarly he wrote litanies, an Office and a Mass in honour of each of the Sacred Hearts (of Jesus and Mary), and encouraged a cult to the Name of each.

**To honour Mary
Is to honour her
Divine Son**

Another principle stressed by our Saint was that we ought to honour Jesus in Mary and Mary in Jesus. God asks of us and as she desires," he wrote, «we must look on and adore her Son in her and see and adore therein none but Him. For that is how she wishes to be honoured since, of herself and by herself, she is nothing, but her Son Jesus is everything in her: He is her being, her life, her holiness, her glory, her power and her greatness."(1)

And in truth this is what has always been done, at least implicitly, for the honours given by Christians to Mary are based upon her dignity as Mother of God and thence they ascend even to her Son. This is explained by St. John with his customary lucidity in his *Coeur admirable*: "Come," he says, speaking of the

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, loc. cit.

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Heart of Mary, "Come and lose yourselves in the gentle waters of this stream of peace, this torrent of delights. . . . Hasten, why do you delay? Why do you put it off for a single moment? Is it not that you fear to wrong thereby the unparalleled goodness of the most adorable Heart of Jesus, your God and your Redeemer, if you address yourselves to the charity of the Heart of Mary? But do you not know that Mary is nothing and has nothing and can do nothing save from Jesus and by Jesus and in Jesus, and that it is Jesus who is all, who can do all, and who does everything in her? Do you not know that it is Jesus who has made the Heart of Mary what it is, and who desired to make it a 'fountain of light, of consolation and of all sorts of graces for all those who have recourse to it in their necessities? And do you not know that not only is Jesus resting and dwelling continually in the Heart of Mary, but that He is Himself the Heart of Mary, and that therefore to come to the Heart of Mary is to come to Jesus, to honour the Heart of Mary is to honour Jesus, and to invoke the Heart of Mary is to invoke Jesus? " (1)

None the less he advised that we should *explicitly* refer to the Son the homage offered to the Mother, and so we get those beautiful words that form the invitatory of his Office of the Heart of Mary: *Jesum in Corde Mariae regnantem, venite adoremus*.

A last principle inculcated by St. John was that we ought to model ourselves on Jesus in the practice of devotion to Mary. "As we have to imitate the virtues and foster within us the sentiments of Jesus, we must also imitate and foster the feelings of love, piety and

(1). *Œuvres complètes*, VI, P. 189.

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devotion that He cultivated in regard to His blessed Mother. And He loved and honoured her most perfectly, choosing her for His Mother, giving Himself to her as her Son, taking from her a new being and a new life, desiring to be thus connected with her, subjecting Himself to her, and externally being guided by her during His Childhood and His hidden life, establishing her as Queen of heaven and earth, glorifying her and making her be glorified by all the world."

And so, the Saint continues, we must "acknowledge and honour Mary as the Mother of our God, and consequently as our own Mother and Sovereign. We must thank her for all the love, the glory and the services which she has rendered to her Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, and, referring all our being and our life to her (after God), put ourselves in dependence upon her and beseech her to take charge of all that concerns us. And we must subject ourselves to her as slaves, begging her to take full command of us as of something that is entirely her own, to dispose of us as she pleases for the glory of her Son, to deign to make use of all our actions for honouring those of her Son, and to associate us with all the love and all the praises she has ever given Him in the past and will render to Him through all eternity."⁽¹⁾

And so we see that devotion to Mary, as thought of by St. John, goes very far. It implies a complete donation, an entire consecration, a constant subjecting, of our whole person to Mary and through her to Jesus, and consequently an assiduous application in honouring her, in serving her in all the details of our lives, in performing all our acts for her glory, in a word in living with her in the most intimate and constant union possible. It is

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, loc. cit.

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this point of view that produced the acts of consecration to Mary that are to be found so often in the Saint's writings, and in particular the noble words that end the salutation written by him in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: *Tibi cor nostrum offerimus, donamus, consecramus; accipe et posside illud totum et purifica, et illumina et sanctifica ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum.*

These principles are those of the French school, and -are to be found in one form or another in all the writings of that great school. They are the same as those that inspired Blessed Grignon de Montfort and which he made known to the faithful in his excellent *Traité de la vraie dévotion à la sainte Vierge.*

We have already said that St. John, like the Church in its liturgy, calls upon us to honour every year the various mysteries of the life of the Most Holy Virgin, and it goes without saying that above all he would have us honour the inner spirit of these mysteries. Is not that the best way of grasping their real meaning and of so eventually being of but one mind, one heart, one soul with the Holy Virgin and her Divine Son, which is the object of every truly Christian life?

Feast and Offices of Our Lady.

But for some mysteries our Saint had a special devotion, for instance the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Name of Mary, her holy Childhood, her glorious Annunciation, her joys, her sorrows, and especially her Heart. We have already seen that he consecrated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary the two Congregations as well as the confraternities founded by him, and that in them he had caused to be celebrated in honour of each of these Hearts a solemn

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Feast under the rite of a double of the first class with octave, and had himself composed the Mass and Office for them. To them he dedicated the chapels that he built at Coutances and Caen; and in his *Testament* he bequeathed these two Hearts to his spiritual children begging them to be faithful in celebrating their Feasts every year with all the devotion of which they were capable. In some respects he did more for the Heart of Mary than for the Heart of Jesus, since for a long time he gave it the first place in his apostolate, instituted its Feast as early as 1643 while that of the Heart of Jesus only dates from 1672, and it is with it that he is chiefly concerned in his writings.

We have elsewhere studied the subject of devotion to the Heart of Mary', and need not now go over that again. It will suffice here to say that in Mary, as in Jesus, the Saint distinguishes three Hearts that make but one: the divine, the spiritual, and the corporal.

Under the name of the Divine Heart of Mary St. John ordinarily means the Incarnate Word: *Jesum in Corde Mariae regnantem venite adoremus*. But sometimes he gives this name to the Holy Ghost or to the complete Trinity. And so it is that he ends the hymns of, her Office with the following doxology:

*O sacrosancta Trinitas,
Aeterna vita cordium,
Cordis Mariae sanctitas,
In corde regnes omnium.*

(1). See the introduction to *Le Coeur admirable* and my book on *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, which is an historical and doctrinal study of the question.

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The corporal Heart of Mary, on the other hand, is her heart of flesh', and we have elsewhere remarked that in the devotion to the Heart of Mary the heart of flesh does not occupy so prominent a position as it does in devotion to the Heart of Jesus.(2)

As for the spiritual heart, we have already seen that in St. John's view it is the superior part of Mary's soul, which includes her intellect, memory, and will, but *primarily and Principally* her love and charity, her love for God and her charity for mankind. In his eyes

(1). Flachaire (loc. cit., p. 134) says that this symbol (the Heart of Mary) was too liable to call up concrete representations, and that this devotion "was soon to confirm the *law of materialisation* from which few cults are immune. Père Eudes," he adds, "foresaw the danger, but he was perhaps not always able to avoid it; for he dealt only rapidly with the sensible element and in his treatise of 1650 hardly mentioned the corporal heart. Nothing is more curious than the tenacity of certain contemporary Eudists in claiming for their founder the honour (or the responsibility) of having insisted on the cardiac organa itself. Undoubtedly Père Eudes distinguishes three hearts in Mary: « He corporeal heart which beats within her virginal breast, the spiritual heart which is the superior part of her soul, and her divine heart which is Jesus,' but he soon adds: 'Above all we mean and desire to honour and revere primarily and principally that faculty and capacity for loving, both natural and supernatural, which is in this Mother of love and which she entirely employs for loving God and mankind, or rather (we honour) all the love and all the charity that the Mother of our Saviour has for us.' And so it is the spiritual side that he stresses." But this is precisely what contemporary Eudists have always thought and loudly proclaimed; and if they have tried to show that in his devotion St. John did not ignore the heart of flesh it is because that has been denied and because a devotion to the Sacred Hearts in which the heart of flesh held no place would be conformable neither to the exigencies of human nature nor to the spirit of the Church. «In all the devotions or feasts that concern the Sacred Humanity of Christ," says Père de Galliffet very justly, "there is always a double subject, the one sensible and corporal, the other invisible and spiritual, and these are united together and honoured indivisibly, the spiritual object communicating its dignity to the corporal object. . . . But the corporal and sensible object has of itself that which always gives its name to the devotion." (*Excellence de la dévotion au Sacré-Coeur*, 1, ch. 1 V.)

(2). *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, p. 287.

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the Heart of Mary is before all a furnace of love, and the chief fruit of devotion to this most holy Heart should be an increase of love for God and mankind. This the Saint repeated over and over again in his

books and in his Offices, and he even had a statue made, called *Notre-Dame des Coeurs*, (1) which showed the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary beneath the emblem of a furnace of love at which he and his priests sought to kindle torches with which to encircle the world in the fire of divine love.

E. JESUS IN EVERYTHING

Devotion to the angels and saints is familiar to everyone, and in *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint recommended it in these terms:

"We ought to have devotion to all the saints and angels, especially to our own good angel and to the (1). A picture of this statue is to be seen at the beginning of Vol. VI of the *OEuvres complètes*, and in Le Doré's *Les Sacrés Coeurs et le V. Jean Eudes*, Vol. II. After describing this statue in his *Paray-le-Monial*, p. 226, n. i, Père Hamon, S.j., adds: «This statue was certainly constructed under the influence of the ideas of Père Eudes, and it is therefore his apostolate that it propagates. Did Père Eudes actually have it made? Père Lebrun answers affirmatively, without giving any proof. . . . He thinks that Père Eudes expressed in the third book of his *Coeur admirable* (*OEuvres complètes*, Vol. VI, p. 335) the ideas of which this statue is the symbol. But if we consider the context of the lines that he quotes, we have difficulty in agreeing with him." It is true that I never dreamed of proving that this statue was the work of Père Eudes, but the name it bears, the inscriptions that adorn and explain it, and the very subject itself, sufficiently proclaim the fact. And one of the Saint's opponents expressly states that -wherever he (Père Eudes) had any influence he caused to be set up and to be publicly sold statues and pictures of Our Lady of Hearts, as he called them- (quoted by Le Doré, loc. cit., II, p. 375). As for the passage in *Le Coeur admirable* referred to by Père Hamon, if the reader will turn to it we believe that, like me, he will find therein the ideas symbolised in the statue of Our Lady of Hearts.

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saint whose name we bear, also to the saints who conversed with Our Lord when He was upon earth, to the order of angels and saints to which we should be associated in heaven, and to the saints and angels who are protectors of the places wherein we dwell or through which we pass, and of the persons with whom our lot is cast. "

While preserving all due proportion, Père Eudes looked upon devotion to the saints in the same way as that in which he regarded devotion to the Blessed Virgin:

How to honour the Saints.

"To honour the saints as they should be honoured," he says, we should adore Jesus in them; for He is everything in them: *omnia in omnibus*. He is their being, their life, their sanctity, their joy and their glory. We must thank Him for the glory and the praise that He renders Himself in them and by them, and thank Him the more for the graces He communicates to them, and by them communicates to us, for the interests of God should be dearer to us than our own. We must offer Him all the honour and love that His saints give Him, and pray Him to make us sharers in this same love and in all their other virtues.»

And he adds: "When we address the saints we must humble ourselves before them, esteeming ourselves most unworthy even to think of them, and unworthy to be thought of by them; we should thank them for the services and the glory they have given Our Lord, and should offer ourselves to them, begging them to offer us to Jesus and to ask Him to destroy within us everything that displeases Him, and to make us sharers in the graces He has given them. We should also ask

them to honour and love Him for us, and to give Him a hundredfold on our behalf all the love and glory that we ought to have given Him throughout our lives; and pray them to associate us in the homage and praises they render Him in heaven, and to make use of us in honouring and glorifying Him in every way they please."(1)

It need hardly be said that these principles also apply to relics of the saints, for Père Eudes had the greatest veneration for these. "We ought," he wrote, "to consider and honour relics of the saints as a portion of Jesus and part of His members, and should carry them with us in union with the love with which He bears all the saints of all eternity in His bosom and His Heart, thereby uniting us with the love and the praises rendered to Him by those saints whose relics we carry, and which will be rendered by them eternally.» (2)

Seeing Jesus in others

When he treats of charity the Saint makes use of the same ideas, urging us to see and love Jesus in our neighbour. "Look upon your neighbour as . . . the temple of the living God, bearing in himself the image of the Most Holy Trinity and the character of Jesus Christ, for he is a portion of Christ, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. Look upon him as he for whom Christ so laboured, so suffered, and gave His Blood and His life; and also look upon him as one whom Christ commends to you as though he were Christ Himself, assuring you that *what you do to the least of these*, i.e. of those that believe in Him, *He will consider it as done to Himself.*(3) If we weigh well the importance

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. xv.

(2). Ibid.

(3). Matt. xv, 40.

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of these truths, what charity, what respect, what honour we will have for each other.» (1)

and In ourselves.

And again it is Jesus that we should have in mind when we are concerned with our selves, whether in labouring for the acquisition of Christian virtues, or in giving our body the rest or the nourishment that it requires: "When you have to rest or to give your body food or refreshment, do it with this intention of considering your health, your life and your body not as merely your own but as being one of the members of Jesus, as Scripture tells us, and as something that belongs to Jesus: *Corpus autem Domino* (2) and of which you must in consequence take care, not for your own sake but for Jesus, in so far as it is necessary for His service; reminding yourself, like St. Gertrude, of Our Lord's saying that *what we do to the least thing that belongs to Him, we do to Himself.*" (3)

In actual fact, indeed, even creatures devoid of reason should lead us to love Jesus; for, as God, He created them, and, as man, He acquired for us, at the price of His Blood, that right of making use of them that we had lost through sin. They sing His glory "with all their being and all their natural power," and invite us to glorify Him with them. Let us make use of them with thankfulness and for the greater glory of Him who placed them at our service.

To sum up: St. John would have us see Jesus in everything and everywhere; in the natural world

and in the spiritual world, because He reigns in both the one and the other although in different ways; in death

(1) *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. xxxv.*

(2) *11 Cor. xv, 13.*

(3). *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. xxxvi.*

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wherein He exercises His sovereignty, in the particular judgment which shows forth His justice, in heaven which is the kingdom of His glory, in purgatory where He reveals both His justice and His mercy, and even in hell where He triumphs over His enemies in the most terrible manner.

In this way Jesus will truly be our "only aim," since we will only see persons and things as they stand in regard to Him. He will be our "all," since we will seek only Him and love only Him in everything, in accordance with that phrase of St. Paul's which St. John would have us make the rule of our lives: *Omnia in omnibus Christus.*

CHAPTER III

THE LIFE OF JESUS WITHIN US (1)

Not only is Jesus the object of our religion, He is also that of our life, for everything of the Christian life that we possess comes from Him and is but the continuation and completion of His life in each one of us.(2) Now this

(1). On this question, see the *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis* (I, ch. 111), in addition to *Le Royaume de Jésus* which treats of it at length.

(2). "The French School," says M. Letourneau, "has the courage to study and to expound *the loftiest and the most beautiful of the doctrines of St. John and of St. Paul on the life of grace*. It in no way consents to whittle them down or to dissimulate regarding them under the pretext of accommodating them to the intellectual weakness of the mass of the faithful. On the contrary, it insists on putting them forward with the utmost plainness. It loves to contemplate first the marvels of *divine life* in the soul of Jesus, in His intellect, and His will, i.e. in His Heart; it exalts and glorifies in every possible way this *interior life* in the soul of Jesus. Then it delights in considering how this divine life of grace flows from the head into the members of the mystical body of Christ, and how the faithful, from St. John the Baptist onwards, reproduce in themselves the death and the life of Jesus. Its members are never more at home than when poring over the texts of St. John (the Evangelist) and St. Paul which set out this magnificent teaching: *In ipso vita erat; Ego veni ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant; Ego sum vitis, vos palmites*. . . . Would it not be a calamity for us to be deprived of these superb commentaries, and is it not greatly to our advantage to be nourished on such substantial doctrines? Would it not be deplorable to see even priests neglecting to make the effort necessary to permeate themselves with them? Nor can we say that similar lessons could easily be learnt elsewhere: that is not so. And so St. Teresa, who so admirably described the marvels of divine love, studied this teaching of St. Paul's in the same way as did our Fathers of the seventeenth century." (*L'École française du XVIIe siècle*, pp. 9-10. From *Le Recrutement sacerdotal*, Sept. 1911)

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way of looking at the Christian life was of capital importance in the eyes of our Saint, indeed he wrote an entire book, *Le Royaume de Jésus*, to bring it into prominence and to teach pious souls to reduce it to practice in their daily lives. He himself tells us as much in the Preface of this book:

**The reign
of Christ with us.**

"The name I have given to this book indicates its two subjects, namely *The Life and the Kingdom of Jesus in Christian*

Souls. I call it primarily *The Life of Jesus in Christian Souls*, because its first and principal end is to point out that Christ must be living within all Christians, since Christians are only on earth for the purpose of thereon continuing the most holy life that Jesus once led there, and since the chief business of a Christian must be to labour to form and establish Jesus within himself, in accordance with the Apostolic desire: *Formetur Christus in vobis*, (1) i.e., to cause Him to dwell in his spirit and in his heart and to establish the holiness of His life and habits in his soul and in his body. That is what St. Paul calls 'bearing and glorifying God in our bodies,' (2) and St. Peter 'sanctifying Jesus Christ in our hearts.' » (3) For Christ being our leader and we His members (and therefore all that is in Him being in us, and all that is in us being in Him), it follows that as He is sanctified for us (4) and is *Himself our sanctification*, as His Apostle assures us, (5) so when we sanctify ourselves we do so for Him, in order that

(1) Gal. iv, 19.

(2). 1 Cor. vi, 20.

(3) 1 Pet. 111, 15.

(4). As He Himself, speaking to His Father, says: «I sanctify myself for them, that they may be sanctified in truth,» i.e. "in Myself Who am the Eternal Truth,- according to St. Augustine's interpretation (*In Joan.* Tract. CVIII, n. 5). Cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, 1, 91.

(5). 1 Cor. i, 30.

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He may be sanctified in us (and our sanctification is the sanctification of Jesus in us), and that we may fulfil the admonition of St. Peter: 'Sanctify the Lord Jesus in your hearts.' (1) Now, all that is done by accustoming ourselves to see, to love, and to glorify this same Jesus in everything, and to do all our actions in His holiness. And that is what this book teaches by very easy, gentle, and potent means.

In the second place I call it *The Kingdom of Jesus in Christian Souls* because its design is not merely to propose to you very easy and efficacious means of causing Jesus to dwell within you in His Holiness, but also the means of causing Him fully to reign within you.» (2)

The author justifies this view of the Christian life by quoting numerous passages by St. John and by St. Paul, but he relies chiefly on the Apostle's teaching concerning the mystical body of Christ. This, of course, was that the faithful form one moral body with Our Lord, of which body He is the head, so that the Saviour has two bodies and two lives: His natural body that was derived from Mary, and His mystical body which is the Church redeemed at the price of His blood; similarly, His personal life of suffering which was spent on earth and now continues in heaven in glory, and His mystical life which He lives in His members and which

(1). 1 Pet. 111, 15.

(2). Here is how St. John Eudes understands the kingdom of Jesus in Souls: "Yes. Jesus is King He is your King and the King of all the hearts He has created But He only reigns in those in which sin, the world, and vanity are dead and in which pride, self, and the will are thoroughly subjugated, or at least so enfeebled that they do not prevent Him from being master, so that He has the keys of your dwelling, and His divine will is therein obeyed in all things and disposes of everything as it pleases. But the number of such hearts is very small." (*Le Coeur admirable*, Bk. III, ch. in, sect. 2.) Cf. *La Vie admirable de Marie des Vallées*, 13k. VIII, ch. iv (Quebec MS.).

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also begins with trials and ends in the beatitude of heaven.

The mystical Body of Christ.

This teaching delighted our Saint and, following the example of Bérulle and Condren, he made it the basis of his instructions on the Christian life. «He seems to delight," says one of his biographers, "in studying St. Paul's doctrine on the mystical Body of Christ, and he sees in the Church the unceasingly progressive development of this great body. For him, every Christian is above all else a member who, when he comes to take his place in the general body, must reproduce in himself the various mysteries that are accomplished in the entire body, just as they are accomplished in the actual Person of Jesus Christ. It was in order to bring out this aspect of the Christian life that he wrote *La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus.* » (1)

Generally spiritual writers consider it from another point of view. They see the Christian life in its internal principle, which is sanctifying grace and charity, and it is only accidentally and in passing that they mention St. Paul's teaching on the life of Jesus within us. This is true of St. Francis de Sales whose *Introduction to the Devout Life* and *Treatise on the Love of God* are full of the idea that the Christian life in all its degrees is nothing else but the love of God, and the object of these two well-known and valued books is simply to teach us to preserve, to increase, and to put into practice the divine charity. But St. John, on the contrary, always considers the Christian life in its relations to Jesus Christ. Whether he writes of prayer, of the Christian virtues, or of ordinary actions, he constantly

(1) *Le P. Eudes, ses vertus*, by P. Hérabourg. Ed. Le Doré, p. 26.

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returns to the principle that the divine life that we enjoy is the continuation and prolongation in each of us of the very life of Jesus, and, as we shall see, he would always have us act in Christ's name, with His dispositions and intentions, and in union with Him and with all the members of His mystical Body.(1)

Let us then carefully study the Saint's teaching on this important question.

A. INCORPORATION WITH JESUS BY BAPTISM

Baptism, by incorporating us with Jesus, initiates us into His life, and so St. John Eudes applies to baptism all his teachings on the Christian life. In almost all his writings he treats of this matter, (2) he even made it the subject of a separate book (*Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le Saint Baptême*), and always he insists on the close union established between Jesus and ourselves by this sacrament.

"In baptism," he writes in his *Entretiens intérieurs*, "God delivers us from the accursed alliance we had contracted with Satan and makes us enter into marvellous relations with Himself. . . . These relations are the noblest and the most perfect that could possibly be; for it is not merely a question of an alliance of

(1). These two points of view (which are not the only ones from which the matter may be considered) do not exclude each other. On the contrary, they are complementary to each other and we cannot without inconvenience neglect either. But the predominance given to one or other of them results in an appreciable modification of the interior life and stamps it with a particular character. Later on we shall see that St. John, like St. Francis de Sales, sees in the Christian life a life of love for God and one's neighbour; but he looks upon it above all as a participation in the life of Jesus.

(2). Particularly in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, the *Entretiens intérieurs*, and the *Regulae Vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*.

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friend with friend, of brother with brother, of child with parent, or of wife with husband, but of members with their head. and that is the most intimate, the closest union possible."

Unity by Baptism.

But he also takes care to point out that the union of head and members in the human body, close though it be, is but a figure and a shadow of the union of Jesus with the members of His mystical body, because the material world is only a figure of the spiritual world, and nature but a shadow of grace: "And besides that," he adds, "the union of the vine-branch with the plant of the vine and of members of the body with their corporal head is in conformity with the quality, and the base and material nature, of the things which that union joins together. But the union of the members of Christ with their Head is

conformable to the excellence and the holy and divine nature of the things that it joins together; and consequently the alliance that Christians have with Jesus Christ excels the union between the head and the members of a human body by as much as this divine Head and these holy members are exalted above the natural head and its members."

But St. John goes even further, and reminds us that "the relations we contract by baptism with Jesus Christ and, through Him, with the Eternal Father, are so lofty and so divine that they are compared by Christ Himself to the unity existing between the Father and the Son: *Sint unum sicut et nos unum sumus, Ego in eis et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum.* (1) And thus the unity of the Father and the Son exemplifies our

(1). John xvii, 21-22.

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union with God by baptism, and this same union is a vivid representation of that adorable unity."

Describing the union established by baptism between Jesus and ourselves, St. John also observes that it is based on the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ and operated by the Holy Ghost: "That same Holy Spirit who is the unity of the Father and the Son . . . is the sacred bond of our association and union with Christ and through Christ with the Eternal Father."(1) Thence the Saint concludes that baptism unites us to Jesus and, through Him, to the Father, in the closest union that can possibly be conceived after the hypostatic union of Christ's human nature with the Eternal Word. Rightly understood, is it not an image and even, so far as is possible, an extension in each of us of the union of the Word with human nature?

Consequences of

this union.

Now the consequences of our incorporation with Jesus are numerous. St. John specially stresses the principal ones: 'I beg you to consider,' he wrote in *Le Coeur admirable* "that Our Lord Jesus Christ is your true Head, and that you are one of His members, and that from that fact there flow five important results: (a) That He stands to you as the head to its members, so that everything in Him is yours, His spirit, His heart, His body, His mind, and that you must make use of them as your own for the purpose of serving, praising, loving and glorifying God. (b) That you stand to Him as do the members to the head, for which reason He ardently desires to make use of all that is in you for the service and the glory of His Father, as of things that are His own. (c) That not only does he so stand in (1). *Oeuvres Complètes*, II, pp. 184 sq.

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regard to you, but also He wishes to be in you, to be living and reigning within you, as the head lives and reigns in its members; and that He desires all that is in Him to live and reign in you: that His mind should live and reign in your mind, that His heart should live and reign in your heart, that all the powers of His soul, all His interior and exterior senses and all His passions should live and reign in the faculties of your soul, in your interior and exterior senses, and in your passions, so that . . . the life of Jesus may visibly appear even in your flesh and in your external deportment. (d) That not only do you stand in a particular relationship to the Son of God, but that you must be in Him, as the members are in their head, that all that is in you must be incorporated in Him and receive life and direction from Him, that there is no true life for you save only in Him alone . . . that outside Him there is only death and perdition for you, that He must be the sole principle of all the movements, customs, and functions of your life, and that finally you must live only for Him, in Him and by Him, in accordance with the divine words: *Nemo enim vestrum sibi vivit et nemo sibi moritur. Sive enim vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus. In hoc enim Christus mortuus est et resurrexit, ut et mortuorum et vivorum, dominetur.*' (1)

That you are one with this same Jesus, as the members are one with their head, and that consequently you must have but the one mind, the one soul, the one life, the one will, the one sentiment, the one heart . . . and that He Himself must be your mind, your heart, your love, your life, your all."(2)

Another consequence of our incorporation in Christ

(1). Rom. xiv, 7-9.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 113.

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is that we associate ourselves with His relations and take our place in His genealogy and His parentage, so that His Father becomes our father. By creation we were servants of God, by baptism we become His children. He would have us call Him "father," and this name is no vain title, for at baptism He infuses into us a new life which is a participation in the life of His Divine Son, and He extends to us the love He bears for this well-beloved Son. The Saviour Himself has told us as much in express terms in the beautiful prayer He addressed to His Father after the Last Supper: "*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them, as thou hast also loved me.*" (1) St. John delighted to savour these last words, and he translated them in his own way when he said that the Father loves us "with the very heart" with which He loves His Son. He added that after regenerating us the Heavenly Father continues to bear us in His Heart and upon His breast, and in this connection he loved to quote the lofty words of Isaias: "*Wearken unto me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are carried by my bowels, are borne up by my womb. Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear: I will carry and will save.*" (2)

Baptism and the Holy spirit.

And after giving us His Father to be our own father, the Divine Master gives us His Holy Spirit to be our spirit. Already, in the Old Testament, God had promised

(1). John xvii, 23.

(2). Isaias xlvi, 3-4. Cf. The Office of the Feast of the Heart of Jesus, the 2nd lesson for the octave day; and *Entretiens intérieurs*, No. 9.

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ised us this Holy Spirit(1); but at baptism He communicates It to us to be, in some sort, our spirit and our heart and to make us share in the most intimate virtues and dispositions of Jesus.

"Being children of God," says St. John Eudes, "and being but one with the Son of God as the members with their head, it necessarily follows that we ought to be animated by the same spirit. Therefore St. Paul says: '*And because you are sons, God hath sent the spirit of his Son into your hearts*' (2); and elsewhere: '*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*' (3) And so the Holy Ghost has been given to us to be the spirit of our spirit, the heart of our heart and the soul of our soul, and to be ever with us and in us, not merely as in His temple, but as in a part of His body, i.e. in a part of the body of Jesus Christ, which is His and must be animated by Him, since the members and all the parts of the body must be animated by the same spirit as that which animates the head."(4)

Finally Jesus makes us members of His family, giving us His Mother to be our mother, His Church to be our second mother, His angels and saints to be our brothers and protectors. And, in fact, from the moment of our regeneration in the baptismal font the Blessed Virgin and Holy Church both

show us (each in their own way) a truly maternal tenderness and solicitude, while the angels and saints for their part watch over us as over their own brethren. And constantly this consoling teaching is to be found in the Saint's writings.

These wonderful privileges are accompanied by an

- (1). Gal. iv, 6.
- (2). Rom. viii, 9.
- (3). OEuvres complètes, II, p. 172.
- (4). Ezech. xxxvi. Cf. the Epistle of the Mass for the Heart of Jesus and the 1st lesson of the Office.

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Interior purification.

interior the Christian the living representation of Jesus. For at baptism the Divine Master purifies us from the stain of original sin and, if necessary, from any actual sins that we have committed; He gives us a new being by clothing us in sanctifying grace, that grace which St. Peter calls a "participation in the very nature of God." To this He adds infused virtues which, like faculties in the natural order, put us in a position to fulfil the acts of the super natural life, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost the object of which is to make us susceptible and docile to the action of the Holy Ghost. All these gifts, which theologians compare to the sails that enable a ship to respond to the breezes that catch them, are at the same time bonds which complete our union with Christ, perfections which make our souls the image of His own, and principles of activity which all contribute, each in its own way, to the blossoming of His life in our own.

And then the action of Jesus within us is completed by the workings of actual grace which stirs us and helps us to practise the Christian virtues, for "like the vine in its branches and the head in its members, the Divine Master never ceases to pour into the souls of the just a vivifying force that precedes, accompanies, and follows all their virtuous acts".(1)

And yet all that is but a beginning and a preparation: eternal happiness is the goal to which Jesus wishes to guide us. He awaits us in heaven to associate us with His glorious life and to make us His co-heirs, the heirs of His Father. As members of Jesus Christ we can effectively have no other end than His, and this

- (1). *Conc. Trid., sess. VI, ch. xvi.*

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end is participation in the intimate life of God, and in the happiness that He finds in the contemplation and love of His divine perfections. Thence it follows, as St. John Eudes remarked, that baptism, by incorporating us with Jesus and giving us, in Him and by Him, a new being and a new life, introduces us into a totally new world.

"God," he says, "has placed the Christian in a new world. What is this new world of the Christian? It is God with all His perfections; it is the bosom of God; it is Jesus Christ the Man-God, considered in Himself, in His life, in His mysteries, and also in His body which is the Church Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering. That is the world of the new man.... In the world of Adam there are skies, stars, and elements. In the Christian's world the sky is God and the bosom of God; the sun is Jesus; the moon is Mary; the planets and stars are the saints; the earth is the Sacred Humanity of Jesus; the water is Christian grace; the air is the Holy Spirit; fire is love and charity; the bread that we eat is the Body of Christ; the wine that we drink is His blood; the clothes that we wear are Jesus Christ: *Quicumque enim*

in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis. There are no poor and no plebeians in the Christian's world; all true Christians are infinitely rich: *Omnia vestra sunt.* They are all noble, all princes, and all kings."(1)

B. THE BAPTISMAL VOW

In return for the benefits which it brings us, our incorporation with Jesus imposes on us the obligation

(1). *Œuvres complètes*, II, p. 179.

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of dwelling in Him and continuing His life, as do the members in regard to their head.

"Jesus, Son of God and Son of man," says St. John, "being not only our God, Saviour, and Sovereign Lord, but also our head and we His members ... it necessarily follows that, just as the members are animated by the spirit of their head and live with his life, so we also must be animated with the spirit of Jesus, live His life, walk in His ways, adopt His sentiments and inclinations, and do all our actions with the dispositions with which He performs His; in a word we must continue and fulfil the life, the religion and the devotion to which He consecrated Himself while upon earth."(1)

To that we formally pledge ourselves, either in person or by our god-parents, when we receive baptism, and it is a solemn engagement which St. John stresses strongly in several of his works.

"Ye must," he writes in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, "have a close and most intimate union with Jesus throughout our life and adhere perfectly to Him in all our actions. That is the solemn vow and public profession that we make in the presence of the whole Church at baptism. For then, as we are told by St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Catechism of the Council of Trent, (2)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, p. 2, n. 1.

(2). St. Augustine: "Voventur autem omnia quae offeruntur Deo, maxime Sancti altaris oblatio; quae, sacramento praedicatur nostrum illud votum maximum, quo nos vivimus in Christo esse mansuros, utique in compage corporis Christi- (Epist. 149-alias 59-ad Paulinum n. 16). And St. Thomas says: "In baptismo vovent homines abrenuntiare diabolo et pompis ejus et fidem servare.... Sub voto baptizatorum cadit abrenuntiare pompis diaboli et fidem Christi servare" (Summa, IIa IIae, 88, 1 ad primum). The Catechism tells us: "Aequum est nos ipsos, non secus ac, mancipia, Redemptori nostro et Domino in perpetuum addicere et consecrare. Et quidem, cum baptismo initiaremur, ante ecclesiae fores id professi sumus: declaravimus enim nos Satanae et mundo renuntiare, et Jesu Christo totos nos tradere. Quod si ut christianae militae adscriberemur, tam sancta et solemnem professione nos ipsos Domino nostro devovimus; quo supplicio digni erimus, si . . . ex mundi et diaboli praeceptis ac legibus vixerimus" (*Catec. Conc. Trid.*, p. 1, a. 2, n. 18-19). Cf. Bérulle, *Narré*, n. xxiv, Migne, col 615.

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we solemnly vow to renounce Satan and all his works and to adhere to Christ, as do the members to their head, and to give ourselves up entirely to Him so as to dwell in Him. But to profess this is to profess to be faithful to His dispositions and intentions, to His laws and maxims, to His spirit and guidance, to His life, His qualities, and His virtues, and indeed to everything that He has done and suffered. . . . In a word, *Christianismus est Professio vitae Christi*, Christianity is a profession of the life of Christ, as St. Gregory of Nyssa tell us. (1) And St. Bernard assures us that Our Lord does not admit among His professed followers those who do not live according to His life: *Non inter suos deputat Professores quos vitae suae cernit desertores.*"

And in another work he writes: (2) "Men you have entered into alliance with God by the holy contract of baptism you have offered, given, and consecrated yourself to His divine Majesty, and you are obliged to two important things. For, firstly, you have promised by the mouths of your godparents to renounce Satan and all his pomps and works. Secondly, you have promised to adhere to Christ by means of faith, hope and charity . . . and to follow Him not merely as a servant follows his master, but as a member follows its head, and consequently to live with His life.... For as the life of the arm is a continuation and extension of

(1). *Initio operis ad Harmonium*. (Marginal note by the author.)

(2). *Le Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu*, ch. iv.

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the life of the head, so the Christian life is a continuation of the life of Jesus upon earth. So that whoever has been grafted on to this divine tree and incorporated with this adorable head by holy baptism must live with His life and walk in His footsteps: *Qui dicit se in ipso manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare.*"

The offering Christ made of Himself.

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint analyses the profession made by Jesus on His entry into the world, and he observes that Jesus made this profession in His name and in the name of all the members of His mystical Body. And so, in becoming members of that body, we at least implicitly make the same profession. He reduces this to three points:

"Christ devoted Himself to fulfilling perfectly the will of His Father, and in that He found all His happiness.

"He devoted Himself to serving His Father and to serving mankind for love of His Father, choosing the lowly and abject status of a servant so as the better to give honour and homage to the supreme majesty of His Father by this abasement. He devoted Himself to loving and glorifying His Father and to causing Him to be loved and glorified in this world, to doing all His actions for the pure glory and love of His Father and to doing them with the holiest, purest, and most divine dispositions. . . .

«Finally He devoted Himself to being entirely immolated and sacrificed for the sole glory of His Father, desiring to be a victim and to suffer in this character every kind of contempt, humiliation, privation, interior and exterior mortification, and lastly a cruel and shameful death...

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Consequent obligations on our part.

"Consequently by vowing to adhere to Jesus and to dwell in Him, which, as St. Augustine says,(1) is the greatest of our vows, *votum maximum nostrum*, we undertake three great obligations, most holy and divine, on which we should frequently reflect:

"1. We oblige ourselves, with Christ, never to do our own will, but always to submit ourselves to the will of God and to obey everybody else in whatsoever is not contrary to God's law, finding therein all our happiness.

"2. We profess ourselves the servants of God, of His Son, and of all the members of Christ, in accordance with St. Paul's phrase: *Nos servos vestros per Jesum*, (2) and in consequence of this no Christian has anything of his own, any more than a slave has, and has no right to make any use whatever of himself, the members of his body, the powers of his soul, his life, time, or temporal goods, save only for Jesus Christ and His members, i.e., all those who believe in Him.

"3. We oblige ourselves to be victims continually sacrificed for the glory of God, *spirituales hostias*, as St. Peter says. *Obsecro vos, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem*, is the entreaty of St. Paul.(3) And what is here said of our bodies must also be said of our souls, and therefore we are obliged to glorify and love God with all the powers of our bodies and souls, to do so to the utmost of our ability, to cause Him to be glorified and loved as much as we possibly can, in all our actions and affairs to seek only His pure glory and pure love, to live in such a way that our lives may be a

(3). Loc. cit.

(2) 11 Cor. iv, 5.

(3). Rom. xii, 1.

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continual sacrifice of praise and love for Him, and to be ready to be immolated, consumed and annihilated for His glory." (1)

And so St. John concludes from the baptismal vow that the business of the Christian life is to bring about the formation of Jesus within us. ---The mystery of mysteries and work of works," he says, "is the formation of Jesus, as is indicated for us by St. Paul's words: *Filioli, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis*. (2) That is the greatest mystery and the greatest work done in heaven and on earth by the most exalted persons on earth and in heaven, viz.: the Eternal Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Most Blessed Virgin and Holy Church.

The formation of Jesus within us.

"It is the greatest action done by the Eternal Father in all eternity during which He is continually occupied in producing His Son in Himself. And outside Himself He has done nothing more admirable than the formation of His Son within the most pure Virgin at the moment of the Incarnation. So also the most excellent work performed on earth by the Son of God is the formation of Himself within His Holy Mother and in His Eucharist. It is also the most noble operation by the Holy Ghost who formed Jesus within the womb of the Virgin, who, in her turn, never did anything, and never will do anything, more lofty than her co-operation in this divine and wonderful formation of Jesus within her. Similarly it is the holiest and greatest work performed by Holy Church which has no more important work than the production of Christ in the Eucharist by

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, Part II, n. xxxviii. Cf. Part VII, n. xiii.

(2). Gal. iv, 19.

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the mouth of her priests, in a certain and admirable manner, and the formation of Him in the hearts of her children, for in all her functions she has no other end than the formation of Jesus in the souls of all Christians.

"And so, our principal desire, care, and occupation must be to form Jesus within us, i.e., to make Him live and reign within us so that His spirit, devotion, sentiments, inclinations, virtues, and

dispositions are supreme in us. To this end all our pious exercises must tend; that is the work that God places in our hands and at which He would have us labour continually."(1)

C. RENOUNCING THE OLD ADAM (2)

If we are to live the life of Jesus we must above all renounce sin and all that leads to it. Hence we must renounce the devil, the world and especially that which Scripture calls *concupiscence, the flesh, or the old man*, which means everything in us that is vicious. For not only did the sin of Adam strip human nature of the supernatural gifts with which it had been endowed by God, it also perverted it, thereby depriving man of his primitive rectitude, which is the reason why our natural inclinations are now disordered and tend without regulation to what is inferior. This depraving of our nature constitutes a permanent obstacle to our welfare and a continual incitement to evil, so that there is within us, in our sensuality and pride, our obstinacy and self-will, and generally in everything in us that comes from ourselves, the principle of all sins, the germ

(1). *Royaume de Jésus, II*, n. xl.

(2). On this question see *Le Royaume de Jésus, II*, n. vi-ix, xxv-xxviii; and *Méditations sur l'humilité*, as well as *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, I, ch. ii.

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of all vices and, as St. John Eudes says, a veritable "Antichrist."

The corruption of nature by sin.

"If we look at ourselves in the light of God, « he energetically says, we shall see that of ourselves,' as sinners, we are so many incarnate devils, so many Lucifers and Antichrists, having nothing in ourselves, of ourselves, that is not contrary to Christ; we shall see that we bear within us a demon, a Lucifer, an Antichrist, namely our own will, our pride, our self-love, which are in fact worse than all the demons, worse than Lucifer, worse than Antichrist, because the malice of all these comes from self-will, pride and self-love. We shall see that of ourselves we are a hell full of horror, of malediction, of sin, and of abomination; that in principle and in germ we have within us all the sins of earth and hell, since the corruption sown in us by original sin is the root and source of every kind of sin ...; we shall see, too, that in consequence of that, if God did not bear us continually in the arms of His mercy, if He did not perform a perpetual miracle to keep us from falling into sin, we would precipitate ourselves every hour into an abyss of all sorts of iniquity.» 2

(1). By this expression, which constantly recurs in his writings when treating of renunciation or humility, St. John distinguishes very clearly that within us which is the work of God and that which is the work of Adam or our own, i.e. the flesh, concupiscence, or the old man. The latter, which is the sequel of sin, must be destroyed as completely as possible; while the other, on the contrary, has to be consecrated to God and employed in His service.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus, II*, n. xxvi. The gravity of the corruption of nature caused by the sin of Adam is disputed. Nowadays, when naturalism prevails, the tendency is to belittle it; whereas in the seventeenth century it seems to have been sometimes exaggerated. However that may be, it is obvious from the passage just quoted and from others that we will later quote, that our Saint, like most of his contemporaries, extends the corruption of nature by original sin as far as orthodoxy allows.

**Hence the
renouncing
ourselves.**

It follows from this corruption of nature by sin that our only way of salvation is to renounce ourselves and to give our necessity of selves to Jesus so that we may act under His influence. St. John never ceases to repeat this; he would have us make constant efforts to combat the instincts of depraved nature which are the great obstacle to the life of Jesus within us. And as these instincts are part of ourselves 'are indeed ourselves as deformed by sin, he urges us to labour unwearingly to go out from ourselves, to strip ourselves of ourselves and, as he says in his vigorous language, "annihilate ourselves."

"We must labour," he says,---to annihilate ourselves, i.e., our own feelings, self-will, self-love, pride and vanity, all our perverse inclinations and habits, all the desires and instincts of depraved nature, and everything that is of ourselves. For since we have of ourselves nothing in us that is not depraved and corrupted by sin, and is consequently contrary to Christ and opposed to His glory and love, everything must be destroyed and consumed so that Jesus Christ may perfectly live and reign within us."

And he adds: «This is the first principle and the first step of the Christian life, and is what is called in Scripture and the writings of the Fathers 'losing oneself,' 'dying to self,' and renouncing self. It must be one of our chief cares, one of the principal exercises to which we must give ourselves by the practice of abnegation, humiliation, and both interior and exterior mortification, for it is one of the most powerful means of forming and establishing Jesus within us.» (1)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xli.

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So, too, in *Le Coeur admirable*, he writes: "Whoever would find a place in the true earthly Paradise, i.e., in the Paradise of the Second Adam which is the Heart of His most holy Mother, must desert the race and genealogy of his first father and enter that of his second. He must cease to be a son of Adam that he may become a child of Jesus, and must die to the corrupted and depraved life of the old man, to his evil and perverse spirit, his irregular inclinations, and all that comes from himself, so that he may live by the holy and heavenly life of the new man, may be animated by his spirit and be guided by his sentiments and inclinations: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*. This death seems to be terrifying, this flaming sword in the hand of the cherubim seems formidable, but its effect is very different to its appearance. For it is a sword of love, the sword that has wounded and slain all true lovers of Jesus, that is, all the saints. It wounded them that it might heal them, it killed them to bring them to life; it made them die to sin, to the world, to themselves, and to everything that was not God, so as to make them live with the life of God. It struck them, in fact, with a desirable and precious death: *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus*, with a death which is not death but is life and the source of life."(1)

**How to effect
this.**

This annihilation of all that is vicious in us is the work of a lifetime and calls for incessant efforts, for the flesh dies but slowly and it is only the saints who succeed in overcoming it completely. And so it does not suffice to renounce our corrupt nature from time to time, we must, as Père Eudes always explained,

(1) *OEuvres complètes*, VI, pp. 240-241.

live in the habitual practice of renunciation and mortification, which alone can lead us to durable results.

And so that we may bring this conflict with the flesh to a happy conclusion St. John advises us to begin all our actions with a formal act of renunciation followed by an act of oblation to Jesus: "At the beginning of your actions," he writes, "be careful to raise your heart to Jesus and to tell Him that you renounce yourself, your self-love and pride, i.e. all your own particular dispositions and intentions. And tell Him also that you give yourself to Him, to His holy love and His divine Spirit, and that you wish to perform all your actions in the dispositions and with the intentions with which He did His. By this means you will give Him much glory in all your undertakings and in a little time will advance far in the ways of grace."(1)

Every time that Père Eudes puts forward a method for the carrying out of a pious exercise or a virtuous act he introduces those two acts of renunciation of self and of oblation to Jesus, as is proved by a glance at *Le Royaume de Jésus* or the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, or by studying in his *Manuel de Prières* the various ways of beginning and ending prayer and the acts suggested for the examination before midday.

But we must not forget that however great our efforts may be, they can but second the action of grace without which they would remain sterile. In the supernatural order we must await everything from Jesus, even the destruction of the obstacles that oppose His action, and that is why P&e Eudes, while advising us to do everything that depends on us for

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. 1.

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conquering the old man, urges us to ask Jesus to deliver us and to free us from him. And so he says: "Annihilate yourself often at the feet of Jesus, annihilate all that is in you, and beg Him by the great love with which He annihilated Himself to use . . . His great power to annihilate our old selves and to establish Himself within us, saying to Him: 'O Good Jesus, I adore Thee in Thy divine annihilation as described by Thy Apostle: *Exinanivit semetipsum*. I adore Thy great and omnipotent love for Thy Father and for us, which has thus annihilated Thee. I give myself and abandon myself entirely to the power of this divine love, so that it may annihilate me totally. O most powerful and good Jesus, use Thy great power and infinite goodness to annihilate me and to establish Thyself within me, thereby to root out my self-love, my own will, my pride, and all my passions, sentiments and inclinations, so that Thy holy love, Thy sacred will, Thy divine spirit, Thy profound humility and all Thy other virtues may reign within me."(1)

Similarly in *Le Coeur admirable* are these words: "O Jesus, it is with all our heart that we renounce our first father (Adam), who is not our true father since he bequeathed us death before giving us life. Thou art our true Father, Thou who has suffered death in order to give us life; and we wish to be Thy true children. But this we cannot be if we do not cease to be children of Adam, and if he does not die within us. O Jesus, Thou art the cherubim placed by God Thy Father at the gate of the second Paradise; the flaming sword is

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xli. Compare this prayer with the prayer *Contere prorsus in nobis* which we recite before the midday examen. Cf. *OEuvres complètes*, III, p. 287.

in Thy hand. Strike, then, strike with that sword the old Adam, the man of sin and of perdition, he who is directly contrary to Thee and who consequently is a true Antichrist. If this Antichrist does not die in us Thou canst not live within us, O Jesus, and Thou wilt live within us only in the measure in which he dies. Slay him, then, within us, so that Thou mayest live completely in us and that we may say with Thy Apostle: *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*" (1)

The law of mortification obviously extends to the whole of man. The body requires to be mastered as well as the soul, but as St. John is generally addressing pious souls to whom corporal mortification is familiar he seldom speaks of other than spiritual mortification. It is our pride, self-love, and self-will that he would have us attack, and that is the more understandable in that the whole of his spiritual teaching aims at causing the spirit of Jesus, the love of Jesus and the divine will to reign within us.

D. THE OBLATION OF SELF TO JESUS

By killing the old Adam within us, renunciation clears away the chief obstacle to the life of Jesus in us, but for the exercising and developing of this life we must remain united to the divine Master, submit ourselves to His action and let ourselves be guided by Him. That is what is implied by that adherence or oblation so much stressed by writers of the French School.

"Under the present dispensation," writes Bérulle, If mankind is sanctified outside itself, it is sanctified in

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, VI, p. 241.

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Jesus Christ. *Et secundum mensuram donationis Christi*. . . . Every man . . . must be detached from himself and emptied of self, he must be appropriated to Jesus, subsisting in Jesus, grafted to Jesus, living in Jesus, he must work in Jesus, and fructify in Jesus."(1)

Close adherence to Christ.

Elsewhere he exhorts his readers: "Give yourself entirely to Christ's spirit which impresses on souls a living image and perfect resemblance of its own conditions on earth. There He is unknown, abased and humiliated there He is a captive, suffering and dependent and He well knows how to work in us through His spirit . . . producing a life of suffering and subjection, of captivity and dependence, thereby honouring His condition in the conditions to which He is pleased to reduce us and honouring Himself in us. *Open your soul to His operations, abandon it entirely to His intentions, and knowing your own acts to be too feeble to be able to honour Him, give yourself up to the efficacious power of His spirit, so that He may deign to make use of you to honour Himself by means of His power and operations.*"(2)

And again he writes: "Jesus alone is our fulfilment and we must bind ourselves to Him as being by His divinity the foundation of our existence, by His humanity our link with God; the spirit of our spirit, the life of our life, the fullness of our capacity. Our first knowledge must be that of our own deficient and imperfect condition ' and our first movement must be to Jesus as our all in all. And in this search for Jesus, this adherence to Him, this profound and continual dependence upon Him, is our life, our strength and all

(1). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 914.

(2). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 1054.

our power to act. Never must we act save as united to Him, directed by Him, and from Him drawing our inspiration to think, to speak, and to work, so that without Him we can neither exist nor labour for our salvation."(1)

St. John echoes his master: "We must acquire a most intimate union with Jesus, a most perfect adherence and application to Him throughout our life, in all our exercises, and in all our actions."(2) Plainly what the Saint asks of us is not mere habitual adherence to Christ by sanctifying grace, but an actual adherence expressly renewed in each of our acts of devotion, and even in everything we do. And this adherence consists of two acts which he never separates from each other. The first is an act of oblation which consists in offering ourselves, giving ourselves, abandoning ourselves to Jesus and to His holy Spirit; while the second is a prayer by which we formally ask Him to take possession of us and to make us live with His life.

Consider, for example, the first disposition that he demands for prayer: "We are most unworthy to appear before the face of God, to see Him or to be seen or heard by Him, and . . . of ourselves we can have no good thought or perform any good act in the least pleasing to Him. Therefore, we must annihilate ourselves at His feet, giving ourselves to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and begging Him that He Himself will annihilate us and will establish Himself in us, so that it may be He Himself who prays within us.'(3)

So, too, with the practice of virtues: "Give yourself

(1). *OEuvres*, Migne, col. 118 1. This passage and those that precede it are taken from Bremond's *L'Ecole française*, pp. 131 sq.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. XXXV111.

(3). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xvi.

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often to Jesus," says the Saint, "with a lively desire to practise this virtue with all the perfection that He asks of you, and beg Him to destroy in you all that is contrary to this same virtue, and to establish Himself in you for His pure glory."(1)

The Saint does not use different language when treating of the way of honouring Christ's mysteries: "We must," he tells us, "give ourselves to Jesus if we would honour the mystery we have to honour in every way that He desires. And when we have used all the capacity that it pleases Him to give us for honouring this same mystery, we must beg Him to deign Himself to use the power and holy inventions of His spirit and His love for honouring Himself in us. For this end we must ask Him to destroy in us everything that is contrary to the glory of this mystery, to produce in us by this mystery all the graces and effects that He desires to produce in us, and to rule us in accordance with the spirit and grace of this mystery. Similarly we must beseech Him to impress upon our souls an image and participation of this mystery, to consummate this mystery in us, and finally to accomplish all the designs that He has in regard to us in this same mystery, granting that we may do and suffer all that pleases Him for this end.'(2)

We have already pointed out the necessity of self renunciation and of making an act of adherence to Jesus: only this is capable of delivering us from the influence of the old Adam and of destroying him within us. Listen to the Saint's recommendation on this point:

"Renounce yourself entirely, then; renounce your

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxiii.

(2). *Ibid.*, III, n. ix.

Self-immolation.

self-will and all the power and capability that you think you feel in yourself. For all the power that Adam left in human nature is but impotence; the feeling of it within us is but illusion, presumption, and a false opinion of our selves; and we can never have true power and real liberty to do good save by renouncing ourselves and departing from ourselves and from all that is our own, so as to live in the spirit and the virtue of Jesus Christ.

"And when you have made this renunciation, then adore Christ, give yourself entirely to Him, and beg Him to take possession of all the rights of Adam within you and your own also, since He has acquired the rights of sinners by His blood and by His death; ask Him therefore to be pleased to dwell within you in place of Adam., to free you from your own nature, and to take all that you are for His own use. Protest to Him that you desire to lay in His hands all that you are, and that you wish to relinquish your own spirit (which is a spirit of pride and vanity) together with all your intentions, inclinations and dispositions, so as henceforth to live only in His spirit, in His intentions, and in His divine and adorable inclinations and dispositions.

"Beg Him, therefore, to draw you out of yourself as from a fire by His wonderful mercy, so as to bring you into Himself and to establish you in His spirit of humility, and that, not for your interest or satisfaction, but for His pleasure and for His pure glory. Ask Him also to use His divine power to destroy in you your pride and not to rely on your infirmity for establishing His glory by the way of perfect humility within you. And remembering that, of yourself, as a sinner, you are an incarnate devil, a Lucifer and an Antichrist . . .

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by reason of the iniquity, pride and self-love which is always in each one of us, place yourself often, but especially at the beginning of the day, at the feet of Jesus and His Holy Mother, saying to them:

'O Jesus, O Mother of Jesus, hold fast this miserable demon beneath your feet, crush this serpent, kill this Antichrist with the breath of your mouth, bind this Lucifer so that he may do nothing to-day contrary to your holy glory.' "(1)

After that we are not surprised to find constantly in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, the *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, and the *Manuel de piété*, acts of oblation to Jesus accompanied by the prayer we have just quoted, and preceded by an act of self-renunciation. Such acts as these, when they express and (by reviving) strengthen the intimate dispositions of the soul, are for St. John, as for Cardinal de Bérulle, the chief means to be used for forming Jesus within us and for living His life.

**Till we have
offered ourselves
completely to
Christ we can do
nothing.**

Not that the Saint dispenses us from the efforts necessary for forming us to the practice of piety and Christian virtues; on the contrary, he would have us do everything that depends on our selves for arriving at that goal, striving for our part as though we had nothing to expect on the part of God. But the essential thing in his eyes is that we should break away from our own selves and offer ourselves to Jesus, who is the principal author of all the good that we do. Our own task is to place ourselves at His

disposition as docile instruments to be used at His pleasure; not to oppose His workings, but meekly to follow His inspirations and to let our

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxviii.

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selves be guided by Him after the fashion of a child with its mother. That is the best way in which human liberty can co-operate in the work of sanctification that Jesus would accomplish in us. Without despising particular methods, St. John only gives a secondary importance to them, and in *Le Royaume de Jésus* he does not hesitate to write that "The practice of practices, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions is not to be attached to any particular practice or devotion, but to take great care in all your devotions to give yourself to the Holy Spirit of Jesus . . . so that He may have full power and liberty to act in you according to His desires and to instil into you such dispositions and sentiments of devotion as He may wish, guiding you by whatever ways He pleases." (1)

E. IMITATION OF JESUS (2)

If Jesus is to live in us it does not suffice that we submit ourselves to the action of His grace; we must, as we have said, co-operate with it to the best of our ability, striving to conform ourselves to the divine head of whom we have the honour to be members. St. John presents Our Lord to us as the *Book of Life*, on which we must always keep our eyes, as the *Example* that we must copy, as the *Prototype* whose characteristics we must reproduce, and as the *Supreme Law* to which we must submit all our actions.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. xviii.

(2). Some writers have distinguished imitation from adherence, as being two things that are mutually exclusive. They are certainly two distinct things, but they complement and require each other. Adherence is the oblation of self to Jesus; it submits us to His grace, it even anticipates this by offering us to its action. Imitation is a free and considered act by which, under the action of grace, we strive to enter into the thoughts and sentiments of Jesus and to regulate our lives by His. By the first of these we offer ourselves to Jesus in order that He may *impress* on us an image of His life; but by the second, we strive with the help of grace to *express* in ourselves the life of Jesus. But it goes without saying that adherence itself like every supernatural act, is due to the action of divine grace.

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It is true that all spiritual writers recommend the imitation of Jesus Christ, but many of them, in tracing the rules of Christian life and perfection, confine themselves to setting out the evangelical precepts and counsels, and citing the examples afforded by the Saviour's life rather as a stimulant to virtue than as a rule of life. This was not Père Eudes' method. Like Bérulle and Condren, he never separated the teaching of Jesus from His Person and His life. From the very start he places his readers in the presence of the Divine Master and demands that they order their lives in harmony with His.

Conformity

**with the dispositions
of Our Lord.**

Above all, it is necessary that we learn to think and to desire as He does; that is what St. Paul demands in the famous words that our Saint loved to quote, and which he applied to the cult of the Sacred Heart: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu*, clothe yourself with the sentiments of Christ. The Saviour's thoughts become our own by faith which is a participation in His knowledge and which makes us see things with His eyes. By hatred of sin and by renunciation of the world and self we enter into His feelings. Those, in fact, were the dominating sentiments entertained in the holy soul of Jesus by the

immense love for His Father with which it burned. There, then, is where our conformity with the Divine Master must begin, and together with prayer, which was the constant

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occupation of the Incarnate Word, this constitutes, in the eyes of St. John, the foundations of the Christian life.

These fundamental dispositions sketch, as it were, the outlines of the image of Jesus in the Christian soul, but the picture is completed in the soul by the industry with which it clothes itself with the Saviour's virtues for the Christian virtues, are, for P&e Eudes, only the continuation and extension in each one of us of the virtues of Jesus. He would not have us consider them merely in themselves, in their intrinsic excellence, as do the pagan philosophers; it is in Jesus, who is their principle and complete model, that we must study them, and it is for the purpose of making ourselves similar to Him and for glorifying His Father, as He Himself did, that we must strive to practise them.

Conformity with the Divine Master is brought about in us by our participation in the various conditions and mysteries of His life. St. John, in fact, teaches that the mysteries of Jesus, as well as His life and virtues, must be renewed and completed in Christians: "It is a truth worthy of notice," he writes,---that the mysteries of Jesus are not yet in a state of perfect completion and accomplishment; for though they are perfect and complete in the Person of Jesus, we who are His members do not possess them perfectly, nor does His Church, which is His mystical Body. For the Son of God intends that we and all His Church should share, extend and continue the mystery of His Incarnation, and those of His birth, and His childhood . . . and all His other mysteries."(1)

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. iv.

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Meditation on the mysteries of Christ.

At bottom the whole of the Christian life is a participation in the Saviour's mysteries. Mystically dead with Him at Holy baptism, we have with Him to lead a new and heavenly life. Whatever the circumstances in which we find ourselves we must spiritually conform to the Saviour's mysteries by applying ourselves to expressing in our lives the virtues which shone so brilliantly in each of those mysteries. Moreover, the Saint advises us to meditate assiduously on the mysteries of Jesus; and, as we have said, he counsels us not to limit our reflections to exterior facts which only give the external appearance of the mysteries, but to penetrate their spirit and roots by considering the thoughts, affections, and interior occupations of Jesus in the various mysteries, as well as the special grace attached to each of them and the fruits that we should acquire from them. In short, to follow the true rule of Christian life we must go to the very Heart of Jesus and, so far as possible, examine its intimate dispositions: "Jesus," says St. John, "gave me His Heart to be ... the model and rule of my life and of my actions. I wish to keep my eyes on this rule and to study it carefully, so as to follow it faithfully."(1)

Furthermore, as we are members of Jesus Christ and continuators of His life, we must, according to St. John, always and everywhere look upon ourselves "as His representatives," and do each of our actions, whether small or great, "in His name and in His spirit," i.e. "with His intentions and dispositions."

Many spiritual writers advise us, before taking any

(1). *OEuvres complètes*, VIII, p. 318.

What would Jesus do in our place?

action, to put ourselves mentally in the presence of death or of eternity, and by this means the thought of our last end becomes the rule and test of the whole moral life. Certainly this is an excellent way of sanctifying our actions, and Père Eudes does not fail to recommend it. But he prefers that at every occurrence we should ask ourselves what Jesus would do in our place, and to act accordingly: "Christians," he writes, "being members of Jesus Christ, hold His place upon earth. They represent His Person, and consequently they ought to do all that He does . . . whatever He would do in their place. just as an ambassador, holding the position and representing the person of his king, must act and speak in his name, i.e., as his king would act and speak if he were present."(1) Therefore, in St. John's view, to act in a Christian manner is to act as Christ would, with the same intentions and dispositions as He, or, to use the Saint's phrase, "in His spirit."

Consequently he invites us to pray with the dispositions that Jesus had when praying; when confessing, to permeate ourselves with those feelings of hatred for sin which filled His soul during the Agony in the Garden; when assisting at Mass, to unite ourselves with the dispositions of both priest and Victim. And so, in all our labours, in our recreation, our goings and comings, and in even our commonest actions such as going to bed or getting up, sleeping or eating, we ought, in his opinion, to raise up our hearts to Jesus and to conform ourselves to the sentiments which animated Him when performing the same actions.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xvii.

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"Our Holy Redeemer," he wrote in *Le Coeur admirable*, "desires to transform Himself into us and to transform us into Himself.... In His mercy . . . He would associate us with Him and make us His cooperators in the great work of this marvellous transformation. That is why He gives this commandment to all Christians: *Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum*:(1) imprint upon yourself exteriorly and interiorly a living image of my interior and exterior life. Notice that Our Redeemer did not say: 'Put my seal upon your heart and upon your arm,' but rather: 'Put me myself as a seal upon your heart and upon your arm. As I am the image of my Father and the divine character of His substance, let your heart also be a living image of me, let it live with my life, let it be animated with my spirit, let it be filled with my sentiments, and be embraced by my love and charity. And put me also as a seal upon your arm, i.e., let your exterior be a portrait of my exterior, of my modesty, my humility, my sweetness, my affability, let it copy the mortification of my senses and of the holiness that was always manifested in my exterior deportment.' " (2)

F. UNION WITH JESUS

Between the Christian life and the life of Jesus, St. John marks out in addition to the ties formed by dependence and conformity others which it is important to study because of the practical consequences that follow from them. These fresh ties or relationships are those of society and union with Jesus.

(1) *Cant.* vii, 6.

(2). *OEuvres complètes*, VII, pp. 228 sq.

To grasp thoroughly this new aspect of Christian life we must recall once more that Christians are members of a moral body, or, as we generally say, of a mystical body of which Christ is the head. Now in a moral body it is obvious that each member has his own life and his own activities; and yet the life of each is associated with the life of the others and especially with that of the head. But in addition to this, each member, and especially the head, acts in the name and to the advantage of all, so that both head and members work in concert, mutually supporting each other and thereby contributing to their reciprocal perfection.

The Communion of Saints.

That is precisely what happens in the supernatural order. Though its principle and rule is Jesus, the Christian life is no less our own personal life, as the Council of Trent declares.(1) We have it by the Saviour's liberality, but it is ours and it is we who are primarily interested in its preservation and development. But our spiritual life does not unfold itself in solitary isolation; it is intimately bound up with that of all the faithful, and especially with that of Jesus, the divine Head of whom we are members.

Whether we are aware of it or not, when we act in a Christian manner it is not merely in our own name that we act, but also in the name of Christ, as His representatives, His ambassadors, and the continuators of His life, and our action profits Him. Not that it adds anything to the fullness of His personal life or perfects

(1). «Unica formalis causa (justificationis) est justitia Dei, non qua ipse justus est, sed qua justos nos facit, qua videlicet ab eo donati ... vere justii nominamur et sumus, justitiam in nobis recipientes, unusquisque suam secundum mensuram, quam Spiritus Sanctus partitur singulis prout vult.» Conc. Trid., sess. VI, cap. vii.

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Him in Himself, but it procures for Him, outside Himself, that extension of life and complement of perfection which the head finds in members that are obedient to its influence. It is in this sense that the Church is called by St. Paul *the fullness of Christ*, and that we all meet, in his phrase, in the perfection of the Divine Master.(1)

But, in return, the whole life of Jesus turns to our advantage. As the religious Head of all humanity, He has associated His members with all the acts of His life and has caused them to benefit by the holiness with which He accomplished them. "The Saviour," says Bossuet in his *Reflections on the Agony of Jesus Christ*, "charged Himself not only with the sins, but also with all the interests, obligations, and duties of His children.... Their agony was, on the Cross, distinctly present to the eyes of His Heart: He foresaw the nature of the illness from which they must die; and, as He knew well how greatly the pains and symptoms of a violent or sudden illness would, with the senses, hamper the highest faculties of the soul and make them weak and powerless in their prostration, how can we gauge the measure the extent and the force of the charity with which He regarded their agony as inseparable from His own? All that He then did, He did as a fulfilment of their obligations and as doing what they would not be able to do when their time came. He offered on behalf of His children all His agony and its consequences, by a movement of love which He communicated to them for their profit if they should be in such a condition as to be able to share in it, and if their obscured reason made

(1). Eph. iv, 13.

them incapable of actually entering into His dispositions He made this act of love on their behalf in the eyes of His Father so as to assist them in their helplessness."(1)

And what Bossuet says of the Agony of Our Lord must be extended to apply to all the conditions and actions of His life on earth. Always and everywhere He acted in His capacity as our head and in the name of the members of His mystical Body as well as in His own personal name. And that is why (as well as in order to give us an example to follow in every situation that can arise) the Divine Master deigned to experience all the phases of human life and to subject Himself to all its necessities. He wanted in His own person to sanctify our whole life, and to supply for our insufficiency by rendering to the Father, for Himself and for us, the particular duties demanded by the various conditions of human life.

**We profit by all
the actions of
Christ.**

St. John took great pleasure in the thought of this. He often recurs to it in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, but especially does he insist on it in the meditations that he invites us to make on the subject of our birth and baptism, and in those that he proposes as a preparation for death. For it is, in fact, at the two (1). In his booklet, *L'École française* (p. 11), M. Letourneau compares the ideas on death held respectively by St. Francis de Sales and by Bossuet, and expresses himself thus: -Proceeding by comparison, read first St. Francis' meditation on *Death* in *The Devout Life*. There you will find wise reflections on the uncertainty of the time of our death, on the parting we must then make from relations and friends, on the decay of the body, and on the necessity of being converted and of abandoning oneself to God. It is all most judicious and practical. But then see the very different tone taken by Bossuet, who tells you that you must imitate Jesus in His death, which was the *supreme sacrifice* of human nature." The ideas of Bossuet are those of all the French school, and they are to be found in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, VII, n. XVIII- xxxi.

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extremes of our span of life that we have the most need of finding in Jesus a source whence to supplement our helplessness. The child can do nothing, and generally the dying cannot do much. What a joy, then, to know that Jesus, on entering the world, consecrated to the Father not only the beginning of His own life but also the beginning of ours! What a consolation to know that if sickness prevent us in our last moments from reflecting on God, Jesus has in advance accepted death in our name and has placed our soul with His own within the hands of our common Father! And so it is also with all the rest of our life; for, as St. John tells us, «since the office of the head is to perform all his actions on His own behalf and on behalf of his members,» (1) Our Lord in His prayers, His works, and His sufferings acted for us as well as for Himself, and thereby He made good in advance the deficiencies and imperfections that are in all our works. The Divine Master Himself taught this truth one day to St. Margaret Mary when He said: "I make you heiress of my Heart and of all its treasures both in this world and for all eternity, permitting you to make use of it according to your desires.... It will make reparation for, and supply for, all your failings and will acquit you of your obligations." (2)

In order to share in this divine assistance by which the Saviour makes good our deficiencies it suffices, strictly speaking, to be habitually united to Him by sanctifying grace; for the smallest degree of grace makes us living members of Christ, and so long as they are not separated from him, the members always

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VII, n. ii.

(2). *Vie et OEuvres de la Sainte* (Gauthey), I, p. 173.

profit, even without their knowledge, by what is done by their head.(1)

However, actual union with Jesus Christ remarkably enlarges the channel by which His favours reach us, and this union St. John incessantly recommended to his disciples. He advised them never to lose sight of the Divine Master, to consider themselves in everything as His members, and to have recourse to every kind of pious method for living and dying with Him. (2)

First means of bringing about this profitable union.

The first means that he points out for thus associating our actions with those of Jesus is that of reminding ourselves in the the various circumstances of our lives of what Christ did for us in similar circumstances, so that we may not merely conform our conduct to His but also identify ourselves with everything that He did in our name. Thus, since when offering Himself to His Father at His entry into the world He at the same time offered each of the members of His mystical Body as so many victims ready to be sacrificed for His glory, it is our duty to accept and to ratify this oblation of our lives that He made to God the Father. And so we find Père Eudes addressing Christ thus: "O my divine Head, in Thy temporal birth Thou hast offered for me to Thy Father all the duties that I should have offered to Him in my own, and Thou hast practised the acts and exercises that I should have practised. With all my heart I consent and adhere to all that Thou didst then do for me; I ratify and approve it with all my will,

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, V, n. x. Cf. Bossuet: *Réflexion sur l'agonie de Notre-Seigneur*.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. i, et passim.

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and I desire to sign it with the last drop of my blood. "(1)

Second means of effecting the same.

Next the Saint reminds us that the life of Jesus belongs to us, and that we can use it as our own for fulfilling our obligations. In actual fact in giving Himself to us Our Lord conferred on us a real right over all His works. Besides, He is our head and we are His members. Now, the head and the members make but one, and even as the head can dispose at its will of what belongs to its members, so in the same way the members can make use of what belongs to the head. Jesus, therefore, is ours, and we can always offer His external works and internal dispositions to His Father, thereby supplementing the poverty of our homage and making reparation for the multitude of our failings. Listen to Père Eudes on this point: "I well know what I will do. I have a Jesus who has in Himself an infinite treasury of virtues, merits, and holy works, and who has been given to me to be my treasure, my virtue, my sanctification, my redemption and my reparation. I will offer Him to the Eternal Father, to the Holy Spirit, to the Blessed Virgin, to all the Angels and to all the Saints in reparation and satisfaction for all the sins of which I have been guilty in their regard. O Holy Father, O Divine Spirit, I offer you all the love and honour that my Jesus gave You throughout His life by all His divine thoughts, words and deeds, by the divine use He made of all the parts of His body and soul, by the virtues which He exercised, and by all the sufferings that He bore, in satisfaction for all the offences that I have committed against You in all my life. '(2)

(1). *Ibid.*, VII, n. ii.

(2). *Ibid.*, VII, n. xxi.

So convinced was Père Eudes of the reality of the rights that Christ has given us over His Person and His life, and also over the person and life of every member of His mystical Body, that he believed we can make use of the heart, the soul, and all the powers of the Divine Master and of His members to render to God the cult of adoration and of love which His infinite goodness demands. And so, after urging us to repeat as a chaplet the following words which are the practical expression of the first of God's commandments, and which he later inserted in the *Ave, Cor sanctissimum*: "I love Thee, O my God, with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength," he goes on to give us this commentary:

"In saying the words '*with all my heart*' we must understand it of the Heart of Jesus, of that of the Blessed Virgin, and of the hearts of all the angels and saints in heaven and on earth, which all together have but one single heart with the Most Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary, by reason of the union that subsists between all these hearts. And that Heart is ours, for St. Paul assures us that everything without exception is ours: *Omnia vestra sunt*; (1) and consequently we can and must make use of it wherewith to love God."(2)

It is unnecessary to point out the grandeur and beauty of these views. They surprise us a little at first because in these days we are accustomed to restrain our relations with Christ. We see in Him only the Redeemer who has made satisfaction for our sins, and the God who has a right to our adoration; whereas He is, in addition, the Head whose life must be united to ours

(1). 1 Cor. iii, 22.

(2). *Royaume de Jésus*, IV, n. xii.

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in order to cover our failings and to give us the perfection that will make us pleasing in the eyes of the Heavenly Father.

Third means for the same end.

A last means of benefiting by the merits of Christ and the saints is to address ourselves directly to them, begging them to make reparation for all our iniquities and to glorify God in our place. On this, Père Eudes writes: "This is the most pleasing prayer that we can make them, and to none other do they hearken more willingly."(1) It assures us a special part in the love and the praises that they continually render to God, for this God of goodness regards as coming from us the adoration that is rendered to Him at our request and in our name. (2) St. John especially urges us to end all our devotions with a prayer of this kind. He would have us, for example, at the end of our morning prayers ask Jesus and His saints to make good all the faults of which we have been guilty during this holy exercise and to continue it in our name throughout the day. And similarly in the evening, when we go to rest, he desires us to invite them to glorify God on our behalf while we sleep through the night. (3)

As regards himself, the Saint feared lest he should appear egoistic in his pious practices, and that is why, following the example of Christ, he offered all his devotions not only for himself but for others. He considered this a means of giving God more glory and of enabling his neighbours to profit by whatever good he (St. John) should do. Moreover, he most strongly recommends

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, I, n. iv.

(2). *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

(3). *Ibid.*, I, n. xii.

this eminently Catholic practice to us (1) which he had learnt from Cardinal de Bérulle, and which, moreover, Our Lord Himself taught us when He showed us in the *Our Father* that we should not separate our own interests from those of our brethren.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VII. Meditation on the subject of our birth.

CHAPTER IV

PRAYER

A. PRAYER IN GENERAL

ST. JOHN did not write any separate book on prayer, but the few pages devoted to the subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus* enable us to give an account of his ideas on it. Moreover, that book is full of prayers and meditations that make it, in M. Joly's words, "a manual of prayer" and show us the theoretical ideas of the author reduced to practice.

In that volume the Saint uses the word "prayer" in its widest sense so that he applies it to every kind of prayer, whatever may be the acts of which it is composed and the manner in which it is offered. In his eyes spiritual meditation and the reading of good books are true prayers for they arouse in us sentiments of piety and acts of love of God.

Prayer is often defined as a request made of God for things that we need, and some Christians restrict prayer to this limit. Such a prayer is certainly good, and the Divine Master recommends it in the Gospels: "Ask and you shall receive," He said to His apostles, "seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you";(1) and on another occasion he reproached them for having made no requests:

"Hitherto you

(1). *Matt. vii, 7.*

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have not asked anything in my name. Ask, and you shall receive."(1)

**St. John's
definition of
prayer.**

But, excellent as the prayer of petition may be, it is not the whole of prayer, nor even its main element. St. John gives us a much wider idea of prayer which he takes from Catholic tradition. "Prayer," he says, "is a respectful and loving elevation of the mind and heart to God; a sweet and holy communication of the Christian soul with its God."(2)

As a rule, in actual fact, a Christian speaks to God in prayer in the style of the *Our Father*, and God replies by putting into his mind good thoughts, or acts of faith, confidence, love, and the like. But it may happen in prayer that the mind and heart are raised to God with a more or less active feeling of adoration and love which finds no expression in either external or internal words, and yet this is most certainly prayer. And that is why the Saint begins by telling us that prayer is "a respectful and loving elevation of the mind and heart to God."

After defining prayer St. John goes on to describe in detail the elements that go to compose it: "In prayer," he says, "the Christian soul considers and contemplates (3) God in His divine perfections, in His mysteries

(1). *John xvi, 24.*

(2). St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, and many subsequent writers define prayer as *Ascensus mentis ad Deum*, but in adopting this definition St. John Eudes develops it in his own way. He remarks that it is a *respectful* and *loving* elevation, and an elevation of the *heart* as well as of the mind, and this indeed is how everyone considers it. And the second part of his definition (an intercourse with God) is also

classical, and is to be found in St. Francis de Sales' *Treatise of the Love of God*, as well as in the writings of St. Teresa and many others. On the idea of prayer, see Bremond, *Histoire du sentiment religieux*, VII, pp. 5 sq.

(3). He is not here dealing, at any rate exclusively, with infused contemplation. St. John often uses the word *contemplation* in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, but in its widest sense. By it he means attentive consideration (apparently without reasoning) of the divine perfections or of the mysteries of Our Lord and of His Holy Mother.

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and in His works; it adores Him, blesses Him, loves Him and glorifies Him, giving itself to Him and humbling itself before Him by reason of its sins and ingratitude; and it begs Him to have mercy and to teach it to model itself upon Him, imitating His virtues and perfections. Finally, it asks everything it needs for serving and loving God."

These few lines, inserted almost accidentally in one of the chapters of *Le Royaume de Jésus*, really contain the germ of a complete theory of prayer, to which we will return when dealing with the subject of mental prayer. For the moment we may merely note that according to St. John prayer is before all and above all an exercise the object of which is to render to God that tribute of adoration and love, of satisfaction and thanksgiving, to which He has a right. It is only when he has drily performed these duties that a Christian may turn to his own needs and ask for their fulfilment, and he does so less from self-interest than from a desire to be able to love and to serve God. For, as St. John (like Cardinal deBérulle and his followers) frequently reminds us: "the interests of God must be dearer to us than our own."(1) Accordingly prayer in his view is profoundly *theocentric*.

The theocentric character of prayer.

Then the Saint portrays the excellence of prayer so defined. "Prayer," he says, "is a participation in the life of the angels and saints, in the life of Jesus and His most holy Mother, and even in the life of God Himself and of the Three Divine Persons.

(1). Cf. supra, p. 54.

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For the life of the angels and saints, of Christ and His Blessed Mother, is nothing else but a continual exercise of prayer and of contemplation, since they are unceasingly occupied in contemplating, glorifying and loving God, and asking for us whatever may be necessary for us. And the Three Divine Persons are perpetually occupied in contemplating, glorifying and loving each other, all of which acts are the primary and principal elements of prayer."

Those last words, intentionally placed last, stress still more, if possible, the theocentric character of prayer as conceived by our Saint, and show us that in his view it is primarily and principally an exercise of contemplation and love, resulting from the charity with which our hearts are flooded by the Holy Ghost. Seen in this light it is truly a participation in the life of the angels and saints and a foretaste of the life of heaven.

"Prayer," continues the Saint, "is perfect felicity, sovereign happiness, and truly heaven upon earth. By this divine exercise the Christian soul is united to God, who is its centre, end, and sovereign good. Therein it possesses Him and is possessed by Him; therein it fulfils its duties to Him, its homage, its adoration, and its love, and therein it receives from Him its lights and blessings, and the thousand

manifestations of the exceeding great love that God has for it. Therein, finally, God takes His delight in us in accordance with His own words: 'My delight is to be with the children of men,'(1) and makes us understand by experience that true joy and perfect happiness are to be found in God, a hundred or even a thousand years of the false plea
(1). Prov. viii, 31.

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asures of the world not being worth a single moment of the real delights that God gives to souls who put all their happiness in conversing with Him by means of prayer."(1)

Of course prayer has its difficulties and trials, as Père Eudes well knew: he devoted a chapter of *Le Royaume de Jésus* to spiritual dryness and afflictions. But whether it be easy or laborious, delightful or arid, prayer is always an exercise of praise and love of God, and even when we are deprived of the sweetness of sensible devotion the Saint would have us find all our happiness in conversing with God in prayer.

The necessity of prayer.

He adds that prayer is "the true and proper function of a man and of a Christian, for man is created only for God and for union with Him, and a Christian is only on earth in order there to continue what Christ did while He was upon earth." Therefore prayer is the basis of a truly human life, and above all the foundation of a Christian life. It is true that if we are to be really Christian we must add to prayer the practice of virtue and the fulfilment of our daily duties; but it is prayer which makes us love and practise virtue and gives us the necessary courage to face the demands of duty however formidable these may be.

And the Saint concludes with this pressing admonition: "That is why as forcibly as I possibly can I exhort you who read these lines and conjure you in the name of God, that since our most lovable Jesus deigns to find His delight in being with us and in conversing with us by means of prayer, you do not deprive Him of His pleasure, but find out by experience how true is the
(1). Part II, n. xliii.

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Holy Spirit's declaration that 'her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness.'(1) Look on this matter as the first, the most necessary, the most pressing and most important of all your affairs, and free yourself so far as possible from other less necessary affairs so as to give as much time as you possibly can to this, especially in the morning, in the evening, and shortly before dinner."(2)

B. MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer is internal prayer which consists, not in the recitation of a formula, but in purely interior acts in which language has none but a purely accidental part, as, for instance, happens when we make use of a formula to arouse our attention or to stimulate our devotion.

It has always been held in high honour by pious souls, and especially in religious communities; but it is since the fifteenth century that the custom has arisen in many institutes of devoting a fixed time every day to the regular practice of mental prayer; and it was for the purpose of helping souls to fulfil this duty fruitfully that there grew up what we now call "methods of prayer. "

St. John considered mental prayer of capital importance, and called it "the mother and nurse of true piety;"(3) indeed in his *Memorial de la vie ecclésiastique* he boldly declared it to be "as necessary for the soul of a Christian, and much more so for that of a priest and pastor, as is material bread for the body."(4) So, too, in his *Bon*

(1). *Wisdom, VIII, 16.*

(2). *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. xi.*

(3). *Oeuvres complètes, III, p. 264.*

(4). *Ibid., III, p. 54.*

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Confesseur, after showing that piety is indispensable to all who propose to hear confessions ' he adds these strong words: "But what is piety? If you would be acquainted with it and possess it you must practise mental prayer. Then you will soon know and possess it. But I declare to you that so long as you do not know by experience what mental prayer is you will not know what true piety is and you will not be fit to hear confessions. " (1)

Fruits of prayer.

He is no less outspoken in his *Prédicateur apostolique*: "It is in prayer," he says, "that God so enlightens our minds that we are able to see the importance and the beauty of Christian virtue; it is therein, too, that He possesses Himself of our hearts so that we may taste of and love that virtue. And when we are fully persuaded of this and powerfully influenced by it, then we have a wonderful power of making it intelligible to others and of firmly impressing it in their hearts. The truths with which God enlightens our minds, and by the consideration of which we are moved to serve and to love Him, have an incomparably greater power of inflaming our hearts than have those which we derive solely from books without having meditated and pondered upon them before God. There is almost as much difference between these two sets of truths as there is between well-cooked and well-seasoned dishes and those that are totally unprepared."(2)

He considered that ecclesiastical and religious communities absolutely require mental prayer, and that without it they cannot survive: "Without prayer," he one day wrote to the superior of one of his houses, "it

(1). *Ibid., IV, p. 224.*

(2). *Ibid., IV., pp. 77-78.*

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is impossible for a Congregation to subsist in the spirit of piety and virtue which is necessary for it if it is to be pleasing to God and useful to the Church." And he added: "There is little difference between making half an hour's prayer and not making it, yet nothing is more necessary for ecclesiastics, and I know of no seminary in which they do not make an hour's mental prayer. (1)

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* also the Saint strongly recommends pious souls to practise mental prayer. "This manner of prayer," he tells them, "is so holy, so useful and so full of blessings that its value cannot be expressed in words. And therefore, if God draws you to it and gives you this grace, you ought to thank Him as having given you a very great gift. If He has not yet given you this gift, beg Him to do so and for your part do everything you can to correspond to His grace and to practise this holy exercise which God will teach you more clearly than will all the books and all the teachers in the world if you will cast yourself at His feet with humility, confidence and purity of heart."(2)

(1). *Oeuvres complètes, X, pp. 482-283.*

(2). These words show that the Saint does not attach very much importance to treatises on, and

consequently to methods of prayer. Not that he despises them. He advises his priests to give retreatants and beginners in the spiritual life the guidance they require for commencing the practice of prayer, and he even suggests to them that they should give them the sixth volume of Louis of Grenada's *Memorial of the Christian Life*. He also advises that beginners should be given subjects of prayer suited to their capabilities, and he would have them give an account of their prayer. But in spite of all this he only attaches secondary importance to these means of training. For him as, indeed, for everyone else, the true master of prayer is the Holy Spirit, and it is for Him to teach us to make it well. Cf. *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, p. 6, ch. ii; and p. 13, ch. 1v.

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The nature of mental prayer.

St. John does not dwell at any length on the nature of mental prayer, but the few lines given to the subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus* have a clarity and precision that leave nothing to be desired. "In mental prayer," he says, "the soul occupies itself interiorly with God, taking as its subject one of the divine perfections, or some mystery, virtue, or saying of the Son of God, or something that He has done or is now still doing in the order of glory, grace, or nature, in His Holy Mother, in the Saints, in His Church, or in the natural world. The soul first uses its understanding to consider quietly, attentively and perseveringly the truths to be discovered in this selected subject that are capable of exciting it to love God and to detest its sins. Then it causes the heart and the will to produce diverse acts and affections of adoration, praise, love, humility, contrition, oblation and the like, together with the resolution of fleeing from evil and doing good, according as the Spirit of God shall suggest to it."⁽¹⁾

With all their brevity these few lines plainly show the Saint's mind on the subject of prayer; they tell us what should be its subject and of what acts it should be composed. Let us glance, then, at the author's teaching on both these points. In the first place he would have us take as the subject of our prayer one of the divine perfections, a mystery, a virtue, or a saying of the Incarnate Word, or else consider how He operates in His saints, in His Church, or in the natural world. In brief, he would have us occupy ourselves in our meditations with God and the Incarnate Word. He seems to exclude purely moral subjects, which instead of draw
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xii.

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ing souls to God and His love, throw it back upon itself and plunge it into preoccupation with its own personal interests. Nor would he have us limit ourselves in our prayers to considering in themselves the Christian virtues, the evangelical truths or the example of the Saints, but he wants us always to consider them in their relations with the Incarnate Word. In his eyes the Christian virtues are a participation in the virtues of Jesus, the Gospel truths are words of instruction that have fallen from His lips, and the examples left by the saints are the fruits of Christ's sanctifying action in each of them; and it was in this way that he was accustomed to consider them in his works and his letters. And thereby we see that his views on prayer were in perfect harmony with his teaching on devotion to the Incarnate Word and the life of Christ within us.

Acts of the intellect and the will.

As for the acts that go to make up prayer: these are of two kinds, springing respectively from the intellect and the will. It is true that, strictly speaking, prayer consists in the affections of the will acting under the influence of grace; but the will is a blind faculty, and if it is to be attached to what is good the intellect must present that good to it and make it recognise it. And so we should begin our prayer with acts of the intellect, eluding our understanding," as he says, "to consider attentively and perseveringly the truths it discovers in those subjects that are capable of exciting it to love God and to detest its sins, which truths it discovers in the subject under consideration." Thus we should not dwell on purely speculative truths: to do so would be to make our meditation a study, whereas it ought to

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be an exercise Of Piety. The only truths which should engage our attention are those which can move us to love and serve God, and these we should consider with gentle and insistent attention; gentle, because prayer should be made quietly, without striving or fatigue; and insistent, because otherwise the heart will remain cold and will soon stray off to other matters.

Later on we shall see what the Saint asks us to consider in the mysteries of the Incarnate Word, but for the present we may note that he does not ask of us wise and profound considerations, but very simple and easy reflections. Prayer, in fact, is within the grasp of all pious souls; provided that they know the mysteries and the teaching of the Incarnate Word they know enough to be able to make first-rate prayer. "O Jesus, my Lord," writes our Saint, "Thou art entirely lovable, infinitely lovable, and infinitely worthy of being loved. It is enough, my God, that I have this knowledge. What need have I of great learning, of internal illuminations and considerations? It suffices me to know that my Jesus is entirely lovable, and that there is nothing in Him that is not worthy of being infinitely loved. Let my mind, then, be content with this knowledge; but let my heart never weary of loving Him who can never be sufficiently loved. " (1)

There are to be found in the Saint's works, and especially in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, some meditations complete in themselves, which are models of mental prayer, and it is obvious at a glance that their "points" are extremely simple and well within the range of all minds. This is the case, for example, with the meditations
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, IV, n. viii.

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tions set out in *Le Royaume de Jésus* for each day of the week and for devotions on the subject of baptism. Unfortunately, for want of understanding these principles many souls are never trained to prayer, for they try to make use of learned reflections which are beyond their capability and which have nothing in common with prayer.(1)

As for the acts of the will demanded by prayer, they may be reduced to three. The first is an act of adoration united to acts of praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and (especially) love. We have to adore Jesus in all His mysteries, in all His virtues and works, because He is our God and therefore always has a right to the supreme worship owed by the creature to his Creator. We must praise and glorify Him because of His infinite perfections, we must thank Him for His benefactions and above all for the glory that He procures His Father; we must ask His pardon for our ingratitude and our sins, and lastly protest that we love Him with our whole

(1). "God be praised!" said St. Vincent de Paul one day, repeating these three words four or five times over, for he had just been told by M. Coglée, a priest of his society, that he devoted himself in his prayer chiefly to making acts of affection. St. Vincent greatly praised this method and said that that was the way in which we must act in meditation, not beguiling ourselves by looking for reasonings, but arousing the affections by acts of love of God, of humility, of sorrow for sin, and the like. For of what use are reasonings to us when we are persuaded of the truth of the matter on which we are meditating? "Oh," he said, "how I wish that the company (of St. Sulpice) would make a practice of promptly following the lights given by God and not leave these for the purpose of beguiling themselves by looking for reasons that are useless to us since we have no need of them! ...I beg all priests to ask this grace for the company to-day in their Masses, and all the clerical students and brethren in the seminary to pray for it when they are assisting at Mass and receiving Holy Communion. And let their second intention in communicating be to obtain this grace from God for our little company." *Entretiens*, Vol. XI, p. 401. Quoted by Pourrat: *La spiritualité chrétienne*, III, p. 584.

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heart and that we want to use all that we are and all that we have for the purpose of loving him.

The second act is what the Saint calls oblation, and by that he means not only the giving and consecration of self to Jesus, but also and more particularly an act by which, renouncing all power of disposing of ourselves or of acting of our own accord, we give ourselves up to Him entirely, so that He can take possession of us, eradicate in us everything opposed to His influence, make us sharers in His mysteries and virtues, and guide us in everything as the head guides the members that it vivifies. It is, in short, that "adherence- so strongly recommended by Bérulle and his school. To this oblation is naturally added a request to Jesus to take possession of our heart and to establish therein His life and virtues. It is true that this request is already virtually included in the oblation of which we speak, but St. John almost always makes it the subject of a formal act, as for instance in the *Ave Cor*, (1) and in many of the prayers that he prints in *Le Royaume de Jésus* and in the *Manuel* that he wrote for his congregation of priests.

The last act involved in prayer is a resolution of fleeing from evil and of doing good, imitating the example of the Divine Master and putting His holy teaching into practice. This shows us that the Saint had the same view of prayer as had Père de Condren, M. Olier and all the followers of Cardinal de Bérulle. (2)

(1). In the *Ave Cor* we find after acts of adoration, praise, thanksgiving and love, these words: "Tibi cor nostrum offerimus, donamus, consecramus, immolamus; accipe et posside illud totum, et purifica et illumina et sanctifica ut in ipso vivas et regnes et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen." This is that oblation or adherence which we have just explained.

(2). On the method of prayer followed by the French school, see *Règlements de l'Oratoire* in Bérulle's *OEuvres* (Migne col. 1638-1643); also the *Avis to Bourgoing's Meditations sur les vérités et excellences de Jésus-Christ* (reprinted by Bremond in his *Introduction à l'étude de la prière*); Olier: *Catéchisme chrétien pour la vie intérieure*, II, vi-viii; *Introduction à la vie et aux vertus chrétiennes*, ch. iv; *Amelotte: Vie du Père de Condren*, 11, ch. xviii; and Letourneau: *La méthode d'oraison. mentale du Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice*. In this last book Letourneau quotes a large number of the texts that we have just indicated. In the Sulpician system oblation or adherence is called «communion» and the resolutions are styled «co-operation»; but if the names are different, the doctrine is identically the same.

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But in that there is no cause for surprise, for prayer, as taught by this school, is but a putting into practice in our relations with God of the principles that sum up St. John's spiritual teaching.

We might add that the various elements in prayer unite and interact throughout its whole course, so that in St. John's view there is no necessity to make our considerations and our affective acts two distinct matters. The intellect and the will have to work together, as they do in the meditations given in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. Nor is it necessary to separate the various acts of the will so as to make them in the order we have just shown. For they also combine and intermingle, and we may even say that in practice each of them calls up the other two, implicitly contains them and can suffice for the making of a good prayer.

**How to meditate
on the mysteries:
seven
considerations.**

Let us now turn to the mysteries which St. John says must be "the subject of our contemplation and adoration,- "the object of all our pious exercises," the "daily bread and nourishment of our spiritual life," and consequently the ordinary subject-matter of our mental prayer. To help us in meditating on these mysteries the Saint points out seven things which we have to consider and to honour in each of them.

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**The first
consideration:
the external
aspect.**

Of these the first is the body or external aspect of the mystery, which St. John explains as being "all that externally happened in the mystery. For example, the external aspect of the mystery of Our Lord's birth includes the nakedness, poverty, cold, helplessness and insignificance in which He was born, the baby clothes with which He was covered, His lying on the manger straw between the ass and the ox, His tears and infant cries, the little movements of His sacred hands and feet, the first use He made of His eyes, His mouth, and His other senses, His repose upon the breast of His Blessed Mother, the refreshment He drew thence, the sweet kisses and embraces that He received from her and from St. Joseph, the visit of the shepherds, and everything else that was said and done exteriorly in the stable at Bethlehem on that night that saw the birth of the Son of God."

Père Eudes then adds: "All that deserves to be considered and honoured, for there is nothing of small moment in the mysteries of Jesus, in them everything is important, divine, and adorable. And if the Son of God takes the trouble to give His mind and His Heart (which, it would seem, should only take note of what is divine) to considering and counting our every step and even the hairs of our heads, as He Himself assures us; and if He writes in His Heart and preserves as treasures the least actions that we perform for Him, so as to honour and glorify them for ever in heaven: with what care, in that case, should we apply our minds and hearts to considering, adoring and glorifying the smallest occurrences in His life and mysteries

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since there is nothing in these that is not infinitely great and admirable, and which does not deserve infinite honour and adoration."

**The second:
the interior spirit of
the mystery.**

The second feature that we must consider in each mystery is, in St. John's words, the « interior spirit of which is the particular virtue, power the mystery. and brace in that mystery, proper and peculiar to it, each mystery having its own particular virtue and spirit. Included also in this interior spirit are the thoughts, and intentions, the affections, sentiments, dispositions, and interior occupations with which it was performed; in a word all that passed interiorly in regard to it in the mind, the heart, and the holy soul of Jesus when He performed that mystery, as well as in the minds and hearts of all who were there present.»

"It is this," the Saint proceeds, "that must be chiefly considered and honoured in the mysteries of Jesus: and yet it is precisely this that is least considered and honoured. For many content themselves with contemplating the exterior body without passing on to the interior spirit of these mysteries, though this last is the principle, the foundation, the substance, the life and the truth of the mystery, whereas the external body is but the shell, the accidental accessory and appearance of the mystery. The external body is fugitive and temporal, but the interior spirit to be found in each mystery is permanent and eternal."(!0

(1). These views on the interior spirit of the various are common to all spiritual writers of the French school. "They love," says M. Letourneau, «to penetrate the very *interior* of the sensible mysteries of Jesus, contemplating its life of supernatural grace, and examining in it the marvels of that divine life which flows from the head into the members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ." *L'École française*, p. 7. Cf. Bérulle in Migne, col. 1052 sq.; and Bremond: *L'École française*, p. 70 sq.

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**The other
considerations**

The third thing to be honoured in Our Lord's mysteries is composed of the effects that He has produced and still continually produces by each of them.

The fourth comprises the particular designs entertained by Jesus in each of His mysteries.

The fifth is the share and the special part taken by the Blessed Virgin in each mystery. «Forshe,» says St. John, "has a quite particular and extraordinary part in all her Son's states and mysteries. She alone has a greater share therein than all the angels, the saints, and the whole world put together; for the Son of God worked in her greater and more wonderful things by each of His mysteries than He worked in all the angels, in all the saints and in all the rest of the world. Moreover, Our Blessed Lady has by herself given greater honour to all her Son's mysteries than have all the angels, the saints, and the rest of the world together."

The sixth thing that we have to consider in His mysteries is the part played therein by the angels and saints particularly connected with each mystery.

Lastly, the seventh matter to be considered and revered is the singular and special part that we have in these mysteries. "For we," says St. John, "have a quite special part in every one of Our Lord's mysteries, inasmuch as in each of them the Son of God had some idea, some plan, or some particular aspect of His love to reveal for each of us. He desired therein to communi

cate certain graces to us and to give us certain special favours both on earth and in heaven."(1)

Obviously the Saint does not seek to persuade us to consider all these things in our meditations. From them every one is free to choose those which most attract him or correspond to his particular needs and to concentrate his thoughts and his love on these. And in due proportion it goes without saying that these principles equally apply to other possible subjects of prayer, especially to the mysteries of the Blessed Virgin, the Christian virtues, and the teachings of Our Divine Master.

**Prayer is
adoration and
love.**

Such is the view of prayer given us by St. John and the method of practising it that he proposes, and we have already said that these are also the views of the whole French School. Prayer, for all writers of this School, is before all else adoration and love: it is profoundly theocentric. Moreover, it is a means of increasing the life of Jesus within us, and that is why all these writers stress the necessity of oblation or adherence of self to Jesus, as explained by Cardinal de Bérulle. But since participation in the life of Jesus demands real efforts to permeate ourselves with His thoughts and virtues, it implies serious resolutions that will ensure its efficacy.

We may add that prayer, as conceived by the followers of Cardinal de Bérulle, gives little opportunity to the imagination or to the discursive element. All it demands of the intellect is certain considerations entirely based on the doctrinal information given us by the Gospels without any admixture of the artificial or

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, III, n. vii.

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the arbitrary. The intellect need only be filled with the spirit of prayer in order that the heart, in its turn, may thence derive an increase of love and of generosity in the service of God.

C. THE DIVINE OFFICE

In the opinion of St. John vocal prayer is scarcely less useful than mental prayer, provided that the heart prays as well as the tongue, in which case prayer is, in fact, both vocal and mental. But if they are recited out of mere routine and without attention, vocal prayers leave us more dissipated and colder than we were before we began them: and that is why, apart from those that are of obligation, the Saint advises us to make but few, and to accustom ourselves to making these in a holy fashion, with great attention and application, engaging the mind and heart in various holy thoughts and affections while the tongue speaks.(1)

The principal vocal prayer, at least for priests and religious, is, of course, the Divine Office, and St. John made it the subject of a special book which was never printed and which has now been lost. But he also treats of it at some length in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, (2) and from this book Pierre Hérambourg drew all that he tells us of the way in which the Saint recited his Office. The author stresses the preparation that is necessary if we are to say it in a holy fashion:

"The chief reason," he says, "why we are very often worried by distractions and useless and extravagant thoughts in our vocal prayers is that our minds must always be occupied by some thoughts, whether good or

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, a. xiii.

(2). VI, n. xxxi-xxxiii.

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bad. Therefore, if evil and useless thoughts are to be excluded, we must take great care from the beginning of our prayer to give our minds and hearts entirely to Jesus so that He may fully possess them; and for our part we must accustom ourselves to filling our minds with good thoughts and holy affections, being careful not to let ourselves perform so holy an action slackly and imperfectly, or out of mere habit and routine rather than from piety and devotion."

Dignity and value of the Divine Office.

With this object in view he invites us to remind our selves that recitation of the Divine Office is «one of the holiest actions performed in heaven and on earth. So grand and lofty is it that not only does it continually and eternally occupy the vast host of angels and saints in heaven as well as the Queen of Angels and Saints, the Blessed Virgin; but it also occupies through all eternity the Three Divine Persons of the Sacred Trinity who unceasingly praise, bless and glorify each other. The Divine Office is holy and divine, and consequently should be chanted or recited in a holy and divine manner, that is, with holy and divine dispositions.»

The Saint might have stressed the special nature of the Divine Office by reminding us that it is the official prayer of the Church, and he also might have insisted on its doctrinal wealth, the examples of virtue that it puts before us, and the devotional spirit of the prayers that go to comprise it. In this respect it is specially suitable for strengthening faith and piety. But he omits these considerations, some of which have a motive of self-interest, and he confines himself to the general consideration, applicable to all prayer, that

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recitation of the Office is a holy and divine action that must be performed in a holy fashion.

Then he reminds us that we are unworthy and incapable of carrying out this duty as it should be done, and again he exhorts us to renounce ourselves and to give ourselves to Jesus so that He may praise God in us and for us:

We are unworthy to recite it.

"Considering," he says, "the dignity and holiness of this action, acknowledge that, of yourself, you have no worthiness or capacity in you for performing it in a holy way, and that everything in you that comes from yourself is opposed to this, and even that you are quite up-worthy of presenting yourself before God and of appearing before such lofty majesty. Therefore annihilate yourself at His feet, give yourself to Jesus, and beg Him to empty you of self and to establish Himself in you, so that He Himself may perform this work, praising and glorifying His Father and Himself in you, He alone being worthy to do that. Give yourself up to the zeal and love with which He unceasingly praises His Father in heaven and on earth, beneath the earth and throughout the world. For, strictly speaking, there is but the

one Jesus praising and glorifying God throughout the universe: He praises and glorifies Him eternally in heaven, by Himself and by His Holy Mother, by His angels and by His saints. So, too, He continually praises and blesses Him upon earth, by Himself in the Blessed Sacrament upon our altars, wherein He perpetually praises and adores His Father, and also by all holy souls on earth who praise God whether in public or in private. Moreover, He praises and magnifies Him in the nether regions where He is

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in His Divine Person and where He perpetually acts in regard to His Father even as He does in heaven. Finally, He praises and exalts Him unceasingly throughout the world, which is filled with His presence and divine majesty, and with the perpetual praises and benedictions that He everywhere renders to His Father.

"Unite yourself with all these praises rendered by Jesus to His Father and with the Most Holy Trinity everywhere and at all times, and unite yourself also with His humility, attention, love, purity and holiness, together with all the other divine dispositions with which Jesus is ever filled in His praise of His Father."

**A suggested
method of
reciting it.**

And then St. John shows us «an excellent way" of saying the Divine Office. It consists in devoting the various Hours of the Office to the principal mysteries of the life of Jesus: the first nocturne to the divine life which He has from all eternity in the bosom of His Father, the second to His life in the world before the Incarnation, the third to His hidden life within Mary; Lauds may be devoted to His Sacred Childhood, Prime to His hidden and laborious life at Nazareth, Terce to His public life, Sext to His Passion, and None to His death and burial. Finally Vespers may be consecrated to His life on earth in the Eucharist and in the members of His mystical Body; and Compline to "the state and dominion that is His throughout the world, in heaven, on earth, in purgatory, in hell, in the world of nature, of grace, and of glory, over mankind, the angels and all creatures; and generally in honour of all that He has been, is, and will be in His divinity and His humanity, and of all that He has done and will do eternally in regard to His Father,

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Himself, the Holy Ghost, His Blessed Mother, His angels and saints, and all creatures."

"When saying each part of the Office," St. John says elsewhere, "we must apply our mind to considering that part of the life of Jesus in honour of which we are saying it; that is, we must consider what happened in Jesus during that part of His life, His thoughts and plans, affections and dispositions, the actions that He performed, the virtues He practised, His interior occupation in regard to His Father, to Himself, to the Holy Spirit, to His Blessed Mother, and to His angels and saints, and especially the thoughts, designs, and love that He entertained in regard to you in particular. We must also consider the glory and praise given Him during that part of His life by His Father, by the Holy Spirit, by His Holy Mother, and by the angels and saints."

And after considering all that passed during that part of His life, "we must," the Saint continues, "think of ourselves; and realising how remote are our lives from the holiness and perfection of that of our Head, whom we are obliged to imitate, we have to abase ourselves profoundly and to ask His pardon. Then we must give ourselves to Him so as to honour and imitate that portion of His life with the

perfection that He asks of us; beg Him to imprint Himself on us and to glorify Himself in us by eradicating in us everything that could hamper His action in us; and finally we must unite ourselves with all the praises that have been given, are being given, and will be given to Him in that part of His life by the Father, the Holy Spirit, etc."

St. John then adds: "If it is part of the temporal

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life of Jesus that we are honouring in our Office, we must, when we give ourselves to Him to honour that part of His life, offer and consecrate to Him the corresponding part of our own life in honour of that part of His; begging Him to destroy everything evil in that part of our life and to bring it about that everything in that part of our life may render glory and homage to all that passed in the corresponding part of His life. "

In fact St. John advises us to join to the recitation of the Office prayer that is purely mental and independent of the Office itself: and though he assigns a special subject to it he looks upon it in the same light as ordinary mental prayer. And this is but the view of those theologians who tell us to give our attention above all, not to the words that we pronounce (although they must be pronounced carefully), nor to their meaning, but to God to whom our prayer is addressed.

The Saint then goes on to say that this method of praying is very easy and does not lengthen the recitation of the Office. ---Notice,- he says,---that it is not necessary ... when doing all this to stop or to interrupt your recitation of the Office; for it can all be done by giving your mind to these practices while you continue to chant or recite the Office, so that whether you have much or little experience in making such interior acts you will need no extra time for this particular act. On the contrary, the time that you give to it will seem very short because of the great sweetness and fruitfulness that you will discover in thus interiorly giving your mind and heart to Jesus, who is the source of all benediction and consolation.

But the Saint also shows us another way of worthily

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A second method.

reciting the Divine Office: as we recite each hour we can unite ourselves with the praises given to Jesus in heaven, on earth, and in the nether regions by His Father, by the Holy Ghost, by His Blessed Mother, His angels, His saints, and by all creation. And he advises that we should do it by acts similar in all due proportion to those he has just described.

For the holy recitation of the Little Office of Our Lady or of the Rosary he recommends practices of the same sort that will be found in Part VI of *Le Royaume de Jésus*.

D. THE HABIT OF PRAYER

How to pray always.

Yet another way of praying, as St. John tells us, consists in "performing all our actions in a Christian and holy manner, offering even the smallest of them to Our Lord when we begin them, and

from time to time raising our hearts to Him as we perform these actions... For to do them in this way is to do them in the spirit of prayer and to be continually praying, thereby fulfilling the commandment of Our Lord who would have us 'pray without ceasing.'"(1) This is an excellent and very simple way of being always in the presence of God.» (2)

Elsewhere the Saint returns to the same thought: "By means of the aforesaid practices, and by frequent elevations of the mind and heart to God, your whole life will belong to Jesus, all your actions will glorify Him, you will walk always before Him, and you will

(1).1 Thess. v, 17,

(2) Royaume de Jésus, 1, n. xiv.

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always be in His presence; for this is the true and the simplest means of being always in God's presence and of continually loving Him.

"I know quite well that he who is in the grace of God and who offers Him every morning all that he is about to do throughout the day, even though during the day he gives no thought to God, none the less thereby causes all his actions to glorify God (so long as they are not of themselves evil). But since Our Lord Jesus has offered for us to His Father all His actions upon earth, and thinks of us and loves us every moment, that man would need to have very little knowledge and love of Jesus to think of Him only once or twice a day. Certainly, if we truly love our Adorable Saviour we must find all our happiness in thinking of Him and in frequently raising our minds and hearts to Him, which can be done without any trouble or forcing of the mind, but quite easily and gently. For with the help of His grace which is never lacking, and with a little care and fidelity on our part, we become so accustomed to this holy practice that it almost becomes part of our nature.

Ejaculatory prayer.

"To prove that, I will tell you the true story of a priest I knew whose name is written in the book of life. This priest, by the constant exercise of this practice, reached the stage at which he could, while taking his meals, easily make acts of love of Jesus almost as many as the morsels he put in his mouth; and this he did not only without any forcing of his mind or any inconvenience or any harm to his health, but even with such facility and gentleness that it in no way prevented him from speaking and from taking charitable recreation

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with his neighbour whenever in company or whenever the occasion presented itself. I do not tell you this in order that you might do the same, for then you would at once say that I was asking something very difficult of you; but I tell you so that you may know the great power of a holy habit, and how wrong the world is in imagining a thousand difficulties and trials where in reality there is but charm and delight."(1)

So we see that for St. John the habit or spirit of prayer is a duty of thankfulness and a necessity of the heart. He constantly recommends it. In very truth his book *Le Royaume de Jésus* is nothing but an initiation into the interior life and the habit of prayer. And the same may be said of his *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*. And what the Saint so insistently recommended he himself was the first to practise; it is, in fact, perfectly clear, and Père Hérambourg definitely asserts as much, that the priest in the story just quoted is none other than the Saint himself.

E. HOLY MASS

Holy Mass, which St. Francis de Sales calls "the sun of pious exercises," is a prayer; but it is a prayer of a particular kind, for it is the sacrifice of the new law and the representation and continuation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. St. John gives several pages of *Le Royaume de Jésus* (2) to showing us how to assist at it with most profit. Here, as everywhere, he rests his teaching on the great principle that being members of Jesus Christ we make but one with Him:

"As soon as you leave your house to go to Mass," he
(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, VI, n. xix.
(2). VI, n. xxiv-xxx.

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says, "you must reflect that you are going not merely to assist or to witness, but that you are actually going to perform an action which is the most holy and divine, the greatest and most important, the loftiest and most wonderful that can be done in heaven or on earth. And reflect, too, that consequently it must be performed in a holy and sacred way, i.e. with holy and sacred dispositions, and with the utmost care and application of mind and heart, as being the most important affair on earth. I said 'you are going to perform,' forevery Christian being but one with Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Priest, and consequently being a sharer in His divine Priesthood (for which reason all are called priests in Scripture), he has a right not only to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, but also to perform with the priest what the latter does, that is, to offer with him and even with Christ the Sacrifice which is offered to God on the altar. "

**All who attend
both sacrificers
and victims.**

A little further on the Saint reminds us: "You must remember that Christians being one **are** with Jesus, as the members with their head, for which reason they share in all His qualities, and Jesus in this sacrifice being both priest and victim; so, similarly, all those who assist at that Sacrifice must assist as priests or sacrificers for the purpose of offering with Christ, the Sovereign Priest, the very Sacrifice that He offers. And also they are present as holocausts and victims, making but one victim, just as they make but one priest, with Jesus Christ, and so they must be immolated and sacrificed with the same Jesus Christ to the glory of God."

The Saint then goes on to explain what we must do

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in our double character of priest and victim: "And therefore," he says, "since you share in the divine Priesthood of Jesus Christ and as a Christian and a member of Christ bear the name and character of priest, you must exercise that character and use the right that it gives you of offering to God, along with the priest at the altar and even with Our Lord, the Sacrifice of His Body and Blood which is offered to Him in Holy Mass. Moreover, you must offer it, so far as is possible, with the very dispositions with which it is offered to Him by Jesus Christ. And how holy and divine are those dispositions! What humility they express, what purity and holiness, what detachment from self and from all creation, what attention to God, what charity for mankind, and what love for His Father! Unite yourself by desire and intention with those dispositions of Jesus, beg Him to impress them on you, so that you may offer the divine Sacrifice with Him, in union with His own dispositions.

Intentions at Mass.

"Unite yourself also with the intentions for which He offers it. He has five principal intentions, of which the first is to honour

His Father in all that He is in Himself and in all things, and to render Him an honour, a glory, and a love that is worthy of Him. The second is to give Him thanks that are worthy of His goodness, and of all the benefits He has ever conferred on creatures. The third is fully to satisfy for all the sins of the world. The fourth is for the fulfilment of His plans and His will. And the fifth is to pray for all that is necessary for mankind, whether for the soul or for the body. In conformity with these intentions you should offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

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«(1) In honour of the Most Holy Trinity, in honour of all that Jesus is in Himself, in all His states, mysteries, qualities, virtues, actions, and sufferings, and in honour of all that He is and all that He does, either in mercy or in justice, in His Holy Mother, in all the angels and saints, in His Church (Triumphant, Militant, and Suffering), and in all creation in heaven, on earth, or in hell:

«(2) in thanksgiving to God for all the blessings and graces, temporal or eternal, that He ever communicated to the Sacred Humanity of His Son, to the Blessed Virgin, to all angels and men, to all creatures and especially to yourself;

«(3) in satisfaction to His divine justice for all your sins, for the sins of the whole world, and especially for those of the poor souls in Purgatory;

«(4) for the accomplishment of all His plans and desires, especially His plans in regard to yourself;

«(5) to obtain from His bounty all the graces necessary for you and for all men, so that He may be served and honoured by all with all the perfection that He demands from each of us.»

"That," continues St. John, "is what you must do as priest. But besides that, you must, as victim, when offering Jesus as a victim to the Father in Holy Mass, offer yourself also with Him as a victim; or rather beseech Jesus to come into you and draw you into Himself, so that He unites Himself to you and unites and incorporates you with Him as a victim, to sacrifice you with Himself to the glory of His Father.

«And because the victim to be sacrificed must be

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The spirit of sacrifice must be in us.

slain and then consumed in the fire ask Him to cause you to die to your self, i.e. to your passions, to your self-love, and to all that displeases Him; ask Him to consume you in the sacred fire of His divine love, and to bring it about that henceforth your whole life may be a perpetual sacrifice of praise, of glory and of love for His Father and for Himself.»

And after recommending the reader to communicate sacramentally or at least spiritually, the Saint concludes with these words: "After thanking Our Lord for the graces given you during Mass, go your way with the firm resolution of thoroughly utilising the day in His service, and with the thought in your mind that henceforth you have to be a victim that is both dead and alive: dead to all that is not God, and alive in God and for God, totally consecrated and sacrificed to the pure glory and the most pure love of God. Protest to Our Lord that this is your desire and that you offer yourself to Him to do and to suffer for this purpose all that He pleases. Beg Him to bring this about in you by His great mercy; beseech Him to give you the grace to raise your heart frequently to Him throughout the day, to do nothing save for His glory, to die rather than offend Him; and implore Him, for this purpose, to give you His Sacred Blessing."

And so we see that the Saint would have us add to the spirit of prayer the spirit of sacrifice. For it is by this two-fold means that we are enabled to lead a holy life entirely conformed to that of our head, which life is itself a continual prayer and a perpetually renewed sacrifice.

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F. EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Taken by itself examination of conscience is not prayer, but in practice it is always accompanied by prayers intended to ensure its success. Furthermore, it is often, especially in the evening, one of the elements of prayer; and sometimes, as we shall see, it is even changed almost entirely into prayer.

St. John introduced into his Congregation of priests the three examinations customary in the Oratory, to wit: that of the morning, the examination before midday, and that of the evening. His view of them was the same as that of Bérulle and Condren, but in his *Manuel de Piété* he determined the subject and fixed the method more precisely than did they.

How to make the morning examination.

The morning examination is anticipatory and follows the conclusion of the morning's prayer. This is how the Saint requires it to be practised: "Let every one make an anticipatory examination, that is, let him foresee the faults into which he is accustomed to fall and the occasions of it that are likely to occur during the day; as also the virtues that he is particularly called upon to practise, especially humility, obedience, charity, and meekness. Let him make a resolution of avoiding the one and embracing the other, and let him ask the necessary grace from God."⁽¹⁾

These four virtues mentioned by the Saint are those which he loved to contemplate in the Heart of Jesus and the practice of which he specially recommended. This is shown by the beautiful prayer that superiors of his houses recite every day during the visit to the

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, 111, 272.

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Blessed Sacrament that follows supper: *Christus Jesus, mitis et humilis Corde, propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, humiliavit semetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem crucis: itaque omnia nostra in humilitate et obediencia et charitate et mansuetudine fiant.* (1) We shall shortly see that they also form the principal subject of the evening examination.

The evening examination.

This takes place at the evening prayer and concerns itself with the faults committed during the day. It begins with an act of adoration and of respectful submission to the Sovereign judge: "Let us adore Our Lord Jesus Christ,- cries the Saint, "as our sovereign judge and submit ourselves to His power of judging us. Let us adore and bless Him in the judgment that He exercises, and in the sentence that He will pronounce on us at the hour of death, whatever it may be; and let us beg Him to make us sharers in the light, by which He will make us see our sins, and in His divine justice, so that we may know and detest the sins we have this day committed."

Therein we can see the spirit of the French School, preoccupied before all else with giving to Jesus the honour that is His due and always careful to place His interests before our own, and to urge generous souls to the practice of pure love.

There then follows the actual examination itself "Let us examine ourselves," he says, "on the faults we have committed to-day in thought, word, and deed, and especially on those to which we are most addicted, and on those that we have committed contrary to the
(1). Ibid., 111, 311.

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resolutions taken during the morning prayer, and against *humility, obedience, charity and meekness.*"

The examination concludes with an act of contrition and of amendment: "Let us beg God," writes the Saint, "to give us a true spirit of repentance and contrition. Let us give ourselves to the Son of God to share with Him the humiliation, contrition, and penitence that He bore for our sins. Let us detest them because He detests them. Let us promise to correct them by means of His grace out of love for Him; and let us offer to the Eternal Father the life and virtues, the passion and death of His Son together with the merits of His Blessed Mother and of all the Church in satisfaction for our offences.

"Let us beg the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Gabriel, our good angels, and all the angels and saints to supply for our deficiencies, to ask pardon for us from God, and to obtain for us the grace of a true conversion."

Inspired by desire for the glory of God rather than our own sanctification.

The spirit that inspires these acts is always the same. They all tend to the glory of God more than to our personal sanctification and lead to the kindling of pure love.

This examination is followed by prayers animated by the same spirit which express, together with sorrow for past sins, a desire for a true and sincere conversion. These are the prayers in question:

Peccavimus, Domine, peccavimus in coelum et coram te. Parce, clementissime Pater, Parce famulis tuis, quos redemisti pretioso sanguine dilectissimi Filii tui, et Propitius esto nobis vilissimis peccatoribus, peccata nostra

toto corde detestantibus propter te et tibi soli vivere cupientibus.

V. Converte nos, Deus salutaris noster.

R. Et averte iram tuam a nobis.

OREMUS. Respice, quaesumus, Domine, super hanc familiam tuam, toto corde tibi prostratam et ex nulla virtute sua subsistentem, sed in sola misericordia tua confidentem; ut eam, beata Maria semper virgine intercedente, cum beatis Gabriele, Joseph, ac omnibus sanctis, ab omni iniquitate emundes atque custodias et a te nunquam separari permittas, sed corde magno et animo volenti tuae facias inhaerere voluntati. Per Dominum. (1)

**The midday
examination:
our interior
dispositions.**

The examination made before noon follows the recitation of the litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus or other litanies in honour of certain mysteries of the Incarnate Word. Its subject is not the faults committed, but the interior dispositions which ought to animate us in all the details of our lives. The subject varies in accordance with the weeks and days of the month.

Thus, during the first week, the examination concerns the particular virtues we ought to practise and also the mysteries and saints that we ought to honour during the year or the month. The object is the same for every day of the week.

During the second week the subject is God and His attributes, so that on Sunday it is the Blessed Trinity that is considered, on Monday the Divine Will, on Tuesday God's love for Himself, on Wednesday His love for His creatures, on Thursday the Divine Mercy,
(1). Oeuvres complètes, III, pp. 313-315.

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on Friday the Divine justice, and on Saturday the holiness of God.

In the third week the examen bears on the qualities and titles of the Incarnate Word. Thus St. John invites us to adore Jesus on the various days of the week respectively as the only Son of the Father, as the principle of the Holy Ghost, as our Redeemer, as our Superior and Father, as our Head, as Priest and Victim, and as the only Son of Mary.

During the fourth week we are to reflect on the virtues of Jesus, taking respectively for each successive day His love for His Father, His humility, His patience, His dearest virtue, namely purity, His charity for mankind, His obedience, and His love for His Holy Mother.

As for the way this examination is made: it is always the same. The Saint explains it in a very short but precise phrase in which he enumerates the acts to be made. These are four in number: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and an offering of self, or, if you like, adherence. Here are a few passages from his writings that will serve as examples and will show better than any analysis the method recommended by the Saint:

**Suggested "acts"
f or this
examination.**

"Let us adore Our Lord Jesus Christ in the particular virtues that we have to practise this year and this month, and also in the mysteries and saints we have to honour.

"Let us thank Him for the honour He has given His Father by the practice of these virtues, by these mysteries and these saints; and also for the favours He gave these same saints, and the graces He has given us by their intercession and by these same mysteries.

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"Let us ask pardon of Him for the faults committed against the aforesaid virtues.

"Let us give ourselves to Him to honour these mysteries and saints and to practise these virtues with all the perfection that He asks of us, and beg Him to eradicate in us everything that can hinder us, and to give us the necessary grace. For this end let us invoke the prayers of our saints for this month....

"Let us adore with Jesus the Most Holy Trinity, all that it is in Itself and in all Its works in heaven, on earth, and in hell. Let us rejoice in It, thank It, ask pardon of It, and give ourselves to Its infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, so that It may destroy in us everything displeasing to It, and may possess and rule us, and establish for ever the rule of Its glory in our souls and bodies....

"Let us adore Jesus as the only Son of God and as one God with His Father and the Holy Ghost; as our Creator, preserver and governor, also as our Brother who has made us children of God and has given us His Father to be our Father. Let us thank Him for that, and ask His pardon for our misuse of His favours. Let us give ourselves to Him and beseech Him to make us sharers of His love for His Father and of His zeal for His glory....

"Let us adore Jesus in His most pure love of His Father and in the perfect submission He has always had to the Divine Will, and thank Him for the honour rendered to the Father by the practice of these virtues, asking His pardon at the same time for the faults we have committed against these same virtues. Let us give ourselves to Him so as to share in this love and submission; and let us beg the Blessed Virgin, the

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angels and the saints, to obtain for us this grace ...(1)

It is clear that examination of conscience has no place, or very little place, in all this. Rather does this exercise comprise a summary view of the imperfect way in which we have acquitted ourselves of certain duties incumbent upon us as Christians or as priests. Fundamentally it reduces itself to a prayer with a special subject, the acts of which, however, are those recommended by all the masters of the French School.

(1) *Oeuvres complètes*, 111, 286. This is all certainly a kind of particular examen, but it in no way resembles the particular examen and the spiritual book-keeping to be found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, which St. John never mentions at all.

CHAPTER V

THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

**St. John was
always practical.**

ST. JOHN often wrote of the Christian virtues, but always from a practical point of view (1), and it is useless to search his works for a dogmatic study on the nature of the virtues, their origin and progress, or their connections with each other and with sanctifying grace. For the Saint put speculative questions on one side, and concerned himself solely with what can help souls to acquire true and solid virtues. He has much to say on this subject in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, and begins by showing the excellence of the Christian virtues in general and how to practise them. Then he attends particularly to those which seem to him to be the most necessary and most important. We will here do the same, and in explaining his doctrine need scarcely do more than let him speak for himself.

**A. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN
VIRTUES AND HOW TO PRACTISE THEM**

Since the Christian life is but a participation in the life of Jesus, the Christian virtues, in which that life

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxii-xxxvii; *Regulae vitae christianae et sacerdotalis*, Part II; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, III, IV, V. See also *Constitutions de Notre-Dame de Charité*, *L'Enfance admirable*, *Le Coeur admirable*, *Méditations sur l'humilité*, etc.

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finds its full development, are also simply a continuation and reproduction in each of us of the Saviour's virtues. It is in His school that we must study them, it is on His grace that we must rely if we are to practise them, and it is through love of Him that we must exercise them.

St. John Eudes sadly observes that even amongst the faithful true and solid virtues are rare. "There are," he says, «many persons who esteem virtue, desire it, seek it, and take great trouble and labour to acquire it, and yet we see very few who are adorned by true and solid Christian virtues.» And, asking the reason for this, he replies that "one of the main causes is that these persons conduct their search for virtue not so much in the spirit of Christianity as in that of the pagan philosophers and of heretics, that is to say not so much in the spirit of Jesus Christ and of the divine grace that He has acquired for us by His Blood, as in that of human nature and reason." (1) And he fixes on

(1). We see many who either every day or every week very carefully select certain virtues to be practised, and who keep a sharp look-out to see whether they neglect any opportunities that arise for practising them, and note their falls carefully for the purpose of confessing them and, if possible, of avoiding them for the future. But after practising this for a long time it is clear that they have derived little profit from it, *because they forget the inner aspect of the matter and do not enter into the spirit of the virtue in question, nor do they practise it with the suitable and necessary dispositions. . . . Every virtue has a spirit which is its essence or rather its soul and the form that vivifies and perfects it. Now those who would live the life of grace and acquire solid and Christian virtues must most carefully attend to these dispositions so as to make them their own, if they are to perform their actions perfectly; for without this, virtue is but external and superficial. And, moreover, they must know and seek the spirit of virtue or (as some say) its essence, so that when they practise this same virtue they can do so with its own spirit: that is to say, as they perform the external action they can have the internal*

sentiment or spirit of the virtue in question" (Quarré: *Le trésor spirituel*, 1638, pp. 157-158). Père Quarré's teaching is obviously the same as that of St. John Eudes. Both of them tell us that *external* acts of virtue are nothing without its *internal dispositions*, which constitute what they term "the spirit of grace," "the spirit of virtue," or "the spirit of Jesus. « For in their eyes the spirit of Jesus means the intimate dispositions of His Heart or the Holy Ghost which communicates them to Him. This is, in fact, a commentary on St. Paul's saying: *Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei*. Let us note in passing that these principles are constantly to be found in the teachings of the French school, and that is why writers of that school so often speak to us of the Christian spirit, the spirit of prayer, the interior spirit, the spirit of the various mysteries, and the spirit of the virtues.

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three points as the source of the error of those who pursue virtue in too natural and human a manner:

Mistaken attitude towards the virtues.

---1. They look upon virtue," he says, -simply with the eyes of human reason, esteem it as something in itself most excellent, in conformity with reason and necessary for the perfection of man to distinguish him from the beasts who are governed purely by the senses; and by these considerations, which are more human than Christian, they move themselves to desire and to acquire it.

---2. They persuade themselves that they can acquire it by their own efforts, by taking pains, by vigilance, by reflection, resolution and actual practice. And therein they greatly deceive themselves, for they ignore the fact that it is impossible for us to perform the smallest act of Christian virtue without the help of divine grace.

---3. They love virtue and strive to acquire it, but not so much for God and for His glory as for themselves, i.e., for the sake of their own merit, self-interest, and satisfaction, and for the purpose of making themselves more worthy and accomplished; which is the way in which pagans, and heretics, desire and seek it. Even

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the very devils desire it in this way, for, being full of pride, they desire everything that can serve to make them more distinguished and outstanding. And so, since virtue is a most noble and excellent thing, they desire to have it: not in order that they may be more pleasing to God, but out of a spirit of pride and of self-esteem."(1)

The virtues acquired by acting in this way are not Christian virtues; they are natural and purely human virtues: human in the idea formed of them, in their principle, and in their end, which is self-love. «They have no foundation and no stability,» says St. John, "for they rest only on the weak human mind and reason and on the shifting sand of self-love and vanity."

The true view of virtue.

But Christians who in the search for virtue act in accordance with the spirit of Jesus Christ, take a very different course. As St. John tells us:

«1. They consider virtue, not merely in itself, but in its principle and source, that is to say in Jesus who is the source of all grace, who eminently and in a sovereign degree possesses every kind of virtue,

and in whom virtue is of infinite worth. For since everything in Jesus

(1). M. Henri Bremond seems to think that these words are directed against St. Ignatius and his followers. Such is not our opinion. St. John is not attacking any writer, or any school of asceticism; he attacks only the purely natural *spirit* with which certain persons, including Christians, and even Religious, seek after virtue. So little does he attack the school of St. Ignatius that he ranks the works of Rodriguez and *Le saint travail des mains* of Père Thomas Le Blanc amongst the books that he would have in the hands of the novices of his Congregation. So, too, he would have the treatises on humility and obedience by Rodriguez and Le Blanc read in the houses of his institute after the reading of the *Constitutions* which is obligatory twice every year. Cf. Bremond: *L'École française*, pp. 135 sq. *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, Oct. 1922, p. 423; and *Eudes Oeuvres complètes*, IX, pp. 252, 264, 301.

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is holy, divine and adorable, virtue is sanctified and deified in Him and consequently is worthy of infinite honour and adoration. And therefore, if we consider virtue in Jesus Christ, that consideration will be infinitely more potent in leading us to esteem, love, and seek it, than if we were to regard it merely in respect to its intrinsic excellence, and the esteem in which it is held by human reason.

"2. Those who are guided by the Christian spirit in practising the virtues know very well that they cannot perform the smallest act of virtue by themselves; that, on the contrary, if God should withdraw Himself from them, they would at once fall into an abyss of all sorts of vices; and that since virtue is a pure gift of God they must ask for it confidently and perseveringly. Therefore they continually ask God for the virtues that they require, without ever wearying; and at the same time for their part they bring the greatest possible care, vigilance, and toil to their efforts at acquiring it. Yet they take good care not to trust to, or to rely on, their own carefulness or practices, their desires or resolutions, nor even to the prayers they offer to God on this subject; but they await everything from the pure goodness of God, and are in no way anxious when they cannot perceive in themselves the virtues they desire.(1)

(1). The principle here pronounced by St. John is often to be found in his works. For instance, here is how he repeats it in connection with confidence in God: «we must take as much care,» he says, «and must so labour, as if we expected no help from God; and yet we must no more depend on our own care and labour than if we had done nothing at all, but expect everything solely from God's mercy.» The same teaching is attributed to St. Ignatius, who says: "*Haec Prima sit agendorum regulae: Sic Deo fide, quasi rerum successus omnis a te, nihil a Deo penderet; ita tamen iis operam omnem admove, quasi tu nihil, Deus omnia solus sit factur.*» Or, as Père Brou translates this. «The golden rule of action is: To have the utmost

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Instead of being troubled and discouraged, they rest peacefully and humbly before God, realising that it is due to their own fault and their own faithlessness. For they know that if God treated them as they deserved, not only would He give them none of the things for which they asked, but He would even deprive them of all the graces He had ever given them. They know, in fact, that He shows them too much kindness in not entirely rejecting and abandoning them. And this knowledge kindles a new fire of love in them, and a new confidence in that infinite goodness, together with an ardent desire to seek in every possible way the virtues necessary to them if they are to serve and glorify Him.

«3. It is not for their own sakes, for their own satisfaction or reward that they desire virtue and frequently strive to practise interior and exterior acts of love of God, of charity towards their neighbour, of patience, obedience, and humility, and of mortification and the other Christian virtues. They do this, not for their own sakes, but for God's pleasure and for His interests, in order to make themselves similar to their Head, who is Jesus Christ, to glorify Him, and to continue the exercise of

the virtues which He put into practice upon earth; and it is in this that Christian virtue properly

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consists. For, just as the Christian life is nothing else but a continuation of the life of Christ, so, too, Christian virtues are a continuation and completion of His virtues. And if virtues are to be put into practice in a Christian manner, it must be in the spirit in which Jesus practised them and with the motives and intentions that were His. Thus Christian humility is seen to be a continuation of the Humility of Our Lord; Christian charity a continuation of His charity, and so with the other virtues."

And the Saint sums up his teaching with these words:

"In short, Christian virtues are the actual virtues of Christ, with which we must be clothed, and which He communicates to those who adhere to Him, who ask for them with humility and confidence, and who try to practise them as He practised them." Thus, then, union, prayer, and practice are the ways recommended by St. John for acquiring these virtues.

But so as to be sure of being correctly understood, and for the purpose of helping simple souls to apply these principles, he illustrates in a separate chapter in greater detail how we should practise virtue:

How to acquire a particular virtue.

"When," says the Saint, "you desire to advance in perfection in regard to a given virtue:

1. Adore it in Our Lord, and reflect how marked was this virtue in Him, and with what perfection He exercised it throughout His life.

2. Seeing yourself so remote from this perfection, humble yourself before Him, asking His pardon for all your failures in practising this virtue, acknowledging that you have no power of yourself to practise it in

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, 11, n. xxii.

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the slightest degree, and that you are quite unworthy of receiving the necessary grace, and begging Him, none the less, to give you in His great mercy the grace to practise this virtue whenever occasion shall arise.

3. Often give yourself to Jesus with a great desire of practising this virtue with all the perfection that He asks of you, and beg Him to destroy in you everything contrary to it, and to establish it firmly in you for His pure glory.

4. Take care actually to practise this virtue by interior acts and exterior consequences, uniting yourself to the dispositions and intentions with which Jesus Christ exercised these same virtues."

And, with his usual wisdom, he adds: "Whenever you commit some fault contrary to that virtue, be not troubled or discouraged but humble yourself before God, asking His pardon for it and offering Him in satisfaction for your fault all the honour that His Beloved Son and Holy Mother rendered to Him by the exercise of this same virtue. Then give yourself to Jesus with a new desire of being faithful to Him henceforth in the practice of that virtue, and beg Him in His great mercy to repair your fault and to give you new grace with which the better to practise that virtue as occasion offers."(1)

There we see the fundamental principles of the French School applied to the Christian virtues. Whether it be a matter of the idea of the Christian life, of prayer, the virtues, or of any other pious exercise, we find them always and everywhere.

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxiii.

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B. THE CHRISTIAN VIRTUES IN PARTICULAR

The Christian virtues of which St. John treats in particular in *Le Royaume de Jésus* are humility, confidence in God, submission to the divine will, charity towards our neighbour, zeal and love of the cross.

It may perhaps cause surprise that he does not deal with faith, with love of God, or with religion, which, with hope, are the most excellent of the virtues. The reason is that before broaching the virtues the Saint discusses what he calls the *foundations* of the Christian life, and these, in his view, are faith, charity with its accompanying dispositions (hatred of sin, of the world, and of self), and finally prayer, which is one of the acts of the virtue of religion.

**The foundations
of a Christian
life: faith, hatred
of sin, prayer.**

"The first foundation of the Christian life," he writes, "is faith. For St. Paul tells us that 'without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is'. (1) 'Faith,' says the same Apostle, 'is the substance of things to be hoped for'; (2) it is indeed the foundation stone of the house and the kingdom of Christ. It is a heavenly and divine light, a participation in the eternal inaccessible light from the countenance of God; or, in Scriptural terms, faith is 'the light of thy countenance, O Lord, (which) is signed upon us'. (3) It is a communication, and as it were an extension of the light and the divine knowledge which was infused into the holy soul of Jesus at the moment of His Incarnation. It is the science of salvation, of the Saints, of God, which Christ drew from the bosom of His Father,

(2). Heb. xi, 6.

(3). Heb. xi, 1.

(4) *Ps.* iv, 7.

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and which He brought to us on earth to dissipate our darkness, to illuminate our hearts, and to give us the knowledge necessary to us if we are to serve and love God perfectly. Thereby He would subject our minds to the truths which He taught us and still teaches us both in His own Person and through His Church. By this means He would express, continue and complete in us that voluntary submission, docility, and subjection displayed by His human mind in regard to the lights communicated to Him by His Eternal Father and the truths taught Him by the Father. So it is that faith, which is given to us for the purpose of leading our minds to belief in the truths announced by God, is a continuation and a completion of the loving and perfect submission of the human mind of Jesus to the truths, declared to Him by His Eternal Father.

"And it is this light, this divine knowledge, that gives us, so far as is possible in this life, perfect knowledge of everything that is in God and outside God. Reason and human science too often deceive us, because they have too weak and limited a light to enable them to attain to a knowledge of the

things of God, which are infinite and incomprehensible. Moreover, in consequence of the corruption of sin, human science and reason are too full of shadows and obscurities to be able to have a true knowledge even of the things that are outside God. But since the light of faith is a participation in the truth and light of God, it cannot deceive us, rather does it make us see things as God sees them, that is to say in all their truth and as they appear in the eyes of God."

Then, having briefly summed up the teachings of faith on God, Jesus Christ, the Church and ourselves,

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the Saint thus concludes: "We have, then, to see all things not in the vanity of our senses, nor with the eyes of the flesh, nor with the limited and deceptive view of science and reason, but in the truth of God and with the eyes of Christ, i.e., with that true light that He draws from the bosom of the Father, with which He sees and knows everything. This He communicates to us so that we may see and know all things even as He sees and knows them."

So it was with St. John Eudes. He lived in the supernatural world and looked at everything from the point of view of faith. His books are little more than an exposition of the purest teaching of the Gospels which he strove to inculcate in his readers, and with which he would have them be penetrated to the marrow.

**Our actions must
be governed by
faith.**

But faith is not merely a light for the intellect, it is also a rule of conduct to which we must conform our whole life if we wish it to be really a copy and a continuation of that of Jesus: "Just as we must see all things in the light of faith," says the Saint, "if we are truly to know them, so also we must regulate all our actions by this same light if we are to do them in a holy fashion. For, as God rules His actions by His divine wisdom, as the angels rule theirs by their angelic intelligence, men of the world by worldly maxims, and the voluptuous by their senses, so also Christians must rule themselves by the light with which their Head, Jesus Christ, governs himself, i.e. by the faith that is a participation in the knowledge and the light of Christ.

"That is why we have to strive by every means fully to comprehend this divine science, and never to under

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take anything save under its control. For that purpose we should place ourselves at the feet of God at the beginning of our actions (especially the more important ones), adoring Him as the author and consummator of faith, and as the true light, the Father of lights, who enlightens all men coming into the world.

"We must remember, too, that of ourselves we are but shadows and that all the lights of human reason, knowledge, and even experience are frequently but obscurities and illusions, on which we can place no confidence. Let us renounce worldly wisdom and the prudence of the flesh; let us beg Jesus to destroy them in us as being His enemies and not to allow us to follow their laws and maxims. Let us rather beseech Him to enlighten us with His heavenly light, to guide us by His divine wisdom, to make us know what is most agreeable to Him, and to give us grace and strength to stand bravely by His words and promises, to be deaf always to all considerations and persuasions of human prudence, courageously preferring the truths and maxims of the faith He teaches us by His Gospel and by His Church to the

reasonings and speeches of men who are guided by worldly principles."

Furthermore the Saint invites us to read on our knees See all things with every day a chapter of the Life of the eyes of Jesus. Jesus, i.e., of the New Testament, so that, as he says, 'We may learn the details of His life, and, by reflecting on His actions, His virtues, and His words, note the rules and maxims which He followed and which He would have us follow. For Christian prudence consists in renouncing the maxims of worldly prudence, in invoking the spirit of Jesus Christ that He may enlighten us and guide us by

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His maxims, and in asking Him to govern us by the truths He has taught us in pursuance of the virtues and actions that He practised."(1)

The faith teaches us to think like Jesus, to see all things "with His eyes," but that alone is not sufficient. If we are to be truly Christian we must clothe ourselves with His feelings, in accordance with St. Paul's exhortation: *Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu.* (2) "But," writes St. John Eudes, "Jesus Christ had in Himself two kinds of extremely contrary feelings: infinite love for His Father and for us, and extreme hatred of what is contrary to the glory of His Father and our salvation, i.e., sin. For since He infinitely loved His Father and us, so He infinitely hated sin. So greatly does He love His Father, and so greatly does He love us, that He performed infinitely great things, suffered appalling torments, and lived a life supremely precious for the glory of God and our love. On the other hand, so great was His horror of sin that He came down from heaven to earth, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, lived for thirty-four years a life full of toil, of contempt and of suffering, shed His blood to the last drop, and died the most shameful and cruel of all deaths; and all that through His hatred of sin and His extreme desire to eradicate it in us.» (3)

Consequently hatred of sin and of all that leads to it, i.e., the world and the flesh, is a fundamental condition of every Christian life. St. John explains this with his usual lucidity and vigour. And if he does not dwell on positive love of God at this point, it is because his book *Le Royaume de Jésus* entirely turns on that sub

(1). *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. iv, v.*

(2). *Phil. ii, 5.*

(3). *Royaume de Jésus, II, n. vi,*

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ject. In it the author constantly praises the practice of pure love.

The same is true of the virtue of religion. St. John does not devote a special chapter to it, but he deals with prayer, the Divine Office, Holy Mass, and Christian devotion, and those are the chief exercises that go to make up the virtue of religion. And in the later editions of that book the author inserted a long chapter on Devotion to Holy Places, and this completed his teaching on the point.

C. HUMILITY

Humility is one of the virtues on which St. John most frequently dwelt. In his books on the Christian life and on devotion to the Sacred Hearts, in the Constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, in his prayers and offices, humility always has a prominent place, so necessary did this virtue seem to him for the leading of a truly Christian life.

**The most necessary
of all the virtues.**

He states, indeed, in *Le Royaume de Jésus* (1) that it is the most necessary of all the virtues, the virtue *par excellence* of Jesus Christ, and the proper and special virtue of Christians since it is the guardian of all graces and of all other virtues, and draws down the most abundant benedictions upon souls. It is, too, with holy love, the true measure of sanctity: "Give me," he says, "a truly humble soul, and I will declare him to be truly holy, adorned with every kind of virtue. In such a one God is greatly glorified, and in him Jesus dwells. For such a one is His treasure and paradise of delights," (1). 11, n. xxv-xxviii.

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and will be greatly exalted in the kingdom of God, according to the promise of Eternal Truth that 'he who humbles himself shall be exalted.' On the other hand, a soul devoid of humility is a soul without virtue, it is a hell, a dwelling-place of demons, and an abyss, of every kind of vice."

"Finally," he writes, "we may in some sort say that humility is the mother of Jesus, for it was by it that the Blessed Virgin was made worthy of giving Him birth. Moreover it is by this virtue that we shall become worthy of forming Him in our souls and of making Him live and reign in our hearts."

**(a) Humility of
the mind.**

Now, in humility the Saint distinguished two elements: humility of the mind and humility of the heart. Strictly speaking, humility of the mind is not the virtue of humility, it is only its condition, but a very necessary condition. It consists in a profound realisation of what we are in the eyes of God: "For," says St. John, "if we are to know ourselves thoroughly we must see ourselves not as we seem to be to the eyes and the deceptive judgment of men, and to the vanity and presumption of our own minds, but as we are in the eyes and judgment of God. And to do this, we must see ourselves in the light and truth of God, by means of faith."

Realisation of ourselves demands that we should reflect on what we are as human beings and on what we are as children of Adam and sinners. As human beings, we are but dust and nothingness, since we are creatures of God and derive from Him whatever of good there is in us. Of ourselves we have nothing, we can do nothing, we are nothing. For the creature, having

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issued from nothingness, is nothing, has nothing, and can do nothing of itself.

And as children of Adam and sinners, our condition is even more lamentable. St. John, who on this point as on so many others is in accord with all the writers of the French school, perhaps exaggerates the corruption of nature by original sin. At all events he speaks of it in very strong terms:

**Our miserable
conditions as
children of Adam.**

"As children of Adam and sinners," he writes, 'we are born in original sin, enemies of God and subjects of the devil. Thus we are held in abomination by heaven and earth, and are incapable of doing

any good or of avoiding any evil by our own powers. Our only means of salvation is to renounce Adam and all that we derive from him, to renounce ourselves, our self-will and our own powers, so as to give ourselves to Jesus and to share His spirit and His power.... So it is that by the just judgment of God we bear all the load of iniquity that Scripture calls the kingdom of death, which hinders us from doing works of freedom and life, i.e. of the true freedom and life which is that of the sons of God; we can but do the works of death and captivity, works that are far removed from the grace of God, His justice and His holiness.(1) How great is our misery and worthlessness, since it has made it necessary for the Son of God to purchase for us with His blood the smallest thought of serving God, and even permission for us to present ourselves before Him!"

'These last words strikingly tone down whatever might seem exaggerated in the picture of our original downfall drawn by the author. Understood in this way, there is nothing in his words that could displease the most suspicious of theologians.

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He goes on to add that "as children of Adam and sinners, we do not deserve to live or that the earth should support us, we do not deserve that God should think of us, or even that He should take the trouble of exercising His justice in regard to us. Well might the holy man job be astonished that God should deign to open His eyes to behold us and should take the trouble of judging us: '*Dignum ducis super hujuscemodi aperire oculos tuos, et adducere eum tecum in iudicium.*' (1) He does us a favour in allowing us into His presence and in allowing the earth to support us. If He did not work a miracle everything would contribute to our ruin and perdition; for there is that in sin which, withdrawing us from obedience to God, deprives us of all our rights, from which it follows that our existence, our lives, our souls, our bodies and all our powers no longer belong to us. Thus the sun no longer owes us its light, the stars their help, nor the earth its support; the air is no longer bound to enable us to breathe, the other elements are not bound to give us their various qualities, nor the plants their fruits, nor animals their services. Rather in such conditions must all creatures make war on us and use all their strength against us, since we employ ours against God, that so creation may avenge the injury we inflict on its Creator. The revenge which at the end of time the whole world will take on sinners ought to be brought to bear on us every day that we commit new sins; and in punishment of a single sin God might justly deprive us of life and of all the temporal and spiritual graces He has given us, and visit us with the direst punishments."

Folly of pride.

After sketching this sombre picture, the Saint
(1). Job. xiv, 3.

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expresses his astonishment that any man can become proud. "How strange it is," he exclaims, "to see creatures so mean and miserable as are we, trying to exalt themselves and to enhance their dignity! Truly the Holy Spirit has good reason for telling us by the pen of the Wise Man that He holds in aversion and horror a poverty-stricken man who is proud. For if pride is insupportable when found in anyone, what must it be in one whom poverty calls to an extreme humility. And yet it is a vice that is common to all men, although, however great they may appear in the eyes of the world, they always bear with them the marks of their infamy, namely their sinfulness, which should lead them to the utmost self-abasement before God and before all creatures. But, alas, sin makes us so vile and so infamous that we by no means desire to recognise our misery, thereby resembling Satan who, although by his slavery to sin he is the most worthless of creatures, is yet so proud as to refuse to accept his ignominy. This is what causes God to have such a horror of pride and vanity, for, knowing our baseness and worthlessness,

it is utterly insupportable to Him to see so vile a creature trying to aggrandise himself. And it is particularly hateful to Him in view of the fact that He who is greatness itself humbled Himself down to nothingness. After that, it is more than insupportable to Him to see nothingness trying to magnify itself."

Yet the Saint hastens to add: "But although as a man and as a child of Adam and a sinner you are such one as I have just pictured, yet as a child of God and member of Jesus Christ, if you are in His grace, you have in you a most noble and sublime being and life,

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and you possess an infinitely rich and precious treasure. And although humility makes you know what you are in yourself and in Adam, yet it must not hide from you what you are in Christ and by Christ, and it does not compel you to ignore the graces that God gives you through His Son ... but rather to realise that all that you have of good comes to you from the pure mercy of God."

(b) Humility of the heart.

Humility of the mind would be useless without humility of the heart; it would be what St. John calls a "diabolical humility." For the demons full well know their own nothingness and worthlessness. True humility, that which Our Lord would have us learn from Him, is humility of the heart. In a few lines St. John points out how to practise this humility.

"Humility of the heart," he says, -consists in loving our baseness and abjection, in being content to be obscure and contemptible, in treating ourselves as such, in rejoicing at being treated as such by others, so that we do not excuse or justify ourselves save in cases of great necessity, and never complain of anyone, remembering that since we have in us the source of all evil we deserve every kind of blame and harsh treatment. Therefore with all our heart we must love and embrace contempt, humiliation, shame, and everything that can abase us."

In *Le Royaume de Jésus*, in *Le Coeur admirable*, and in the *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie* the Saint recommends many acts of humility. However casually we glance at these, we perceive that they are in brief merely particular applications of rules laid

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down by the author in the few but pregnant lines that we have just quoted.

Elsewhere the Saint warns us that humility of heart consists not only in loving humiliations, but also in hating and fleeing from all display and vanity: "I say all display," he adds, "for it is not sufficient to despise temporal display and to have a horror of the vanity of human praise, but we must have an even greater horror of the vanity that proceeds from spiritual things, and we must fear and flee everything in our pious exercises that appears striking or extraordinary in the eyes of others; I refer to such things as visions, ecstasies, revelations, the gift of working miracles and the like. And not only must we on no account desire or ask God for these extraordinary graces; but even if the soul should be offered such things by God, we must shrink into the depths of our nothingness, consider ourselves utterly unworthy of such favours, and beg Him to give us some other grace instead, some grace less striking in the eyes of men, that will make the soul more in conformity with the hidden and despised life that He Himself led upon earth. For, just as Our Lord delights in heaping His ordinary and extraordinary graces upon us in the excess of His bounty, so also He is greatly pleased when He sees that, moved by a true feeling of our unworthiness and a desire to resemble Him in His humility, we flee everything that

is great in the eyes of mankind. And if anyone has not got this disposition he will lay himself open to the deceptions and illusions of the spirit of vanity."(1)

(1). The Saint adds: "But notice that I here speak of extraordinary things, and not of actions that are common and usual with all true servants of God, such as communicating frequently, falling on our knees at least in the morning and evening to perform our duties to God (and this in any place or company in which we may happen to be), accompanying the Blessed Sacrament in the street when it is carried to the sick, mortifying the flesh by fasting, taking the discipline, or some other means. Other such common actions are saying our Rosary, praying in a church, or in a house, or by the wayside, serving and visiting prisoners and the sick, and many other works of piety. I say I do not refer to doing all these things, for we must take great care that in desiring to omit such actions under the pretext of a false humility, we do not omit them rather through a real cowardice."

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"Furthermore," says St. John, "true humility of heart consists in being humble in the way that Jesus Christ was humble when upon earth, i.e., in always choosing in all things whatever is vilest and most humiliating and in being ready to be as much humiliated as was Jesus in His Incarnation, in His Passion, and in His Death.

The example set by Our Lord.

"In His Incarnation 'he emptied himself,' as St. Paul says, 'taking the form of a servant!'; He chose to be born in a stable, He subjected Himself to the helplessness and insignificance of childhood, and underwent a thousand other humiliations. In His Passion He describes Himself as 'a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.'² He bore the anger and the judgment of His Father the severity of which was so great that it caused Him to sweat blood so that the soil of the Garden of Olives was saturated with it, As He Himself assures us, He subjected Himself to the powers of darkness, the devils, who, acting through the Jews whom they possessed and through Pilate and Herod whom they influenced, made Him suffer every conceivable indignity. And so Uncreated Wisdom was treated by Herod and the soldiers as an imbecile; He was scourged and nailed to the cross like a slave or a robber; and the Father, who normally

(1). Phil. ii, 7.

(2). Ps. xxi, 7.

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would be His support, deserted Him and looked on Him as though He had committed all the crimes in the world. And finally, to speak with the language of His Apostle, He was 'made a curse for us,'(1) and even (terrible degradation though it be!) He was made, as it were, to sin by the power and justice of God, for so St. Paul tells us: *Deus eum pro nobis Peccatum fecit*: 'Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us' (2) which means that He bore not only the confusion and shame that sinners deserve, but also all the ignominies and infamies due to sin itself, which is the vilest and most ignominious state to which God can reduce even the greatest of His enemies. What a humiliation for a God, for the only Son of God, for the Sovereign Lord of the universe, to be reduced to such a state! O Lord Jesus is it possible that you so loved men that you went so far as this in your love for them? And you, man, how can it be that you still have any vanity, when you see your God thus abased for love of you? O my Saviour, let me be humbled with you, let me share your feelings of profound humility, and let me be ready to bear all the confusion and abasement that is fitting for the sinner and for sin itself!"

"Perfect Christian humility," the Saint concludes, consists in being disposed to desire to be

treated, not only as a sinner deserves, but also to bear all the ignominies and degradations due to sin itself, since Jesus our Head, the Saint of saints, and holiness itself, has borne them, and since we thoroughly deserve this treatment, being of ourselves but sinful and malediction. If these truths were only thoroughly impressed upon our minds, we would realise that we

(1). Gal. 111, 13.

(2). 11 Cor. v, 21.

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have good cause to cry out ... with St. Gertrude: 'Lord, one of the greatest miracles you have ever wrought is that the earth is permitted to bear me up.' "

Humility, then, as preached by the Saint, is not a matter for common souls. It calls for generous souls who give themselves entirely to Jesus and to His Holy Spirit, and who do not shrink from any sacrifice in walking in His footsteps and becoming perfect in His likeness.

D. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Confidence in God is one of the virtues of which souls stand most in need. St. John dwells lovingly on it in *his Royaume de Jésus*, and it may be said that this virtue is one of the dominant characteristics of his spirituality which resolves itself into love and confidence: a pure and generous love, and an unshakable confidence that leads the soul to abandon itself completely to God. This confidence that he strives to inculcate into souls goes so far that in his "preparation for death" he calls on his readers to celebrate in advance the happy day of their entry into Paradise.(1)

There is a close connection between confidence and humility, and this did not escape the Saint. For if humility is the mother of all the virtues, it is specially the mother of confidence in God. The sight of our incapacity for doing any good and of our inclination towards evil must, in fact, lead us to depart from ourselves so as to hide in Jesus and to seek strength

(1). It is clear that if the Saint, for the purpose of keeping us humble, paints a very dark picture of our original fall, he takes great care to raise us in our own eyes by reminding us of what we are in Christ, and he neglects no means of developing in us a true confidence in God. In short, his spirituality is extremely optimistic.

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and support in Him. He has been given to us by the Eternal Father to be our redemption, our virtue, our sanctification and treasure, our life and our all. He Himself invites us to come to Him with all confidence, saying: ---Cometo me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you,"(1) and He assures us that He will not cast aside anyone who has recourse to Him: *Eum qui venit ad me non ejiciam foras.* (2)

The grounds for confidence in God.

St. John, indeed, extracts and groups together in *Le Royaume de Jésus* the promises made by God to those who put their trust in Him, and after quoting numerous Scriptural texts he adds: "I should never end if I were to reproduce here all the other passages of Scripture in which God commends to us the virtue of confidence. It would seem that He can never sufficiently assure us in a thousand parts of the Bible how dear and delightful to Him this virtue is, and how He loves and cherishes those who trust Him and abandon themselves entirely to the Fatherly care of His divine Providence."

And after thus giving the promises contained in Holy Scripture, the Saint then quotes several beautiful passages taken from the writings of St. Gertrude and St. Mechtilde: "We read," he says, "in the third book of St. Gertrude's *Revelations* that Our Blessed Lord one day told this great saint that the filial confidence shown in Him by a Christian soul is that eye of the Well-Beloved of which the Divine Spouse speaks in the *Canticle of Canticles*: 'Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes'; for He went on to say to her that 'He who has an assured confidence

(1). Matt. xi, 28.

(2). John vi, 37.

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in me that I can and desire faithfully to assist him in everything, pierces my heart with an arrow of love; and so great an influence over me has this confidence that I can in no way absent myself from him."(1)

«And in St. Mechtilde's *Book on Special Grace* (2) we find that Jesus said to her: 'It is a special source of joy to me that men trust in my kindness and rely upon me. And consequently, I will specially succour in this life, and reward in the next life to an extent greater than he deserves, whoever greatly yet humbly trusts in me. The more anyone trusts in me and avails himself of my bounty, the more he will thereby profit, especially as it is impossible for a man not to obtain what he piously believes to have been promised him and hopes to obtain. And so, it is very useful for a man to hope for great things from me, and to put his trust completely in me.'

"And to this same saint, who asked God what was the chief thing that she should believe of His ineffable goodness, He replied: 'Believe with assurance that after death I will receive you even as the Father received His well-beloved Son, and that no father ever distributed all his means to his only son so completely and so affectionately as I shall make you a partaker in all that I have. He who firmly and with humble love believes that of my goodness, will be truly happy. (3)

"To strengthen us still more in this confidence,- continues the Saint, "our sweet and lovable Saviour adopts in regard to us the most gentle and loving titles and qualities that are possible; for He calls Himself and in fact is, our friend, advocate, healer, pastor brother, father, soul, mind, and the spouse of our souls,

(1). *Legatus pietatis*, Bk. III, vii.

(2). III, V.

(3). III, V.

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Similarly, He calls us His flock, His brethren, His children, His portion, His heritage, soul, and heart, and our souls He calls His spouses.-

Then to complete the task of convincing us of the love of Jesus for us, Père Eudes again has recourse to Holy Scripture and extracts there from certain texts which he later on introduced into his Office of the Sacred Heart:

The mercy and the love of God shown in Scripture.

"Jesus,- he says, -assures us in several parts of the Scriptures that He 'has care of all ... and does not give judgment unjustly,'(1) urging us to 'cast our care upon him, for he hath care of us ' (2)

'Hearken unto me ... who are carried by my bowels, are borne up by my womb. Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.' (3) Not once or twice, but five times does he tell us in this same passage that he will bear us up. And elsewhere He asserts: 'Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands; thy walls are always before my eyes'; (4) 'he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.' (5) Moreover He tells us not to be solicitous of what is necessary for feeding or clothing us, for He knows we need these things, and He will take care of us; (6) He says that He has counted the hairs of our heads and that none of these shall perish; (7) that His Father loves us as He loves Himself, and that He

(1). Wisdom, XII, 13.

(2). 1 Pet. v, 7.

(3). Isa. xlvi, 3-4.

(4)).Isa. xlix, 15.

(5). Zach. ii, 8.

(6). Matt. vi, 31-33.

(7). Matt. x, 30.

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(Jesus) loves us as His Father loves Him; (1) that He desires us to be where He is, (2) i.e., that we should repose with Him in the bosom of His Father; that we shall sit with Him on His throne, (3) and that in a word we are all only one, being completely united with Him and with His Father. (4) If we have offended Him, He promises that if we return to Him with humility, sorrow, confidence in His goodness, and a resolution to shun sin henceforth, He will receive us, will embrace us, and forgetting all our sins will reclothe us in the robe of His grace and His love, which we have lost through our own fault. (5)

"In view of all that, who will not have confidence, and who will not abandon himself entirely to the care and the guidance of a friend, a brother, a father, a spouse, whose infinite wisdom knows what is most advantageous for us, foresees all that can happen to us, and guides us to the goal of our sovereign happiness? Does not His marvellous kindness wish us every good, and is He not sufficiently powerful to be able to deflect from us all evil that might happen to us, and to secure us the happiness that He desires to procure for us? "

And lest we should be tempted to see merely vain promises in all this, the Saint calls on us to reflect on what Jesus has done for us in His Incarnation, in His Passion, and in His death, and what He still does for us every day in the Holy Eucharist. And he concludes by inviting us to go to Jesus with all confidence:

"Let us," he says, "have a great desire firmly to acquire this divine virtue; let us have no fear, but courageously form ambitious plans for most perfectly

(1). John xv, 9; xvii, 26.

(2). John xvii, 24.

(3). Apoc. iii, 21.

(4). John xvii, 21-23.

(5). Ezech. xvii, 21; Luke xv, 22.

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serving and loving our adorable and loving Jesus, and for undertaking great things for His glory, according as He may give us the power and the grace. For, although we can do nothing of ourselves, we can do everything in Him, and His help will not be lacking if we have confidence in His generosity.

Completely abandon yourself to God.

"Let us put ourselves in His hands, entirely abandoning to the paternal care of His divine Providence all that concerns us in body and soul, temporally and spiritually, our health, our reputation, our goods, our affairs, those who are connected with us, and our past sins. Let us equally abandon to His care the advancement of our souls in virtue and in His love, our life and our death, our salvation even and our eternity, being assured that in His pure goodness He will take particular care of them, and that He will dispose all things in the best possible manner."

In these few words St. John contrives to say much, and fully illustrates what he means by confidence and by complete abandonment to the divine goodness. But he is always practical, and so he warns us that if confidence in God banishes all anxiety it does not dispense us from toil and effort:

"Let us take great care," he says, "not to depend on the power or favour of our friends, or on our wealth, our own ability, knowledge, or strength, nor to place our reliance on our good desires, our prayers and resolutions, or even on the confidence that we feel we have in God, nor yet on human means or on any created thing, but solely on the mercy of God. It is not that we should fail to make use of all these things and for our part do all that we can to conquer vice, to practise

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virtue, and to fulfil the duties that God has entrusted to us and the obligations that attach to our position; but we must renounce all dependence and confidence that we might have in these things, and depend solely on the pure goodness of Our Lord. Consequently we must for our part take as much pains and care as if we expected nothing on the part of God; and yet none the less we must put no more trust in our own efforts than if we had done nothing at all but expected everything solely from God's mercy.

"And the Holy Spirit exhorts us in this sense, through the mouth of the Prophet-King, saying: *Revela Domino viam tuam, et spera in eo, et ipse faciet*; (1) and in another place: *jacta super Dominum curam tuam, et ipse te enutriet*. (2) So, too, speaking through the Prince of the Apostles, He urges us to cast all our care upon God, for He will take care of us: *Omnem sollicitudinem vestram Projicientes in eum, quoniam ipsi cura est de vobis*. (3) It is but what Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Siena: 'My daughter, forget yourself and think of me, and I will continually think of you'. (4)

"Take this as being applied to yourself. Make it your chief care to avoid everything that could displease Our Lord, and to serve and love Him perfectly, and He will turn everything, even your faults, to your advantage. Finally, confidence is a gift of God that follows humility and love. Therefore, ask it of God, and He will give it to you; and strive to do all your actions in a spirit of humility and for the pure love of God. Then will you soon taste the sweetness and peace that accompanies the virtue of trust in God."
(5)

(1). PS. xxxvi, 5.

(2). Ps. liv. 23.

(3). 1 Pet. v, 7.

(4). Raymond of Capua's *Life of the Saint*, I, ch. v.

(5). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. XXIX-XXX.

E. SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL

Submission to the Will of God is another of St. John's favourite themes. He constantly returns to it, and made it one of the foundations of his Congregation of priests. As a motto, he gave his spiritual sons these beautiful words from Holy Scripture: *Colere Deum et facere voluntatem ejus corde magno et animo volenti*; and he told them always to put at the head of their letters: *May the divine will be our guide in everything*. He also ordered them to keep the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost in honour of the divine will.(1) For in truth the disposition that he most admired in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary was their perfect submission to the will of God; and he even had painted for the seminary at Coutances a picture showing the reign of the divine will in the Sacred Hearts. (2) He looked upon the divine will as his good mother and exhorted his spiritual children to do the same, as we see from this letter which he wrote to one of them while preaching a mission at Gatteville in the diocese of Coutances, telling them that he could not go to assist them:

"The adorable will of God (our good mother) has ordained this separation. May that holy will ever be blessed! I call it 'our good mother' for it is from her that we have received our being and life, both that of nature and that of grace. It is she who must govern us, and we must obey her and give ourselves up to her guidance with great confidence, for she has a truly maternal love for us. That is why I beg you, my

(1). *Oeuvres Complètes, IX, pp. 74, 144, 146, 175.*

(2). *Le Doré: Les Sacrés Coeurs et le V. Jean Eudes, II, p. 377; and Oeuvres complètes, VII, p. 527, note.*

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beloved brethren, to look upon her, to honour her, and to love her as our beloved mother, and that we make it our chief devotion to attach our minds and hearts firmly to her, to follow her faithfully in everything, and to obey all her orders *corde magno et animo volenti*. In so doing let us find our glory and our joy, and consider everything else as pure folly."(1)

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* (2) he observes that submission to God's will is the most universal of virtues, the use of which ought to be most habitual with us, "for," says he, "every hour there are occasions for renouncing our own will and submitting ourselves to that of God."

How God reveals

His will to us.

Elsewhere he remarks that the divine will is very easy to know and that God reveals it to us in five principal ways. These are: (1) by His commandments; (2) by the evangelic counsels (3) by the laws, rules and obligations of our state in life (4) by those in authority over us who are charged with our guidance; (5) by public or private events, whether great or small, with which we are connected, for nothing happens in this world save by the absolute will of God or by His permissive will. "And therefore,- says the Saint,---how ever little we open the eyes of faith it will be very easy for us always and everywhere to know the holy will of God, and this knowledge leads us to love that will and to submit ourselves to it."

So as to induce us to act in this way, St. John reminds us that the will of God, both His permissive will and His absolute will, is infinitely holy, just, adorable, and lovable, and that moreover, God wishes only what is conducive to His glory and the good of those who love

(1). *Oeuvres complètes*, X, p. 390.

(2). 11, n. xxxi-xxxiv.

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Him: *Diligentibus Deum omnia co-operantur in bonum*. Finally he recalls to us that---Our Lord undertook from the first moment of His life and His entry into the world, never to do His own will, but always that of His Father, as St. Paul testifies when writing to the Hebrews 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world he saith . "Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will, O God.(1)' Similarly He Himself said: 'I came down from Heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me.' (2) And to this He was true. Although His own will was holy and adorable, yet He gave it up completely in order to follow that of His Father, unceasingly protesting on all occasions (even as in the Garden of Olives on the eve of His death): 'Father, not my will, but thine be done.' (3)

Inducements to self-abandonment.

"Now if we reflect well on these truths we will have great facility in submitting ourselves in everything to the adorable will of God. For, if we remember that God orders and disposes everything that happens in the world, that He does so for His glory and our greater good, and that His dispositions are most just and loving, then we will not attribute the happenings of life to chance, to the malice of the devil, or to man, but rather to the will of God. And we will love and embrace that will tenderly, knowing with certainty that it is most holy and lovable, that it orders and permits nothing save for our greater good and the greater glory of our good God. And that glory we must love before everything else, since we are only in the world for the purpose of loving and advancing the glory of God.

(1). Heb. x, 5-7.

(2). John vi, 38.

(3). Luke xxii, 42.

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"And if we attentively reflect that Jesus, our Head, abandoned and ignored a will so holy and divine as His own, so as to fulfil the rigorous and severe will of His Father in regard to Him, a will that involved His great sufferings and His cruel and shameful death; on behalf of His enemies; if we reflect on this, can we find any difficulty in giving up our own depraved will, corrupted as it is by sin, so that the holy, gentle, and lovable will of God may live and reign in its place?

"Therein," says the Saint, always faithful to his principles, -consists Christian submission and obedience; viz., in continuing that perfect submission and obedience that Jesus rendered, not only to the wishes that His Father revealed to Him by His own mouth, but also to those that He revealed to Him by His Holy Mother, by St. Joseph, by the angel that guided Him down into Egypt, by the Jews, by Herod, and by Pilate. For not only did He submit Himself to His Father, He also subjected Himself to all creatures for His Father's glory and for love of us."

An exhortation to practise this.

Then St. John exhorts us to submit lovingly to the divine will in whatever way it may, be manifested to us: «Have,» says he, "a continual resolution of dying and suffering every kind of torment rather than contravene the smallest of God's commandments, and have a general disposition of following His counsels according to the light and grace that He gives you, your condition in life, and the advice you receive from your director.

"Respect and honour those who are in authority over you, as holding on earth Jesus Christ's place in regard to you; and follow their will as the will of Christ,

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provided that they do not order what is manifestly contrary to what God orders or forbids.

"St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, goes much further than this, for he exhorts us to submit ourselves to every human creature, for love of God: *Subjecti estote omni humanae creaturo, Propter Deum*; (1) and St. Paul would have us consider all others our superiors: *Superiores sibi invicem arbitrantur*. (2) Following the divinely inspired teaching of these two great Apostles, we should respect and honour all kinds of people as our superiors, and be ready to renounce our own judgment and will in favour of theirs. For as Christians, who must live with the sentiments and dispositions of Christ, we must, with Him, be determined never to do our own will, but in everything to obey the will of God. And in case of doubt, i.e., when we are not certain what is the will of God in any given circumstances, we must do the will of someone else, considering all men our superiors and submitting to their will in whatever is possible and is not contrary to God's commands and the obligations of our state, but always giving the preference to those who have most authority and right over us.

**Submit yourself in
all things to God's
good pleasure.**

"Look upon the laws, rules, and obligations of your state, office or condition, as the infallible marks of what God asks of you. Jesus gave the most exact honour and obedience, and was most perfectly subject, not only to the rules which His Father gave Him and to the hours and minutes which the Father fixed for each of His actions, but also to human laws. So, too, do you subject yourself to the

(1). 1 Pet. ii, 13.

(2). Philip ii, 3.

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rules and obligations of your condition, to the hours and moments at which you should fulfil the duties of your office, and even to human and civil laws. And do all that for love of Him who, through love of you, has preceded you in this subjection.

"In all that happens, whether by the absolute will of God or by His permissive will, adore, bless, and love both the one and the other, and with His beloved Son, and as far as possible with the same love, submission, and humility, say to Him: *Pater, non quod ego volo, sed quod tu; non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*'. (1) And again: *Ita, Pater, quoniam sic fuit placitum ante te*. (2)

"Whenever you feel any inclination or desire for anything, at once cast it from you at the feet of Jesus; and should the inclination be a powerful one, do not cease to renounce it and to beg Jesus to take it from you, until you feel yourself ready to desire the contrary, if He would have it so.

"And whenever there comes to you the thought or fear of losing your health, or your reputation, or your goods, your parents, your children, your friends, or anything of the sort, renounce your will at the feet of Jesus, and adore, love and bless His, as though what you fear had come to pass; and address Him in this fashion:

" 'O Jesus, I renounce all my desires and inclinations at your feet. With all my heart I adore, love and praise your most holy and lovable will; and, despite all my repugnance and contrary feelings, I

desire to love, bless and glorify you in all that it has pleased you to ordain, or shall please you to ordain henceforth for me and for those connected with me, in time and in eternity.

(1). Mark xxiv, 36; Luke xxii, 42.

(2). Matt. xi, 26.

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Blessed be your most holy will. Let my will be destroyed for ever, and may your will reign and be eternally fulfilled on earth as in heaven!-

To practise submission to God's will in this manner is in itself a considerable accomplishment; but St. John exhorts us to rise yet higher and to find our joy in this submission:

"Not only," he says, "did Our Lord Jesus Christ do

**And do so, not
with resignation,
but with joy.**

the whole will of His Father, and submit to Him in everything for love of Him, but furthermore He found all His contentment and happiness in doing so: *Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me'*, (1) i.e., I know of nothing more desirable or more delightful than to do the will of my Father. For in fact in everything He did He found infinite contentment since they were His Father's will. In His sufferings He found joy and happiness of the spirit, because they were the good pleasure of His Father. And therefore the Holy Spirit when speaking of the day of His passion and death calls it 'the day of the joy of his heart. (2) Similarly, He found peace and contentment of heart in everything that He saw happen in the world, since He saw in everything only the most lovable will of His Father.

"So also, as Christians bound to adopt the feelings and dispositions of their Head, we must not only submit ourselves to God and to every circumstance for love of God, but also find all our happiness and Paradise in doing so. This is the sovereign perfection of Christian submission, as expressed by the prayer that we say every day: *Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in coelo et in terra.*

(1). John, iv, 34.

(2). Cant. iii, 11.

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Now, in heaven the Saints find such happiness in doing the will of God that many of them who see their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, wives and children, in hell, rejoice in the results that the justice of God has worked upon them; for since the Saints are but one with God, they have only His own feelings and will. But God wishes His justice to be exercised on those wretches who have thoroughly deserved it, and He takes infinite pleasure in the effects of His justice, as well as in those of His mercy. And that is why the Saints also find pleasure therein: *Laetabitur justus cum viderit vindictam; manus suas lavabit in sanguine peccatoris.'* (1) It is thus, then, that we must find our joy in the effects of the divine will, since we must try to accomplish it on earth as in heaven.

"That," remarks our Saint, "is the way always to live happily and to have heaven on earth. Certainly we would be very difficult to please, if we were not content with what satisfies God, the Angels and the Saints who rejoice not so much in the great glory that is theirs as in the fulfilment of the will of God in them, i.e., in the fact that God finds pleasure in glorifying them. And we will have no ground for complaint at being in the Paradise of the Mother of God, of the Son of God, and of the Eternal Father."

**This joy is not
necessarily felt,
but it resides in
the will.**

But lest we should misunderstand his meaning in saying this, the Saint adds: «I do not say that you must experience a sensible contentment and joy in all that you do and suffer, and in all that happens in the world (that is the lot only of the Blessed); but I refer here to joy (1). Ps. lvii, 11.

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and contentment of the spirit and of the will which, with the Grace of God, you can easily have, since you have only to say: 'My God, I desire for love of you to find all my contentment in willing, doing, or suffering this or that, because it is your will.' By that means you will find happiness of spirit and will in everything. And furthermore, if this practice be repeated several times it will lessen and eventually destroy the difficulty and natural repugnance that you feel in many matters, and will cause you to find sweetness and happiness, even sensible sweetness and happiness, in those things in which hitherto you felt but bitterness and aversion."

And he tells us that in acting thus: "you will begin your Paradise while yet in this world, you will enjoy perpetual peace and happiness, and you will do your actions as God performs His actions and as Jesus performed His when He was on earth, i.e., in a spirit of joy and contentment, which is what He desired for us and asked for us from the Father on the eve of His death, saying: *Ut habeant gaudium meum impletum in semetipsis.* (1)

"That is supremely perfect Christian submission and pure love of God; for the sovereign degree of divine love consists in doing, suffering, and accepting everything for the love of God, with joy and contentment. And a man who has this holy view of what happens in the world, who in this disposition suffers the hardships that befall Him, and who performs his actions in this way, will give more glory and pleasure to God, and will advance further in one day in the way of His love, than he would in the whole of his life if he were to act in any other way."
(1). 1 John xvii, 13.

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F. CHARITY FOR OUR NEIGHBOUR

Love of God and love of our neighbour are quite inseparable. "These are not two loves," writes St. John, "they make but one single love. We must love our neighbour with the same heart and love as that with which we love God, for we have to love him, not in himself, or for himself, but in God and for God; or rather, it is God Himself whom we must love in our neighbour.

"That is the way in which Jesus loves us: He loves us in His Father and for His Father, or rather He loves His Father in us, and He wishes us to love each other even as He loves us. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.' (1)

The model of Christian charity.

"It is in this precisely," says Père Eudes, "that Christian charity consists: in loving each other as Jesus loves us. But He loves us so greatly that He gives us all His goods, His treasures, and Himself, and He uses all His powers and all the resources of His wisdom and goodness to benefit us. So great is His charity towards us that for a long time He endures our faithlessness with mildness and patience, and when we have fallen He is the first to seek us out, though thereby we have offended Him who has shown us nothing but kindness and seems in some sort even to prefer our happiness and interests to His own, since during His suffering life He underwent every kind of inconvenience, misery and torment to deliver us and to make us happy. In a word, so great is His love for us that He uses His whole life, His body and soul, His time and

(1). John XV, 11.

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eternity, His divinity and His humanity, all that He is and has, for us, so that He is all charity and love for us in His thoughts, words, and deeds.

"There we see the model of Christian charity, and also what He expects of us when He commands us to love each other as He loves us. That is how we should love each other, doing to each other what Christ has done for us according as He gives us the power."

How to think of others.

And then, to lead us to love our neighbour as we should, St. John invites us to see our neighbour in God and to see God in him: "See," he says, "your neighbour in God and God in him, i.e., regard him as having issued from the heart and the goodness of God, as a participation in God, as one created to return to God and to dwell one day in the bosom of God there to glorify Him eternally, one, in fact, in whom God will be glorified eternally, whether by His mercy or by His justice. Look upon him as one whom God loves, in whatever state he may be; for God loves all that He has created, even the very devils in so far as they are creatures, and he hates nothing that He has made. It is only sin, and He certainly did not make that, that He holds in horror. Look upon your neighbour as one who has issued from the same principle as you, as the child of the same Father, created for the same end, belonging to the same Lord, and bought at the same price: the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Remember that he is a member of the same Head, and of the same body, which is the Church of Christ; that he is nourished with the same food, the precious flesh and blood of Jesus; and that consequently you should have but one mind, one soul, and one heart with him.

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Finally, look on him as one who is the Temple of the Living God, who bears in himself the image of the Most Holy Trinity and the character of Jesus Christ, who is, indeed, a portion of Jesus Christ, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone. Reflect that it was for him that Christ so toiled and suffered, and that Our Lord recommends him to you as Himself, assuring you that 'what you do to the least of these (i.e. those who believe in Him), my brethren, you do it unto me.'"(1)

"If we truly weigh and consider the importance of these truths," cries the Saint, "what charity, what respect, and what honour we will show each other! Then would we really fear to offend Christian union and charity, either by thoughts, or words, or deeds, and would be ready to do and to suffer

everything for others. With what charity and patience we would bear with and excuse the faults of others; and with what gentleness, modesty, and restraint we would converse with each other, remembering St. Paul's words: 'Let every one of you please his neighbour unto good, to edification'(2) May Jesus, the God of love and of charity, impress these truths and dispositions on our minds and hearts!"

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, briefly portrays true Christian charity: "Charity,- he says, "is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away.» (3)

St. John Eudes loved to quote this text, and he

(1). Matt. xxv, 40.

(2). Rom. xv, 2.

(3). 1 Cor. xiii, 4-8.

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urges us to read it and frequently to meditate on it. In his *Coeur admirable* he dwells at rather greater length on the practice of charity.

Practical advice on charity.

"Let your chief care," he says, "be to banish from your mind, your heart, your mouth, your ears, your hands, and all the powers of your soul and body, every thing that is in the smallest degree contrary to holy charity. Never let your mind judge or condemn any one, so that you yourself may not be judged or condemned. Permit no animosity, aversion, or coldness towards your neighbour to enter your heart, and as soon as you perceive any such thing renounce it immediately and make interior acts of charity.... Take great care not to let yourself say anything harsh or ill-natured, anything cutting or injurious. Hold all slander in detestation, and make sure that you never say anything to the disadvantage of another, and that you close your ears to everything that could wound charity. Set about so thoroughly mortifying the passion of anger that henceforth it has no part in you; and never let your self be led into contentions and arguments, but rather willingly ignore your own views and leave the field free to those of others.

"Above all, have a horror of accursed envy and jealousy, the detestable sin of Lucifer and Cain. At the very first moment in which you feel it within you, humble yourself greatly in the utmost confusion at finding yourself amongst the followers of Cain. Utterly renounce those pernicious feelings, rejoice in the advantages that God gives your neighbour, whether in matters temporal or spiritual; thank the divine goodness for them and beg God to increase them more and more.

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It must be not merely negative but positive.

"It is not enough that you should refrain from doing evil to your neighbour; charity obliges you to do him all the good, that you can, and Our Lord Him self commands you to love others as He loves you.

Therefore be quick to help your neighbour in his needs and to do for him all the good that you can; but take great care not to do it for your own satisfaction or interest, nor with the intention of receiving a like service from him, but purely in order to please God.

"Bear, with patience and gentleness, your neighbour's faults, so far as you can without wounding charity. When he speaks to you angrily reply without emotion. Strive to satisfy him so far as would be reasonable; and sometimes inconvenience yourself for his sake and deprive yourself of some satisfaction so as to please him. Always keep before your mind Our Lord's commandment: 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that calumniate and persecute you, bless those who speak evil of you, so that you may be children of my Heavenly Father who makes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as on the good.' And finally, try with all your heart to imitate Our Lord in the goodness, the kindness, the patience and the meekness that He continually shows you.» (1)

Sincerity.

In *Le Royaume de Jésus* the Saint recommends us to transform into acts of charity the marks of honour that we give our neighbour. "When addressing or complimenting him," he says, "never allow your tongue to utter pleasing (1). *Oeuvres Complètes*, VII, pp. 476 sq.

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words that are not from your heart; for there is this difference between holy and Christian souls and those that are worldly, that while both use the same compliments and forms of speech in the ordinary intercourse of life, the former do so from the heart and in the spirit of charity and Christian truth, whereas the latter do so with the mouth only and in the spirit of lying and falseness."

And he elsewhere observes that to act in this Christian way a general intention suffices, without each time making a formal act of charity: "I do not say," he writes, "that it is always necessary to have your mind applied to making this intention every time that you address anyone or make a polite remark or do anyone a service, although it would be a very good thing to have this disposition; but, at least, have a general intention in the bottom of your soul to do everything in the spirit of the charity of Jesus, and try to renew it before God whenever He puts the thought of it into your mind. "

Readiness to forgive.

And then, not only does the Saint remind us of the law of forgiving, but he urges us to go ourselves to those who have offended us, without waiting for them to make excuses. "If anyone has offended you," he writes, "or if you have offended anyone, do not wait till he comes to you; but remember that Our Lord said: 'If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother.'" (1) And so as to obey these words of Our Saviour, as also in honour of (1). Matt. v, 24.

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the fact that He is the first to seek us out although in return for all the favours He bestows upon us He receives only every kind of offence from us, go you to seek out him who has offended you or whom you have offended, and be reconciled to him, being ready to speak with him with all kindness, peace, and

humility."(1)

Zeal for the salvation of souls.

Connected with charity is zeal for the salvation of souls and indeed it is the most perfect exercise of charity. It is chiefly in his writings on the priesthood that St. John deals with this subject, and we shall see later on how lofty his views on it were. But he also touches on it in *Le Royaume de Jésus*, for zeal is in his eyes a virtue that must be practised by the laity also.

"Above all," he tells us, "have a very special charity for the souls of all men, but particularly the souls of those who are connected with you or dependent upon you, ensuring their salvation in every way that is open to you. For St. Paul tells us that 'if any man hath not care of his own and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.'(2) Remember that they cost the labours and sufferings of thirty-four years, the blood and life of a God, and also that the greatest, the divinest work and that most pleasing to Jesus of all that you can do in the world is to labour with Him for the salvation of the souls that are so dear and precious to Him. And therefore give yourself to Him to labour in every way that He asks of you. Consider yourself quite unworthy to be employed in so great a work; but when the opportunity arises of helping in the salvation of some poor soul (which will

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, nu. xxxv-xxxvi.

(2). 1 Tim. v, 8.

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be frequently, if you are careful), never let it pass by. First ask the necessary grace from Our Lord, and then busy yourself according to your condition and the power that He gives you, using all the care and affection that is possible, realising that it is of more consequence than if it were a matter of temporal goods, or of the corporal life of all the people in the world. Do all this for the pure love of Jesus so that God may be eternally loved and glorified by those souls, knowing that you should look upon it as a great favour and blessing to be allowed to use all your time, all your health, all your life and the treasures of the whole world, if you had them, to help in the salvation of a single soul. For Jesus Christ gave all His blood and devoted all His time, His life, and His strength for that soul.

"O Jesus, lover of souls and zealous for the salvation of the human race, implant your ardent zeal and charity for souls in the hearts of all Christians.» (1)

G. LOVE OF THE CROSS

St. John's spiritual teaching is not meant for cowardly and nondescript souls who have a horror of hardship or of real effort. It is intended for generous souls who know how to deny themselves and do not shrink from sacrifice. Consequently we cannot be surprised to find that love of the cross finds an important place in his teaching. In *L'Enfance admirable* he warns us that "the cross of Jesus, which is the origin and source of Christian grace, is also its end, for grace is given us that we may crucify ourselves with Him." (2)

His *Royaume de Jésus* contains a profession of love of

(1). *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxvii. (2). *Oeuvres complètes*, V, p. 351.

the cross which he invites us to renew frequently.(1) The crosses of life are numerous and varied, but the most difficult are those that we encounter in the spiritual life. St. John warns us that these will not be lacking to us:

Crosses are a great favour from God.

«The whole of the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our Head, was full of toil bitterness, and sufferings, both exterior and interior, and therefore it is not reasonable that His children and members should travel another road. And He gives us not a cause for complaint but a great grace when He sends us what He Himself accepted in life, and makes us worthy of drinking with Him the chalice which His Father so lovingly gave Him. He gives it to us with as much love as that with which His Father gave it to Him. This, indeed, is how he shows His love for us, and marks His pleasure in the small services that we do Him.

"And so," continues the Saint, "do not deceive yourself and imagine that the way to God is strewn with roses and delights. You will find many thorns and much labour on your journey; but despite all this always love Our Lord faithfully, and His love will change the gall into honey, and the bitterness into sweetness. Do more than this: take a resolution of finding all your happiness throughout life in the cross and in trials, because by these you can most glorify God and prove your love, and because Jesus your Father, your Spouse, and your Head, found in these His joy and His paradise while in the world. Did not the Holy Spirit call the day of His Passion 'the day of the joy of his heart'?

(1). I, n. xxix.

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Leaving on one side the other crosses that may be laid upon us, the Saint concentrates on showing us the use we must make of "interior spiritual afflictions, such as dryness, sadness, weariness, interior fears and troubles, disgust with the things of God, and all the other spiritual crosses met with by souls who serve God. For it is extremely important to know how to make good use of these things, and to remain faithful to God while enduring them.--- Here, then, is the advice that he gives to souls of good will:

How to profit by them.

«1. Adore Jesus in the sufferings, privations and humiliations, the troubles and sadness that His holy soul bore, as He Himself testifies in the words: 'My soul is filled with evils; Now is my soul troubled; My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' Adore the dispositions of His divine soul while in this state, and the good use He made of it for the glory of His Father. Give yourself to Him that you may share these dispositions and may make good use of your trials, which He has made His own. Offer them to Him in honour of His own, and beg Him to unite them to His, to bless and sanctify them, to supply for your failures, and to use your crosses for the glory of His Father even as He used His own.

«2. Do not occupy yourself in seeking the particular cause of the state in which you are, or in examining your sins, but humble yourself in face of all your faults and infidelities in general, and adore the justice of God, being ready in homage to His justice to bear all the trials it may please Him to send you, and yet considering yourself quite unworthy that His justice should take the trouble to notice you. For we have to realise

that the smallest of our sins makes us deserve to be entirely forsaken by God. And when we are in a state of dryness and disgust with regard to the things of God, and can scarcely think of God or pray to Him save with a thousand distractions, we must remember that we are quite unworthy of any grace or consolation, that Our Lord does us a great favour in allowing the earth to support us, and that we have over and over again deserved to be with the damned who throughout all eternity can have only horrible and blasphemous thoughts of God. By such considerations we must profoundly humble ourselves before God when in this state of dryness.

«For that is God's plan for us,, when in that state, and that is what He expects of us. He would have us realise what we are when left to ourselves, and desires that we should become truly wise by a profound realisation of our nothingness, so that when He gives us some good thought, pious sentiment, or other grace, our pride and self-love shall not appropriate it, attributing it to our own carefulness and co-operation; but we shall refer it to Him, realising that it comes not from ourselves but solely from His mercy, and therefore putting all our trust in his pure goodness.

«3. Take great care not to let yourself be carried away by sadness and discouragement, but rejoice by reason of three things: Rejoice that Jesus is always Jesus, i.e., always God, always great and lovable, always in the same state of glory and of happiness, so that nothing can lessen His joy: *Scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus*, and say to Him: 'It is enough for me to know that you are always Jesus. Be ever Jesus, and I shall be content whatever may befall me.'

"Rejoice also that Jesus is your God and is all yours, and that you belong to so good and kind a Lord, remembering the words of the Royal Prophet: *Beatus populus, cujus Dominus Deus ejus!*

Never relax your service because of aridities.

"And then rejoice in the knowledge that it is in these trials that you can most purely serve Him, and can show Him that you truly love Him simply for the love of Himself, and not for the consolations that He formerly gave you. And in order to show in practice the fidelity and purity of your love for Him, be careful to do all your ordinary actions with all the purity and perfection possible to you. So, too, the more coldness, cowardice, and weariness you feel in yourself, the greater recourse you must have to Him who is your strength and your all, the more completely you must give yourself to Him, and the more frequently you must raise your mind to Him. Do not cease to make frequent acts of love to Him, caring nought that you cannot make them with your previous fervour and consolation; for what does it matter whether you are happy or not, provided that Jesus is happy? Now very often what we do in this state of dryness and spiritual desolation pleases him more (provided that we try to do it with a pure intention of honouring Him) than that which we do with great fervour and sensible devotion; for the latter is generally accompanied by self-love, whereas the former is purified of this.

'Lastly, be in no way discouraged by the defects and cowardice of which you are guilty while in this state; but humble yourself before Our Lord, beg Him to repair them by His great mercy, and have confidence that in His bounty He will do it. Above all, always

preserve a firm resolution, whatever may happen, to serve and love Him perfectly, and to be faithful to Him to your last breath, trusting always that He will give you this grace by His great loving-kindness despite all your infidelities."(1)

H. MARTYRDOM AND THE SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM

The grace of martyrdom is the most signal favour that Jesus can grant to His faithful servants; and these can give Him no greater mark of love than that of sacrificing their lives for Him. And so martyrdom is, as St. John says, the perfection and the consummation of the Christian life. But it is rare in our Christian countries, and for that reason spiritual writers do not generally discuss it. But in this St. John is an exception. He himself, in 1637, made a vow to endure martyrdom if the occasion should arise, and he thought that Christians should always be ready to suffer it for Christ. And so we get the chapters that are devoted to this topic in *Le Royaume de Jésus*. One hundred years after his death a violent persecution of the clergy broke out in France and many of his children had the honour of shedding their blood for Jesus Christ. Is it rash to suppose that meditation on the teachings of their Father had helped to prepare them for the heroic act that terminated their lives?

Leaving on one side the promises made to the martyrs, whom Our Lord, speaking through the Church, calls His saints, sancti mei, and the expositions given by St. John Eudes of the nature and conditions of martyrdom, we will confine ourselves here to the reasons which,

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xiii.

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should the occasion arise, oblige us to submit to it, and to the manner of preparing for it, or, which comes to the same thing, to the spirit of martyrdom.

**Why we must
accept martyrdom,
should the
occasion arise.**

The reasons for undergoing martyrdom are numerous, and St. John indicates seven of them. The first one he mentions is that we belong to Jesus on many considerations, and that therefore we are obliged to live and to die for Him.

His second reason is that God created us for His glory and that we can do nothing better for His glory than to sacrifice our life to Him.

The third is that we are obliged to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our strength, and that the best means of doing this is to die for Him.

The fourth reason is that Jesus always had and still has a keen desire of suffering and dying for His Father's glory and for love of mankind, and since He can no longer do so Himself, He seeks souls in whom He can renew and continue His sacrifice.

The fifth flows from the profession we made at baptism "to cling to Jesus Christ, to follow and imitate Him, and consequently to be victims consecrated and sacrificed to His glory. Now this obliges us to follow and to imitate Him in His death as well as in His life, and to be always ready to sacrifice our

lives for Him . . . in accordance with the holy words: 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.' "(1)

The sixth is derived from the fact that we are members of Jesus Christ. "Jesus being our Head and
(1). Ps. Xliii, 22.

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we His members,- says our Saint, "just as we must live with His life, so we are obliged to die with His death since it is quite evident that the members must live and die with the life and death of their head, in accordance with St. Paul's words: 'Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus. . . . For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. ...'(1)

The seventh is the most powerful reason, and it is the sanguinary martyrdom and most dolorous death suffered by Our Lord Jesus Christ for love of us on the cross. "For," says St. John, "this most loving Saviour was not content with using His life on our behalf, He also wished to die for love of us, and He died with the cruellest and most ignominious death that could possibly be. He laid down a life, a single moment of which was worth more than all the lives of men and angels, and, were it necessary, He would be ready to die again a thousand times. And, in fact, He is continually on our altars as a victim: there He is immolated every day and every hour, and will be until the day of judgment. The unbloody and no longer sorrowful Sacrifice of the altar will be offered up until the end of the world, to testify to us thereby that He is ready, if there be need, to be sacrificed just as often for love of us, with a sacrifice as bloody and dolorous as was that of the cross."

After these reflections St. John tells us that he is not surprised that so many Christians have rejoiced to suffer and to die for Jesus; and he adds: «But I am astonished to see that now our love of such a Saviour
(1). 11 Cor. 1V, 10-11.

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is so cold, so cowardly in suffering the smallest thing, so attached to such a miserable and mean life as is that of this world, and so far from being ready to sacrifice it for Him who gave up for us so worthy and so precious life. How can we call ourselves Christians and adore crucified God, a God agonising and dying on the Cross, a God who for love of us gives up so noble a life, and for the same purpose sacrifices Himself every day before our eyes upon our altars: how can we adore such an one and not be ready to sacrifice for Him all that is dearest to us in the world, even our very life which, moreover, belongs to Him for many reasons? Surely we are not truly Christians, if these are not our dispositions.->

How to train our souls to be ready for it.

As for the spirit of martyrdom in which every Christian should try to live, the Saint describes it as follows: "It is a strong and constant spirit which can neither be shaken nor overcome by promises or by threats, by gentleness or by sharpness, and which fears nothing save God and sin. It is a spirit of profound humility, which has a horror of vanity and of worldly glory, and loves contempt and humiliations. It is a spirit that is distrustful of self and full of trust in Our Lord Jesus, as being our strength in virtue of which we can do everything. It is a spirit of perfect detachment from the world and from everything in the world. For those who are to sacrifice their life to God must also sacrifice

everything else for Him. And it is a spirit of ardent love for our Lord Jesus Christ, a love that leads those animated with it to do and to suffer all things for love of Him who has done and suffered all things for them, and which so fires and intoxicates them that for love

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of Him they desire and seek out mortifications and sufferings as a joy, and flee with horror from the Pleasures and delights of this world, as from hell.

"That is the spirit of martyrdom, and do you pray Our Lord, the King of Martyrs, to fill you with this spirit. Pray the Queen of Martyrs and also all the Martyrs themselves to obtain this spirit for you from the Son of God by their prayers. Have a special devotion to all the holy Martyrs, and also be careful to pray to God on behalf of all those who must endure martyrdom, that He may give them the spirit and grace of martyrdom. But especially pray for those who will have to suffer in the time of the persecution by Antichrist, which will be the most cruel of all persecutions.

"Finally, try by imitating them to make your life a perfect resemblance of the life of the Martyrs, and which is more, of the life of Jesus and Mary, the King and the Queen of Martyrs, so that they may make you worthy of being like them in your death."⁽¹⁾

M. Joly relates that when about to write the life of Père Eudes he went to see a priest in Paris whose lengthy sufferings and supernatural lights were well known, and asked him if he knew his hero. The Abbé Huvelin (for he, it would seem, was the priest in question) replied: "He was a harsh saint." Yes a harsh saint. Not that he was hard with anyone, whoever they might be; his biographer tells us on the contrary that he was a model of gentleness. But with souls of good will he never hesitated to put forward Christian doctrine in its loftiest and most austere aspect, and what he preached to others he was himself the first to put into practice.

(1) *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xliv-xlvi

CHAPTER VI

THE PRIESTHOOD

ST. JOHN'S teachings on the priesthood scarcely differ from those of Cardinal de Bérulle and Père de Condren, (1) but he puts them forward in his own distinctive style and pushes them to their furthest consequences. In this chapter we will see what he has to say on the dignity and holiness of the priest, as well as on zeal for the salvation of souls, and also his view of the Feast of the Priesthood which he instituted.

(1) In his book *L'École française* (pp. 8-9), M. Letourneau praises his teaching on the priesthood in these terms: «I have certainly no thought of declaring that other schools do not also give us most praiseworthy teachings on the priesthood, its functions and obligations; and I am not ignorant of what many of the followers of St. Ignatius and of St. Alphonsus have written on this great subject. None the less, I am inclined to think that we French priests will find in our own French school the works that are most suited to our piety. It would be difficult to find elsewhere the brilliant guidance that has been given to us by this school from the appearance of M. Olier's *Traité des Saints Ordres* to that of Père Giraud's *Prêtre et Hostie*. Even St. Francis de Sales, so excellent, so luminous, and so perfect in all his books on the Christian life, offers us nothing similar on the priesthood. St. Alphonsus knew none of the works of this school save Père de Condren's little book on the Sacrifice of the Mass, which he praised to a remarkable extent; and we may well believe that if he had known the other writings of our masters on the priesthood of Jesus Christ he would have shown the same admiration.» Cf. Pourrat: *Le Sacerdoce, Doctrine de l'École française*, Paris, 1931.

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A. THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIEST

When he treats of the priesthood St. John first presents it to us as the greatest and most admirable of all orders in heaven and on earth.

At a time when nobility of blood still enjoyed all its old prestige, and when human dignities allured many by their glamour, the Saint took pains to point out that the priesthood is the highest nobility and the most sublime dignity of which we can possibly conceive. He delighted in proclaiming that priests, sprung from the royal and divine blood of Jesus Christ, are the first-born of the sons of God, the high dignitaries of His palace, the chief officials of His court, and the ministers of His omnipotence. He also called them sovereign judges whose sentences shall endure for eternity, and princes and even kings in the kingdom of the Great King, since Jesus deigned to associate them with His own royalty as well as His priesthood, as St. Luke declares with the words: *Ego dispono vobis sicut disposuit mihi Pater meus regnum.* (1).

The priesthood and the religious state.

Though filled with veneration for the religious Orders which make the Church fragrant with the perfume of their virtues, and which at that time were renewing their fervour with admirable vigour, St. John would never expressly compare them with the priesthood. But his opinion on this point could never be doubted. However great and illustrious the religious Orders might be, their glory pales before that of the priesthood of which, as St. John (following Bérulle)

(1). Luke xxii, 29.

often repeated, Jesus Christ is the "Founder" and the "Head," and which is, as he also said, the first and the most holy of all the Orders, and that which "Sanctifies all the others," But the priesthood and the religious state are not mutually exclusive. Often, on the contrary, they are superimposed on each other, so that the same men can have the honour of belonging at once to a religious Order and to the divine Order of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Possibly that is why Père Eudes always abstained from comparing the two.

Compared with the Angels,

But, on the other hand, he did not hesitate to compare the priesthood with the angelic hierarchies and to proclaim the priest to be superior to Angels and Archangels, not in nature, but in greatness and power. Has a single one of them, he asked, received, like the priest, the power of effacing sin and of communicating the life of grace, of causing Jesus to be born within souls and of immolating Him every day upon the altar?(1) Those are powers of an entirely divine order which markedly raise up the priest above all the Angels in heaven.

and with Our Lady.

He also loved to compare the priest with the Blessed Virgin. Not that he ever allowed himself to exalt the priest above the Mother of God in any respect whatever. On the contrary, every time that he places the priest above all the glories of earth or heaven, he expressly excepts the divine maternity.(2) But in the relationships of the priest with Jesus Christ and with

(1). *Memorial*, Preliminary chapter.
 (2). *Idem.*, Part V. -Meditation on the obligations of Priests, et passim.

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souls, he saw a participation in the double maternity of Mary, and that is why he loved to call her the - Mother" (1)and sometimes the "Queen" and the "sister" of priests, (2) and to hail them as "images of the Blessed Virgin." (3)

The Holy Trinity and the priesthood.

But when he strove to grasp the greatness of the priesthood St. John went even higher, and ascended even to the adorable Trinity, contemplating therein the principle and end of the priesthood and of all its greatness. (4) He even went so far as to see in the

(1). *Manuel*, Part IV, For the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin. And *Memorial*, Part V. Meditation on devotion to Mary, *et passim*.
 (2). Horum matrem te Mariam, Et sororem, et reginam Omnis laudet spiritus.
 (From the Mass of the Priesthood.)

The expression "sister of priests- recalls that of "Virgin~priest" to be found in the hymn *Quam pulchre graditur*, sung at St. Sulpice on the Feast of the Presentation. One verse runs:
 «Quid nos illaqueant improba gaudia? Cur nos jam pigeat vincula rumpere? Dux est Virgo sacerdos;
 Fas sit quo properat sequi.»

Pins IX makes use of this expression in a Brief dated August 25, 1873: «Adeo arete (Maria) se

junxit divini Filii sui sacrificio, ut *Virgo sacerdos* appellata fuerit ab Ecclesiae Patribus."

"*Imago Matris Virginis*, Lucerna Christi corporis, Caput, sinus, cor, ubera Quis tanta laudet munera?" (From the hymn for Matins in the Office of the Priesthood.)

Père Eudes added a note: "Sacerdotes Virginis Matris imago dicuntur, quia sicut per eam, sic per ipsos, Christus formatur, datur fidelibus, et Deo immolatur." Cf. *Mémorial*, Part V. Meditation on devotion to Mary.

(4). Hence the doxology of the hymns in the Office of the Priesthood

"Praesta, beata Trinitas, *Origo, finis omnium*, Patrum tenere semitas Nunc et per omne saeculum."

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functions of the priest a sort of participation in the noblest operations of the three Divine Persons. For is not the priest's power of producing Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist and of forming Him in the souls of the faithful, a striking image of the paternity of the Father? And in carrying out the sacerdotal functions does he not continue here below the work of the Incarnate Word? And similarly, does not his work of extending the kingdom of God in hearts, purifying them from the stain of sin, and infusing sanctifying grace into them: does not this closely associate him with the sanctifying action of the Holy Ghost? Such thoughts are often to be found in the Saint's writings. But nowhere has he set them out more precisely or with greater devotion than in this uplifting passage in his *Manuel de piété*:

"My God, Thou art the principle and source of all the dignity, power and holiness of the Christian priesthood, for from Thee proceeds all goodness. Thou art the end of all its functions, for they have no other end than the honour due to Thy divine Majesty. Thou art the consecration, the benediction, and the sanctification of all the priests of Thy Church. It is by the special election and vocation of Thy adorable will that they are chosen and called to such a lofty dignity. By a communication of Thy admirable Paternity, O Holy Father, they are made the fathers of the children of light. It is by participation in Thy divine priesthood, O Jesus, only Son of God, that they are the sacrificers of the Most High. It is by a special effusion of Thy divine holiness, O Holy Spirit, that they are the sanctifiers of souls. And it is in them and by them, O King of Heaven, that Thou makest Thyself visible upon

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earth and there dost perform works that belong only to infinite power and goodness. Finally, Thou art their portion, their treasure and their glory on earth and in heaven.' (1)

Jesus Christ the source of the priesthood.

Of all the relations of the priest with the three Divine Persons the most important to note for an understanding of the Saint's teaching on the priesthood is that which unites the priest to the Incarnate Word. Jesus Christ is the «Sovereign Priest» He has been chosen from all eternity to be the sole mediator between God and man (2), and it is by Him that mankind must render to God the worship of adoration and love, of praise and expiation, of supplication and thanksgiving to which He has a right. Moreover, God has chosen to communicate through Him alone the graces needed by men for their salvation. Accordingly Jesus Christ received the fullness of the grace of the priesthood, and by a unique sacrifice He consummated the work of salvation that it was His mission to accomplish. (3) He came upon earth in the fullness of time, as St. Paul says, (4) and all the priesthoods previous to His own were but its shadow and figure, and if they could produce certain fruits, that was only by an anticipated application of the sacrifice of the cross. And since His ascent into Heaven Jesus has not ceased to be the Priest of the Most High; His priesthood is eternal and can never be abrogated or super

- (1). *Manuel*, Part IV. For the Feast of the Presentation.
- (2). "Unus Dens, unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus." I Tim. ii, 5.
- (3). "Una oblatione consumavit in sempiternum sanctificatos. Heb. x, 14.
- (4). "In dispensatione plenitudinis temporum." Eph. i, 10. Cf. Gal. iv, 4.

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seded. But, so that its functions upon earth may be continued, He has selected representatives, vicars, whom He associates in His dignity and clothes with His power, so that they can minister to divine worship in His name and in His place.

Unity of the Catholic priesthood with that of Christ.

The Catholic priesthood, therefore, is not distinct from that of Jesus Christ; it is but an extension of it and a partial participation in it. There are not two priesthoods; there is but one, and that exists originally and supremely in Jesus Christ, and from Him is communicated to His ministers.

And this unity of the priesthood is clearly revealed to us in the Gospels. In his Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul has made it perfectly clear though he puts it in a different way. St. John Eudes frequently touches on the subject and, indeed, we might say that all his teaching on the priesthood flows from it.

"You are of the royal and divine blood of Jesus Christ," he says, addressing priests; "you have a place in His genealogy; you are indeed His brothers and His members in a more eminent degree than are other Christians, for you are clothed with His royal priesthood, your priesthood is one with His, and you make but one priest together with the Supreme Priest. So much is this the case that just as there is but one priesthood in the Christian religion—*Unum est sacerdotium*, (1) which is originally and supremely in Jesus Christ and by extension and communication in other priests, so also, strictly speaking, there is but one priest, and that is Jesus Christ, the Supreme Priest, all other priests being but one with Him." (2)

(1). Symmach, *Epistola ad Eonium*.

(2). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter.

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The priest is «*alter Christus*.»

The effect of the priesthood is, then, to unite the priest with Jesus Christ in a very special manner. Already, by the character and grace of baptism, the Christian has contracted a close union with the Divine Master; as a member of His mystical Body he is called to continue, here below amid trials, and above in glory, the divine life of Our Blessed Lord. But by baptism the Christian is associated with the life of the Saviour only for his personal advantage and, so to speak, by a private title. The priestly character perfects this union, for by ordination Jesus associates His ministers in the exercise of His mediation between God and man, and to His dignity as an official and as religious head of the human race. By this means the priest becomes, with Jesus and by Jesus, the sacrificer of the Most High, the teacher and light of the world, judge of consciences, shepherd and physician of souls, minister of the sacraments and saviour of his brethren. And so he finds himself associated with the most glorious

prerogatives of the Incarnate Word Whose place he truly holds in the eyes of God and of man: *Sacerdos alter Christus*.

No other reflection is found so often as this in the writings of St. John: "You have," he tells priests, "a very special alliance with Jesus Christ, who is the institutor, founder, head and superior of your holy Order. Not only does the adorable Saviour associate you with Himself in the greatest works He performed while upon earth, and which He still performs now in heaven and upon earth, but He also makes you sharers in the highest perfections and noblest qualities that His Father has given to Him."⁽¹⁾ (1). *Le Bon Confesseur*, ch. i.

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"You are," he says elsewhere,---the noblest portion of the mystical body of the Son of God. You are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, the heart of His Church, or rather, you are the eyes, the mouth, the tongue, and the heart of Jesus Himself. You are His eyes, because it is by you that this Good Shepherd continually watches over His flock; it is by you that He guides it; it is by you that He saves those of His sheep that are within the claws of the infernal wolf, and that He weeps tears over the death of His beloved Lazarus, i.e., over souls that are dead through sin.

"You are His mouth and His tongue, for by you He speaks to men and continues to preach the same Gospel as He Himself preached while yet upon earth.

"You are His heart, for it is by you that He gives true life, the life of grace upon earth and the life of glory in heaven, to all true members of His body. What marvels, what favours are these What grandeur there is in the priestly dignity!"

And again he says "You are the oracles of the Eternal word, prophets of holy wisdom."⁽²⁾ You are (1) *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter. The same thought is also found in the first part wherein the author speaks of the qualities of a good shepherd. And we find it also expressed in verse in the hymn for Matins of the Office of the Priesthood:

"Imago Matris Virginis,
Lucerna Christi corporis,
Caput, sinus, cor, ubera:
Quis tanta laudet munera?"

And in the hymn for the Second Vespers of the Feast we read

Pupilla vos charissima,
Os, lingua, cor, et viscera,
Manusque Regis gloriae:
Sponsi, patres Ecclesiae.

(2). *Mémorial*, dedicated to the holy priests of the Church Triumphant. The same idea is to be seen in these two strophes of the Hymn for Lauds:

"Vos sacra caeli buccina A Prole missa Virginis, Legatione caelica, Areana Jesu panditis.

"Vos Spiritus oracula, Tormenta Christi bellica; Per vos patent mysteria, Per vos fugantur crimina."

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living and true images of Jesus Christ. (1) You are other Christs living and working in the world, for you bear the most noble of His names, which is that of Saviour, and represent His Person, taking His place, and being clothed with His royalty and His priesthood. So, too, you act in His name and on His behalf, you are employed in the greatest of all His works, and it is your lot to continue upon earth all

the priestly functions which He once exercised thereon."(2)

Looked at in this light, the priesthood appears truly great. It has been very justly remarked that God's masterpiece is Jesus Christ, and that the greatest, the holiest, and the most august thing in Jesus Christ is His priesthood. What an honour for any man to be associated to that! And how greatly are the functions of a holy priest ennobled when it can be said that they are accomplished in the name of, and on behalf of Jesus Christ!

The wonderful powers of the priesthood.

And then, too, consider the marvellous powers that are given by the Supreme Priest to His ministers. He gives them the power of regenerating souls by delivering them from sin and clothing them with sanctifying grace, which, in certain respects, is a more excellent work than the creation of the world.

(1). *Mémorial*, loc. cit.

(2). *Mémorial*, *ibid.*

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But still more wonderful is the fact that He, the Creator of heaven and earth, submits Himself to the authority of priests, and they, at their pleasure, make Him descend upon the altar, carry Him wherever they please, distribute Him to the faithful, and, which is more, sacrifice Him to His Father as though they had supreme power over Him. "Is it not true," cries St. John when he considers such prodigies, "is it not true that priests can say with Jesus Christ, though in a different sense: 'All power is given to me in heaven, on earth, and under the earth'? In heaven, because they have the keys of heaven and can open or shut it to whomsoever they please; upon earth, for every day they produce thereon effects which require divine power: such effects as the remission of sins, the communication of grace, and the formation of Jesus in hearts and in the Blessed Sacrament; and beneath the earth, because they can trample hell under foot and expel all the powers of darkness from both bodies and souls" (1)

The dignity of the priesthood.

From that it follows that the Catholic priest has something of the divine in him. His alliance with the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, his close union with the Incarnate Word, the divine authority that he enjoys, the in some respects infinite power that he exercises over the real and the mystical Body of Jesus make him truly "a little God on earth." (2) The Fathers of the Church said as much long ago, and Père Eudes approvingly quotes them. Of all the descriptions of a

(1). *Mémorial*, *Prelim.* chapter, Part V: Meditation on the obligations of Priests.

(2). *Mémorial*, Part I: The qualities of a good Pastor.

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priest that have been written, he especially liked that left us by St. Gregory of Nazianzen: *Deus deos efficiens*, and he loved to quote it to the priests of his Congregation. (1) To them, indeed, it was specially applicable for they were vowed to the work of training the clergy in seminaries. But it is also applicable to all priests. Deified, as it were, by their priesthood, they are called upon to deify all Christians by forming Jesus Christ in their hearts; and for that reason our Saint suggests to them this saying by St. Gregory of Nazianzen as summing-up his teaching on the greatness of the priesthood, and

also as a programme of perfection that they have to realise in themselves and in the faithful committed to their charge.(2)

B. THE HOLINESS OF A PRIEST

Pope St. Leo in a famous sermon, after setting out the benefits bestowed upon us by the Saviour in delivering us from sin and initiating us into the divine life, called on his hearers to respect their dignity and not to lower it by conduct unworthy of that height to which they had the honour of being members: *Agnosce, O Christiane, dignitatem tuam, et, divinae consors factus naturae, noli in veterem vilitatem degeneri conversatione redire. Memor esto cujus capitis et cujus corporis sis membrum.* (3)

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. Conclusion.

(2). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter, Part 1: The qualities of a good Pastor.

Terrae deos extollimus, Patres deorum psallimus; Dei patres et filios, Summo Parenti proximos.-

(Office of the Priesthood: Hymn for Second Vespers). *Breviarium Romanum: In Nativ. Domini*, 8a lect.

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And St. John Eudes in exalting the priesthood reaches a similar conclusion. His object is to persuade priests that, if they are not to fall, they must lead an entirely holy life, for no other kind of life befits their dignity: - You are a holy race," he tells them, -for the Saint of saints set you in the holiest of positions; and it is to you that He primarily addresses these words: *Secundum etiam qui vocavit vos sanctum, et ipsi in omni conversatione sancti sitis, quoniam scriptum est: Sancti eritis quoniam ego sanctus sum.* (1)

The obligation of sanctity.

"How culpable are we," he adds, "if, instead of honouring the sacerdotal dignity, we degrade it; if, instead of behaving worthily in holy surroundings and becomingly handling holy things, we sully them with sacrileges; and if, instead of seeking only the glory of our Master and the salvation of souls, we run after the glory of the world and our own particular interests. How greatly we should be ashamed if, instead of being clothed with the holiness, the purity, the mercy and the charity of God, we are the slaves of our avarice, our ambition, and our other passions; and if, instead of being animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ, we are filled with the spirit of the world. How disgraceful it is if, instead of following Jesus Christ as our Rule, we follow only our own perverse inclinations; and if, instead of governing our life by the maxims of the Gospel, we conform to the damnable maxims of a corrupt generation!" (2)

He who is raised in dignity above his fellow-men should also be distinguished by virtue above the

(1). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter. Cf. I Pet. i, 15; ii, 9.

(2). *Idem*; cf. *Coeur admirable*, Bk. IV, ch. iv.

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common level. *Noblesse oblige*, runs the wise popular saying; and that is true of spiritual nobility as well as of nobility of birth. And so the priesthood imposes on the priest an obligation of excelling the faithful laity in virtue and holiness, even as he is above them in the dignity of his calling. Even Religious themselves, when they have not the honour of being clothed with the priesthood, are not bound to so eminent a degree of perfection as is he.

It is true that it is commonly taught that neither the priesthood nor the pastoral office suffices to

place a priest in the state of perfection; this is only granted to the episcopate. "According to St. Thomas, (1) says M. Ribet, "the sacerdotal state is characterised by the powers received in it and the ministry for souls that is connected with it. The exercise of these powers supposes and demands interior perfection; but, since it is possible for a priest not to exercise them or to exercise them but rarely, the mere reception of these sacred powers does not bind by vow to perfection, and does not, strictly speaking, constitute a state of perfection.

"The same is true of the care of souls. Not being bound by vow to fulfil this ministry, and being able to release himself from it either with the consent of his bishop or even without that consent (if he intends to enter the religious life), a simple priest does not appear to fulfil by his circumstances the strict conditions of the state of perfection as laid down by theologians."(2)

These arguments seem to be correct. But, on the one

(1). *Sum. Theol.*, IIa, IIae, q. 184, a. 6.

(2). Ribet: *L'Ascétique chrétienne*, ch. V111, n. 3.

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Duties of a priest demand interior perfection.

hand, real perfection and the state of perfection are two very different things, and the same St. Thomas lays it down that the exercise of the priestly functions, and especially the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, demands an interior perfection which, of itself, the religious state does not seem to claim.'(1) And, on the other hand, we might well ask whether a priest who (save in exceptional circumstances) did not exercise, or only rarely exercised his priestly functions, would fittingly correspond with his vocation. Would he not resemble that useless servant of whom we read in the Gospel, who buried his master's talents instead of trading with them? Such was the opinion of St. John Eudes who, as we shall later show, always strove to inspire the ministers of Jesus Christ with a love of all the priestly functions. (2)

Rightly, then, does M. Ribet add:

Compared with the religious state.

"Without in any way contradicting the traditional teaching on what constitutes, strictly speaking, a state which binds one permanently, we may affirm that, of its nature, the priesthood is a condition of life superior to every other condition, superior even to religious profession. And, as the Angelic Doctor observes, it is only when one opposes the case of a religious who is also a priest to that of a secular priest, that one can

(1). *Ex hoc quod aliquis accipit sacrum ordinem, non ponitur simpliciter in statu perfectionis, quamvis interior perfectio ad hoc requiratur quod aliquis digne hujusmodi actus exercent: Sum Theol., loc. cit.* And: "Per sacrum ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria quibus ipsi Christo servitur in sacramento altaris, ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior quam requirit etiam religionis status" *ibid.*, a.S. Cf. also: *Suppl.*, q. 35, a. L, ad. 3; q. 40, a. 1.

(2). *Memorial*, Part II, n. 9, 21, *et passim*.

place the state of the former above that of the latter. And further he adds that because of the perils and difficulties of the pastoral office, parochial ministry demands of those who exercise it more perfection than that of religious. These last, no doubt, are subjected to the observance of their rule, but they find therein help and security which the others can only obtain by their own efforts seconded by the grace of God."(1)

This was precisely what the reformers of the French clergy in the seventeenth century never ceased to proclaim. Jealous to give all its rightful honour to the priesthood, as the Order of Jesus Christ, they strongly stressed the principle that no one is more strictly bound to perfection than is the priest, and, moreover, that no one is bound to a higher perfection, not even monks and nuns.

The reasons that oblige the priest to surpass in perfection the laity, including even religious, are numerous. In the front rank we must place his special union with God (whose minister he is), the complete consecration of his body and soul to God, the holiness of his duties, especially the adorable Sacrifice which he offers every morning. St. John mentions all these reasons, but there is yet another on which perhaps he insists even more strongly: it is the honour conferred on the priest by being associated by Our Blessed Lord to His position as religious head of the Christian people.

(1). Ribet: *L'Ascétique chrétienne*, ch. viii, n. 4. Cf. S. Thomas: Sum. Theol., IIa, Iae, q. 184, a. 5. In his fine book, *The Eternal Priesthood*, in which the ideas of St. John Eudes can often be found, Cardinal Manning plainly states: "The priestly state is the most exalted by reason of the powers entrusted to it, the obligations it imposes, and the graces it receives, and *it is the state of perfection instituted by Our Divine Master* to be the light of the world and the salt-of the earth." (ch. iv.)

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He must be a model of sanctity to his flock.

We have elsewhere explained the part played by the Divine Master in regard to His mystical Body; and we remember that His position makes Him the example that the faithful must imitate, the principle of the divine life that they enjoy, and a supplement that supplies for the imperfection and insufficiency of their worship. There, then, is the *rôle* that falls to the priest by reason of his participation in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Following the Saviour's example he must be a model for his people, by his virtues as well as by the exercise of his sacred ministry he must help to develop the supernatural life in souls, by his fervour he must supply for the negligence of his flock, and if necessary he must by penance make reparation for their sins. It is clear that no ordinary virtue will suffice for this *rôle*; if he is to fulfil it the priest requires to enjoy the fullness of the divine life.

And so St. John never wearied of repeating: "All Christians must be animated by the spirit of Jesus, but the clergy must possess its fullness so as to communicate it to others." (1) And elsewhere he says: "If a priest is adorned with a holiness proportioned to his dignity, he possesses the greatest holiness that can be found anywhere in the Church: a holiness that is a source and principle of grace and holiness, for the priest is the fountain of all Christian holiness."(2)

This metaphor of a fountain scattering its vivifying waters all around it admirably expresses the superabundance of supernatural life needed by the priest for the sanctification of others. P&e Eudes also made use of

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Part I, v.

(2). *Mémorial*, Part I: Qualities of a good Pastor.

it elsewhere in his *Mémorial*: «The priest," he says, "has to purify, guide, and perfect other Christians; therefore he must be a fountain of benediction whose salutary waters flow abundantly over every part of the Lord's house.» (1)

**Particular virtues
needed by the
priest.**

But the Saint is not satisfied with teaching in a general way that the priest must attain to a loftier sanctity than that of other Christians. He often applies this principle to a particular virtue, as, for example, when, speaking of poverty, and reminding the members of his Congregation (who are not bound by vow) of Our Lord's words: *Omnis ex vobis qui non renuntiat omnibus quae possidet, non potest esse meus discipulus*, he added that "no one, whatever his condition may be, is more strictly bound to this universal poverty and to the perfection of all the other Christian virtues, than are clerics."

Similarly, in connection with renunciation of self, he writes in his *Mémorial*: "All Christians are bound to this abnegation, but clerics have a very special obligation to it . . . for in this, as in every other Christian virtue, they are bound to be an example and a living rule for other Christians."

But not only is the priesthood the highest dignity on earth, it confers on the minister of Jesus Christ an authority and a power which raise him, in certain respects, above the Angels. Thence St. John concludes that, "if it were possible," a priest should lead a

(1). *Mémorial*, Part V, 2nd Meditation. Similarly he says in *Le Coeur admirable* (13k. IV, ch. iv): - - - Who should be holier than he who is obliged to be a fountain of graces and of blessings, and to have all the virtues in so high a degree as to be an example of perfection to all the faithful?"

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life «purer and holier» than that of the Angels. He would have the minister of Jesus Christ to be --- an angel in purity of spirit and of body, a cherubim in light and in knowledge, and a seraphim in love and in charity."(1)

Above all he would have him become by the splendour of his virtues «a living image of Jesus Christ» (2) Since we have the honour of representing the Supreme Priest here below, of taking His place, of being clothed with His authority, of acting in His name and continuing His functions, is it not indeed fitting that our life should be the image or rather the continuation of His own? The Saint desired that---our bodies and souls should be a Gospel, a living book in which the interior and exterior life of Jesus can be seen perfectly imprinted.(3)

Sometimes Père Eudes also suggested the divine perfections themselves as models for priestly holiness; nor need we be surprised by that. The Fathers of the Church hold up the priest as one who is divine, indued with a power and authority that belong only to God; is it not right, then, that "so far as is possible" he should be 'full of charity, goodness, mercy, and purity": in short, "full of the spirit and holiness of God? (4)

But Père Eudes's mind was too practical to stop short at these general and somewhat idealistic expressions on sacerdotal perfection. No one knew better than he how important it is to come down to details when we are reflecting on our duties or reminding others of theirs. And in his Memorial principles are given a relatively small space; the book is devoted almost

(1). *Mémorial*, Part I: The qualities of a good Priest.

(2) *Idem*, loc. cit.

(3). *Idem*, Part III, ch. ii; Part V, 10th Meditation, *et passim*.

(4) *Mémorial*, Part 1: The qualities of a good Pastor, *et passim*.

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entirely to setting out in detail a priest's duties and how best to perform them.

Practical counsels for the priest.

The second part of that book (1) and the Meditations at the end of it give in great detail the various elements that go to make up priestly perfection. The salient characteristics, as set out by St. John, are a complete separation from sin (so that the priest is, as he puts it, "irreprehensible"), an absolute renunciation of the world which offers only perversity and folly, great fidelity in avoiding all familiarity with worldly people, especially with women, and complete detachment from self. He also mentions a lively faith that inspires our whole moral life, a great love for Jesus Christ, especially in the Holy Eucharist which is the mystery peculiar to the priest, a singular devotion to Mary, the queen and mother of the clergy, together with a special cult for the holy priests who, after the Sovereign Priest, are our patrons and models, as well as for the holy martyrs and virgins so as to obtain by their intercession the spirit of sacrifice and of inviolable purity which we need. To these qualities, the Saint adds unreserved devotion to the Church, zeal for the salvation of souls which does not shrink from any sacrifice, and, underlying all the virtues, a profound humility resting on a vivid realisation of our helplessness and unworthiness.

The necessity of constant prayer.

The means of attaining to this perfection is application to prayer. Remembering that the Saint declares that prayer is the soul of the Christian life, (2) we can understand that with much more reason it must be the

(1). This second part is called *Abrégé des devoirs des pasteurs*.

(2). *Cf. Introduction au Royaume de Jésus*, p. 26.

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soul of the priestly life. St. John, in fact, desires the priest "to have a great love of prayer, and to have recourse to it at all times and in everything," (1) so that his life becomes "a continual prayer." (2) At this price he will make progress in virtue and his ministry will be fruitful.

Similarly the chief object of his Memorial is to teach the priest to become a man of prayer, by teaching him not only to perform properly what St. Francis de Sales calls "complete and formed prayer," (3) but also to accomplish all his actions with that interior spirit which is simply one of the forms of prayer. The Saint liked to sum up all this by saying that a priest should be, like St. John the Baptist, « a burning, shining lamp: burning before God and shining before men; burning with love for God, shining with charity towards his neighbour; burning with the perfection of his interior life, shining with the holiness of his exterior life; burning with the fervour of his continual prayer, shining in his preaching of the divine word.» (4) It would be difficult to find a more gracious and truer imagery with which to portray the holiness of a priest.

(1) *Mémorial*, Part II, n. 30.

(2). *Idem*, Part II Qualities of a good Pastor.

(3) *La Vie dévote*, II, x.

(4) .*Mémorial*, 11: The qualities of a good Pastor. Cf. *Le bon Confesseur*, II, iv. The same idea is to be seen in this strophe from the Mass of the Priesthood:

"Intus flagrant charitatis Divinis ardoribus: Foris lucent sanctitatis Praeclaris operibus."

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C. THE ZEAL OF A PRIEST

One of the chief obligations of a priest is to labour for the salvation of souls, and St. John Eudes fully realised this. "After the incomparable Xavier," says Père Hérain, "perhaps no one, at least in the seventeenth century, carried zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls to greater lengths."⁽¹⁾ And St. John himself said: "I feel so strong a desire to work for the salvation of souls that I would voluntarily renounce all the glory of Paradise, together with that of the angels and even that of the Blessed Virgin, and I would without difficulty leave heaven and return to earth, to help in the salvation of a poor Soul."⁽²⁾

The Saint's zeal for souls.

During a pilgrimage that he made to the Abbey of Clairvaux in 1665, he was led to envy the fortunate lot of the religious who lived there in absolute separation from the world and in constant union with God. Greatly struck by the security of these happy solitaries and by the tremendous responsibilities entailed by the pastoral life which he had led for so many years, he thought of settling down with them and giving himself to the contemplation that he craved. But soon he thought of the souls who needed his ministry, and he banished this plan as a temptation. "I am afraid," he said,---of not making sufficiently holy use of the talents God has given me for labouring at the salvation of souls. If I were to give up everything to withdraw into solitude, would I not be burying my talent? If I were to give up the missions so as to retire

(1). *Vertus du P. Eudes*, ch. xxiii.

(2) Hérain, loc. cit.

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into religion, would I be able to plead that I had feared to lose my soul? Was not that the reply made by the idle servant who was so severely punished by his lord, and would I not justly deserve the same treatment?"⁽¹⁾

After that, we are not surprised to learn that the Saint insisted on the priest's obligation to labour for the salvation of souls. ⁽²⁾ He constantly returned to this point and expressed himself thereon with a loftiness and a force of conviction rarely to be found. It is in this, perhaps, that his books on the ecclesiastical life are most distinguishable from analogous works that appeared in the seventeenth century, many of which preach holiness rather than zeal. This, for example, is true of M. Olier's *Traité des saints Ordres*. Others, it is true, treat of zeal at some length; but, without seeking to depreciate their value, we believe we may say that in them one will look in vain for the impassioned language that love of souls inspired in Père Eudes.

**The salvation of
souls is the *raison
d'être* of the
priesthood,**

Convinced that the salvation of souls is the *raison d'être* of the priesthood, the Saint could not understand how anyone could enter it for the sake of his own salvation, as he heard some declare they had done: «Know this, brother,» he said, "when you enter the sacerdotal state your salvation should be a matter of the past,

(1) Martine Lecointe: *Vie du P. Eudes*, II, p. 113.

(2). Cf. *Mémorial de la vie ecclésiastique*, passim; *Manuel pour une Communauté ecclésiastique*, passim; *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, 1V, IX; *Royaume de Jésus*, II, n. xxxvii; *Constitutions des Religieuses de Notre-Dame de Charité*, 1st constitution; *Regulae Congregationis Jesu et Mariae*, I, 1V, etc.

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and you should enter the priesthood to labour for the salvation of others. For the prospects of your own salvation should be so promising, and you should be so holy, that you can, with the grace of God, save and sanctify others."(1)

St. John was also wont to remind priests of their office of saviours of the world communicated to them by Jesus Christ: "You," he tells them in his *Mémorial*, "are the saviours of the world whom the great Saviour has left here below in His place to continue and to fulfil the work of the redemption of the universe. Also He caused you to be given the title of *saviours* in the Scriptures, for it is to priests that He refers in the prophecy of Abdias: *Ascendent salvatores in montem Sion*; (2) and Clement of Alexandria has no scruple in calling them 'redeemers.' "(3)

**and the noblest of
all possible works.**

In order to inflame zeal in the hearts of priests St. John went to considerable trouble to demonstrate the excellence of their work. This he did especially in a long chapter in *Le Bon Confesseur*, in which he shows that there is no work greater or holier than that of toiling for the salvation of souls. That, he says, is the great work of God, of Jesus Christ, of Mary, of the Church, and of the angels and saints. Indeed, was it not for that that God created the world? Was not that the reason for the Incarnation and the Redemption, for the life and the death of Jesus Christ? Is not that also why the Church was instituted and why she was given the mission to preach the doctrine of salvation, to administer the sacraments, and to perpetuate the

(1). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. 11.

(2) *Abdias*, 1, 2 1.

(3). *Mémorial*, Prelim. chapter.

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Sacrifice of the Cross? And is not that the object of the ministry the angels exercise among mankind?

The Saint adds that we can do nothing that is more agreeable to God and more useful for our fellows. Fasting, alms-giving, prayer, even martyrdom itself, are of less value than efforts made to save a soul; and in support of this assertion he cites, amongst other proofs, the beautiful words of St.

Teresa: "O my Jesus, how admirable is Thy love for the children of men, since the greatest service that we can render Thee is to abandon Thee (i.e. to interrupt our prayer) for love of them and for their salvation! (1) And a little later he reminds us that this great saint envied those who spent themselves for the salvation of souls more than she envied the martyrs.(2)

The striking pages devoted to the development of these thoughts in *Le Bon Confesseur* should be read: they are certainly amongst the most notable that he ever wrote. And they are, moreover, a magnificent commentary on the saying by Denis the Areopagite (so often quoted by St. John): "The divinest of divine works is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls: *Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari . Deo in salutem animarum.* (3)

Efforts of Satan to cause loss of souls.

To stimulate the zeal of priests the Saint would also point out to them the rage with which the devil strives to bring about the loss of souls: «Shall we,» he asks them, "have less love for the souls of our brethren, than this monster has hatred for them? Shall the

(1). *Exclamations*, 2.

(2). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii, sec. 5.

(3). *Idem*, loc. cit.; *Mémorial*, Part 1: *Qualities of a good Pastor*; *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, Part IV, ch. ix; *Constitutions des Religieuses de N.D. de Charity* 1st constitution, etc.

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fervour we show for their salvation be less than the fury with which he seeks their perdition? If his rage against them is such as to make him consider all too brief the thousands of years during which he is allowed to work for their destruction, with what ardour must we employ the fleeting moments of this life to help in saving those souls for the least of which the Son of God sacrificed a life of thirty-three years, each moment of which was worth more than ten thousand eternities of men and angels! (1)

And again he cries out: "Let us have pity on the multitude of souls that perish every day; they were created in the image of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son, and they are the souls of our brothers and sisters. Reflect on the innumerable labours undertaken by Our Saviour on their behalf, on the wounds He received, and the griefs He endured; consider the tears He shed and the blood that flowed from Him, and the shameful and cruel death that He suffered for their salvation; and think, too, of the tears of His Holy Mother and of the inconceivable anguish that filled her maternal Heart for the same reason. Let no day pass without helping some soul."

"O my Saviour," he added, "when shall be fulfilled those divine words of Thy Holy Mother: *Esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes?* Most holy Mother of God, when shall we see thy great prophecy accomplished? Men shall we see the demons stripped of the immense riches which they possess and which they have stolen from thy beloved Son? When shall be satisfied the extreme hunger of thy children for souls? Would that all God's creatures, both in heaven

(1). *Le bon Confesseur*, ch. ii, sect. 5.

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and on earth, might prostrate themselves with thee before the throne of the Divine Mercy to obtain this great grace!"(1)

Moved by such feelings, St. John could not understand how a priest could remain insensible to the

loss of souls, when it was his mission to save them: "How guilty are we," he cried, "if instead of seeking only the glory of God and the salvation of souls, we pursue the glory of the world and our own particular interests!" (2)

Priests must be self-sacrificing in this work.

He would have the ministers of Jesus Christ bring to the labour of saving souls the generosity that was shown in this respect by the Divine Master: and many times, both in his *Mémorial* and in *Le bon Confesseur*, he urges them to devote themselves to this work without reserve:

"A good pastor," he says, "is another Christ who, imitating the Saviour, makes use of his whole mind, his heart, his affections, his strength, his time, and his belongings in this work, and is always ready to give his blood and to sacrifice his life for the salvation of the souls committed to him by God." (3) And he adds: «Such a one is a living image of Jesus Christ in the world, and of Jesus watching, praying, preaching, catechising, toiling, sweating, weeping, going from town to town and from village to village, suffering, agonising, dying and sacrificing himself for the salvation of souls.» (4)

"As the father of God's people," the priest should, he tells us, "labour unceasingly to feed them with the

(1). *Le bon Confesseur, ch. II, sec. 3.*

(2). *Mémorial, Prelim. chapter.*

(3). *Idem, Part I: Qualities of a good Pastor.*

(4). *Idem, loc. cit.*

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holy bread and the divine word," and to "clothe them with Jesus Christ" by administering the sacraments. "As the captain of God's army, he must always have arms in his hands and must perpetually fight his foes" to gain the souls which are as kingdoms to him. As the spouse of the Church of Christ, he must only think, day and night, of discovering every kind of means of embellishing and enriching the Church so as "to make it worthy of the heavenly Spouse." (1)

Idleness and frivolity to be avoided.

That is what St. John meant by being zealous. He could not bear that a priest, whose time is so precious, should lead a life of sterile idleness, or should waste his time in frivolous occupations. In the *Constitutions* that he gave his Congregation he took great care to forewarn his sons against those unfortunately too common failings: "Since the Congregation was founded to labour for the salvation of souls," he says, "all its sons will frequently remind themselves that they have not joined it in order to lead an idle life, or to seek in it their own interests and satisfaction, but in order to co-operate with God in that great work which is the work of works and the most divine of divine things." (2)

Elsewhere he urges priests to imitate the laborious lives of Jesus and Mary "by fleeing from idleness and frivolity, and by always occupying themselves with some exercise that is either useful for themselves or for their fellows." (3) And again he says: "They will shun idleness as the source of all evil, and for this reason, outside the times of conversation, no time will be

(1). *Idem, loc. cit.* (2). *Constitutions, 1V, ix.* (3). *Loc. cit., I, ii.*

wasted in useless chattering or in other amusements and frivolous occupations."(1)

And in his *Mémorial* the Saint gives the same advice to *all* priests: "Beware," he tells them, «lest the judgment pronounced upon the unprofitable servant (2) be also pronounced against you. And so that that may not happen flee from idleness as a pest and as the mother of all vices. And that you may not fall into it, regulate and occupy your time with prayer, study, works of charity or some other honest occupation, and remember that none are so bound to make good use of their time as are priests, for they are charged with the most important affairs of heaven and earth, namely the glory of God and the salvation of souls.» (3)

Study is not an end in itself.

So greatly did St. John love souls that sometimes he regretted to see so many priests devote to the study of the sciences time which might, he considered be more fruitfully employed in evangelising and converting the people. Not that he was an enemy of study

(1). *Constitutions*, 11, i.

(2). *Servant inutilem projicite in tenebras exteriores*: Matt. xxv, 30.

(3). *Mémorial*, If, n. 9. Père de Bérulle and M. Olier similarly put priests on their guard against idleness and frivolity. "It would be desirable," said Père de Bérulle,---to found a Congregation of clerics in which poverty would combat luxury, a vow of never seeking any benefice or dignity would combat ambition, and a vow of employing oneself in ecclesiastical functions would combat frivolity.- (*Esquisse de l'Oratoire*, MS quoted by Père Boulay in his *Vie du P. Eudes*, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 19.) And Père de Bérulle also wrote that "idleness must be most carefully banished (from the Oratory) as unworthy not only of a regular and cloistered cleric, but of a simple Christian.((*Oeuvres de Piété CXCI*. Migne, col. 1274.) Similarly, M. Olier declared that, «There must be no idle or useless moments in the life of a priest, and he should not be occupied with himself nor should he seek sensible satisfaction in the sweetnesses of divine love." (*Traité des saints Ordres*, III, vi.) Cf. Manning: *The Eternal Priesthood*, ch. x: The Value of a Priest's Time.

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the books he has left show him to have had profound knowledge of the ecclesiastical sciences. In fact, some of them, for instance *Le Coeur admirable*, display considerable erudition and are evidently the results of long research; and the Saint expected priests to prepare themselves for the sacred ministry by serious and assiduous work. But he desired that study should be a means of preparing them for labouring for the salvation of souls, and he wanted them never to apply themselves to it from a pure love of knowledge. This was his meaning when, while preaching a mission at Vasteville(1) in 1659, saddened by the sight of so many penitents pressing around the confessionals and waiting for whole days without being able to confess, he wrote to one of his sons: "What are so many doctors and graduates doing in Paris, while souls perish in thousands for want of guides to lead them from perdition and to preserve them from everlasting fire? Assuredly, if I acted according to my convictions I would go to Paris, and would cry out in the Sorbonne and the other colleges: 'Come, you doctors and graduates; come, you priests and clerics; come and combat the fire of hell that embraces the whole universe; come, and help us to extinguish it!' (2)

It was especially in parish priests and missionaries that St. John wanted to stir up ardent zeal for souls. In his *Mémorial*, and also in *Le bon Confesseur*, he

(1). A parish in the diocese of Coutances, three leagues from Cherbourg.

(2). *Pope Pius X*, in his first encyclical, addressing the bishops of the Catholic world, said to them: «Do

not let new priests leaving your seminaries escape thereby your zealous solicitude. We urge you with our whole soul to press them often to your hearts which must burn with a heavenly fire: enkindle them, inflame them, so that henceforth they aspire only to God and the conquest of souls. . . . It is not that we do not consider worthy of praise those young priests who devote themselves to useful studies in every branch of science, and so prepare themselves the better for defending the truth. . . . But we cannot conceal, and we even openly declare, that our preference is, and always will be, for those who, without neglecting ecclesiastical and profane science, devote themselves most particularly to the welfare of souls in the exercise of the various ministries which become a priest animated with zeal for the divine honour." Those are sentiments which scarcely differ from those of St. John Eudes.

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often reminds them that they will have to give an account at God's tribunal of all the souls entrusted to them and answer for those who will be lost on that day through their negligence and inactivity. St. Gregory the Great told the priests of his day that to leave souls to perish through cowardly silence is to kill them: *Tot occidimus quot ad mortem ire lepidi et tacentes videmus.*⁽¹⁾ St. John frequently quoted these terrible words to rouse from their torpor pastors without zeal and courage.

Treatment of sinners.

But he also took care to show priests, and especially parish priests, the means by which they could exercise a fruitful zeal.

In his *Mémorial* and also in *Le bon Confesseur* he particularly insists on the good example they must set the faithful, and on the care they must take to know the souls entrusted to them, to watch over their needs, to instruct them and to exhort them to lead a good life, to repress abuses and vices, to have holy places respected, to visit schools, the poor and the sick, and finally to administer the sacraments.

The Saint had a very special tenderness for the spiritual and corporal miseries of humanity, and he never missed an opportunity of advising priests to show great compassion and limitless charity to sinners and to all the unfortunate: "You will remember," he
(1). Homily 17.

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says, "that in the Holy Scriptures God so strongly and so often commends to us the orphans, widows, strangers, and all the poor. For that reason we must strive to exercise charity to all these people in every way that is possible, associating more willingly with the poor than with the rich, being more prompt to visit them in their illnesses and afflictions, and to hear their confessions when they ask to be heard. On every occasion we must deal with them with a heart full of love and of respect for Our Lord whom we must see in them."⁽¹⁾

D. THE FEAST OF THE PRIESTHOOD

St. John quickly realised that a solemn feast in honour of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites would greatly help to develop the apostolic spirit in the members of his Institute and to instill it into the ordinands of whom he had charge; and at an early date he decided to establish it. In 1649 he submitted to the approval of Doctors Basire and Le Moussu an Office of the Priesthood written by himself, and this he published in 1652 in the first edition of the *Proper* of his

Congregation. On December 29th of the same year Mgr. Auvry, Bishop of Coutances, authorised all the faithful of his diocese, and especially the priests and clerics of his seminary, to make use of the Saint's Offices. At this time the Feast of the Priesthood was allocated to November 15th, and accordingly it is morally certain that it was celebrated in the seminary of Coutances on November 15, 1653.

(1). *Constitutions de la Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, IV, vi. Cf. Mémoires, loc. cit.; and Le bon Confesseur, loc. cit.*

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Subsequently the Saint continued to perfect his Office, as is shown by the editions of the Proper published by him in 1668 and in 1672. In these the hymns are more rhythmic, an octave is added to the Office, and in order to make it possible to celebrate the Feast and its octave before the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, the solemnity is advanced two days and so is kept on November 13th. St. John wanted the renewal of the promises of the clergy in his Society to take place on the Feast of the Presentation, and thus the Feast of the Priesthood served as a preparation for that great act which, in those circumstances, could not fail to be carried out with the greatest possible fervour.

The Office of the Feast of the Priesthood.

The Saint's Office in honour of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and of all holy priests and levites is one of great beauty. It is at the same time a magnificent glorification of the heroes of the priesthood whose virtues and success it enthusiastically relates, a striking exposition of the dignity and the duties of a priest, and a fervent prayer that God should grant that His ministers should participate in the spirit and the virtues of their predecessors. In it the Saint was happy in his choice and arrangement of texts from Scripture and the Fathers; and those parts of the Mass and Office that are entirely his own (such as the hymns and the prose) are remarkable for their vigour and their loftiness of thought. He succeeded in introducing the whole of his beautiful teaching on the relations between the priest and the three Divine Persons, his union with Christ, his connection with the Blessed Virgin, his personal duties and his mission with regard to the laity. When chanted in a major

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seminary it could not fail to make a profound impression on the ordinands, and the same may be said of the Office as a whole.

Popularity of this FEAST.

This Feast of the Priesthood was also adopted by the Priests of St. Sulpice and by the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament. At St. Sulpice it was first fixed for October 30th, but later, with the consent of the Ordinary, it was celebrated on July 17th, or on another day towards the end of the scholastic year. We cannot say at what precise date the Feast was introduced at St. Sulpice, but apparently it was not established there by M. Olier, but by his disciples some years after his death, which occurred in 1657. According to M. Faillon the Feast began to be kept there about 1660, and he attributes to M. de Bretonvilliers the composition of the Office and Mass used in its celebration. But we believe, on the contrary, that the Fathers of St. Sulpice, being in touch with St. John Eudes, adopted his Office and Mass, retouching, perhaps, certain parts of it, especially the hymns.

Similarly, the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament also adopted the Feast of the Priesthood,

which admirably suited their devotion towards the Holy Eucharist. For there is a close connection between the priesthood and the Eucharist, and in some respects the Feast of the Priesthood seemed to be a happy complement of the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament. That is why when the Benedictines adopted it they fixed its celebration for the Thursday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. (1)

(1). *Cf. Propre des fêtes et offices de la Congregation des Religieuses Bénédictines de l'Adoration perpétuelle du Saint-Sacrament*, approved by Apostolic Authority. Paris, 1671;

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On May 30, 1668, Cardinal de Vendôme, the Legate *a latere* of Pope Clement IX, authorised them to celebrate this Feast, using the Office written by St. John and accommodated to the Benedictine rite.

But this Feast did not remain restricted to the three Institutes that we have mentioned: it was adopted in several dioceses, amongst others in that of Rouen in which it is said to have been kept until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Eudists were very attached to the Feast of the Priesthood, and St. John's immediate successor, Père Blouet de Camilly, "had it inserted in the letters of institution of several houses of the Congregation";(1) while the General Assembly of 1742 recommended that it be faithfully celebrated in all the houses of the Institute. (2) Nor did it cease to be celebrated till towards the middle of the nineteenth century, (3) when its abandonment was doubtless due to the return to the Roman Liturgy. The priests of St. Sulpice preserved it until the liturgy was reformed by Pope Pius X, when they had to give it up; but neither the Eudists nor the Sulpicians have relinquished hope of reviving some day a Feast that so happily harmonises with their spirit and their works.

(1). Pierre Costil: *Annales*, II, pp. 5, 118, 186, 600.

(2). *Actes des Assemblées générales*, p. 100.

(3). Pitra: *Vie du P. Liberman*. Bk. III, ch. iii.

CONCLUSION

St. John and the Oratory.

In the course of this work we have several times remarked that St. John Eudes belonged to the French School of the seventeenth century. Trained to the spiritual life by Bérulle and Condren, he always remained faithful to the principles he received from them, and not only did he himself live up to them, but he threw all the ardour of his zeal into propagating them by word and by pen. Accordingly, in all essentials his teaching is that of the Oratory; but, even during his sojourn at the Oratory, what he chiefly saw in Jesus and Mary was not their greatness but their love. Moreover his piety was more affective than was that of his masters. The virtue of religion had a prominent place in it, but its dominant element was charity, a charity that was sweet and gentle, confident and generous. And with the passage of time this tendency increased till it resulted in devotion to the Sacred Hearts, of which the Saint was the indefatigable apostle.

The practical nature of the Saint's writings.

For the rest, St. John was not a philosopher engrossed in theory: he was a practical man and a man full of zeal. And so, we must not seek in his works the lofty reflections of a Cardinal de Bérulle on the mystery of the Incarnation, or the no less exalted speculations of a Père de Condren on the priesthood and the sacrifice of

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Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that he had carefully nourished his personal piety on these reflections and speculations, but in his daily contact with the people he simplified the teaching of his masters and tried to bring home to them its practical side. If he is not the most profound writer of the French School, we believe that he is the most popular, and that he has contributed more than any other to the diffusion of its common teaching.

The practical bent and talent of the Saint is also shown in his zeal and in his facility for expressing in prayers the spiritual teaching that he was propagating. We have said that his rule of faith will be found in the official prayer of the Church: *Lex orandi, lex credendi*, and, reversing this principle, St. John sought to make his teaching become the rule of his prayer. Hence the numerous aspirations in *Le Royaume de Jésus*; hence the prayers with their varied subjects and attractions to be found in his *Manuel de piété*; and hence, too, the beautiful prayers in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary that he bequeathed to his children.

Furthermore, we have seen that what the Saint expounded in his didactic books, and what he strove to express in prayers intended for current use, he tried to incorporate into the liturgical Offices. In this respect Cardinal de Bérulle had set him the example by instituting the Feast of Jesus and composing a proper Mass and Office for it. And after he had left the Oratory, the Saint could give free rein to his taste for the liturgy and to his poetic talents, so that, as already shown, he composed many Masses and Offices, some of which, still used in his institutes, rouse the admiration of all who read them. On this score he may

be considered the liturgical preceptor of the French School.

**The training of
the clergy.**

If we turn from teaching to institutions we shall find new manifestations in the Saint's work of his practical spirit and his zeal. He shared the views of Cardinal de Bérulle on the greatness of the priesthood and the necessity of its realisation; but he quickly realised that the only way to produce holy priests is to labour at the training of ecclesiastical students. Although this work formed part of the duties of the Oratory, it was not its principal end; and that is why St. John, after much prayer and consultation, believed it his duty to leave that Society for the purpose of founding the Congregation of Jesus and Mary specially vowed to this work of capital importance.

**The Saint's work
compared with
that of Cardinal de
Bérulle and Père
de Condren.**

In the organisation of his Congregation the Saint gave further proof of an eminently practical mind. In view of its principal end the Congregation of Jesus and Mary must, like the Oratory, be a purely sacerdotal society. Thus the two Societies have the same organisation and the same ideal; but in the Saints' Institute discipline is stricter than it is at the Oratory, and is more like that of the Congregations that take simple vows. The Oratory, it has been said, has never had more than a few rules: but St. John, on the other hand, gave very detailed, and sometimes minutely precise, constitutions to his priests.

Cardinal de Bérulle had succeeded by persistent efforts in introducing the Discalced Carmelites into France, and all his life he remained superior and

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visitor of these religious whose life is devoted to prayer and penance. St. John, for his part, also greatly revered the Carmelites and the other contemplative Orders, and, urged on by his zeal, he founded an apostolic Order vowed to the conversion of penitents and gave them constitutions perfectly suited to its end.

Finally the zeal and practical spirit of the Saint led him at an early date to found other societies for people in the world, and these he dedicated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and strove to inculcate a thoroughly apostolic spirit into them so as to make them helpers of the clergy in works of charity and zeal. It does not seem that Cardinal de Bérulle and Père de Condren attempted anything of this nature.

And so it is plain that if our Saint was influenced throughout his life by the teaching of the French School, he used it in a very personal and variegated way, and he pushed it to its furthest consequences by instituting the Feast of the Priesthood and by founding the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. Moreover he enriched it and made it yet more attractive by grafting on to it devotion to the Sacred Hearts, while he completed it by happy originalities of his own. It cannot be denied that the Saint was greatly indebted to Cardinal de Bérulle and to Père de Condren, but, while guided by their principles, he

knew how to undertake original work and, if he had not their metaphysical genius, he deserves a place by their side because of his zeal, his practical bent, his oratorical and poetical gifts, and the variety of his works.

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