

THE INTERIOR LIFE OF MAN

We hear very much about what we call the interior life of the soul. For a vast part of the human race, unfortunately, all such talk has little or no meaning or value. For too many, the talk is only “theoretical” and the vocabulary too “abstract” and it certainly has nothing to do with the making of a living in the here and now.

What, then, is the interior life of the soul? Before we try to answer this question, it might be well to say that such a life has absolutely no meaning to one who fails to believe in any existence other than the present one. We direct our instruction to all those who do believe and who do understand that life continues after the movement of the body comes to a complete stop. We direct our remarks to all who sincerely want to know or who actually accept the fact that God has never ever made a soul without planting in it the certainty that it was made for more than death. The question may be asked: “Does the body, of itself, make any contribution to life?” The answer can be safely stated as, “No, the body makes no contribution to life.” Life is in the soul. It is the life of the soul which energizes every one of the various functions of the human body. The soul gives, in a certain way, energy to the body, as fuel gives energy to the motor. As soon as the soul is separated from the human body, every function of the body stops abruptly and immediately, and decomposition quickly sets in. Is it not fruitless and unrewarding to cater to the demands of the body? However, it must nevertheless be emphasized that for all the reasons known to right thinking people, good and proper and prudent care must be given to the body. After all, the body has a sacred quality about it. The body is holy because the soul, which is holy, is in it. Do we not refer to the body as being the “Temple of the Holy spirit”? At death, when the great separation takes place, the body, no longer functioning, returns to the elements from which it came, and the spirit, which is the “ME” in every single human being, travels onward to its final and eternal destination!

The INTERIOR LIFE OF THE SOUL, in a broad understanding of it, is the orchestration – the collection – the symphony – of all our intimate thoughts, all our aspirations, all our intentions, all our motivations, all our inclinations, all our resolutions, and absolutely everything else that can and does reside in the mind of the individual. All the hate, the anger, the frustrations, the greed, the false ambitions, the hypocrisy, the untruth, the moldy muck of impurity – are all mixed together in this vast collection, this symphony, together with love and piety and prayer and honesty and humility and truth, all keeping uneasy company in the interior life of the soul. For this situation, the Benedictine monk takes a