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Contents

Joy in the Heart of a Child of God.....	1
Holy Mary, Pray for Us.....	6
The Authority and Dignity of the Priesthood.....	12
A Chance to Live.....	17
Sister Agnes' Favorites.....	23
Franciscan Saints.....	24
THE PRUDENT CHRISTIAN.....	26

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Joy in the Heart of a Child of God

Bishop Giles, OFM

It is fitting to observe the wonders and beauty of this world. Familiarity with this world often begets a contempt for this creation. God is the creator of all things, and all things are beautiful and good. All of creation is a reflection of God. We find in creation reflections or images of the various attributes of God. When we perceive beauty we are reminded of the beauty of God. If the creature is beautiful, how much more so must the Creator be beautiful? When we observe order in creation, we are reminded of the order in God. When we observe wisdom in creation we should reflect upon the wisdom of God.

It seems that all too often we focus our attention upon the evils or defects of the world around us, so we seldom, if ever, give honor and praise to God – if we even think of Him. It seems our fallen nature automatically draws our attention to negative things. We often find ourselves cursing the darkness of night, but seldom do we rejoice in the light of day. We see the evil of men,

but fail to see Divine Providence working to bring greater honor and glory to God. We long for souls that are filled with the love of God to point out to us all the good things He has given us. Where are the men like St. Francis of Assisi that rejoice and glory in all of God's creation? Not the pantheists or nature worshippers – St. Francis was neither of these – but, rather, the true lovers of God who rejoice in His creations. The world needs men who humbly perceive that all creatures have God for their Father and, as such, feel a deep kindred relationship with all of His creation. We need souls that perceive that the sun is our brother and the moon and stars are our sisters because we have the same Creator – the same Father.

I recall a physics professor in college who said a true scientist cannot be an atheist. The beauty and order of the world around us, shouts to us of the intelligence, order, power, majesty, beauty, etc. of an Almighty Creator. The evolutionist that denies God

declares to the world that he is a fool. “Only the fool says in his heart there is no God.” It is truly amazing that “scientists” look at similarities in creatures and conclude that one type of creature begot another type of creature. He denies logic, observations, as well as reality. Never has man proven that one creature begot a completely different creature. We may manipulate and steal the womb of a creature to gestate a different creature, but these are not truly begotten. Even if we could implant a human baby into the womb of an ape, this would never prove that men evolved from apes. To prove the evolutionists’ theory, they would have to show that the mating of two apes produced a human child. The similarities between apes and humans proves nothing of evolution.

The similarities between species points to the fact that both species have the same Creator. It is the same Divine Intelligence, Wisdom, and order that designed and created both. In much the same way that we can discern all the paintings of an artist by the similarities of his techniques, subject matter, and style; we can discern that all creatures have the same Creator – God.

The astronomer shows us solar systems and planetary orbital motion around a sun. The physicist shows us a similar system on the molecular level. Instead of a sun, we see a nucleus, instead of orbiting planets, we find orbiting electrons. We find in our macro observations the same design and plan that we find in our micro observations. Though we see that all matter is homogeneous, and planets are composed of many atoms, we have missed the point if we conclude that the atoms have created the planets. The obvious lesson to be learned has somehow escaped so many “learned” and “wise” men of the world as they refuse to believe in God. The lesson is readily and easily made by children and the humble seekers of Truth. The atom has the same design as solar systems because they are both created by the same God. They have the same Designer and Creator.

Many who purport to have faith, declare that all science is atheistic, and that science and faith are opposed to one another. This is far from the truth. Science is an aid to true Faith. As the scientist discovers more and more of the hidden

truths of creatures, he uncovers more and more truths of God. This is not done in a pantheistic way, but rather the truths found in creatures reflect the eternal Truth of God. This takes away nothing from faith, and builds up true science. Likewise, the true Faith, directs us in the discovery and understanding of everything. Science and Faith are not opposed to one another, but are both our helpmates in learning of God, of seeking Him, and resting in Him.

The simple observation of a tree speaks to those of faith and science. The rest of the world observes almost nothing at all. The child of God studies the tree and observes: the structure, order, functions, beauty. He can look to the miracles of: photosynthesis, phototropism, the hydraulic cycle, the cycle of the seasons, the transformation of carbon gas into cellulose to make up the structure of the tree, etc. This one single gift of God to us can occupy us for a lifetime of study and we would still not understand it completely. The child of God is filled with wonder, delight and joy; and arrives at ever greater love, appreciation, understanding and happiness in God.

MAY 2017

The tree is only one of God's gifts to us, there are countless more creatures for us to discover and study, all to bring us closer to Him. As long as we seek God in all of our studies we do well. It is when we try to remove God from our studies that we go astray. The "wise" men of this world are fools because they have failed in the one and only science that is necessary for us all to learn and love. The study and love of God is all that is truly necessary for us. Everything else can aid us in this study, but if these studies take us away from God we are not using them well, and have made a grave mistake.

The knowledge and love of God is our most important study, and the pride of the "wise" men of this world has caused them to be greatly blinded in this most necessary study. God hides Himself from the "wise" of this world, and reveals Himself to the truly humble and to little children. It is for us to be children and ever remain as humble little children of God. The true child has a heart that is filled with the joy of discovery of the world around him, but most importantly, he is filled with joy at finding his loving Father all around him. He sees

His Hand in everything around him. He feels His presence in the goodness, order, and regularity in the world around him. The true child of God has a heart that is filled with joy of living in the obvious presence of God. This is clearly and definitely seen in the life of St. Francis of Assisi and in varying degrees in all the saints.

daily crosses; and we are only passing through this world – it is not our home. We are made for God and our true happiness is only to be found in Him. However, He has filled our lives here on earth with countless gifts – joys, reminders, and aids – that are meant to encourage us and entice us to seek Him with ever increasing solicitude.

In our days of atheistic pseudoscience, we are often tempted to see only gloom and despair. We observe the darkness and negativity all around us. The devils would have us wringing our hands in despair as we forget about God and fail to see Him all around us. We must frequently remind ourselves that God is still in charge; and all things work for the good of those who love God. This world is a vale of tears; we are commanded to take up our

We must not allow the beauty and goodness of creatures to distract us from our destination and goal, but rather allow them to further us on with ever increasing love of God. To see the things God has given us and not think of Him is truly the height of ingratitude. With the help of God's grace, may we find the true joy of the saints as we serve God here on earth and thus more surely arrive at our true home of everlasting happiness in Heaven.



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MAY 2017

5

Holy Mary, Pray for Us.

Fr. Joseph Noonan, O.F.M

Holy Mother Church has the virtues of chastity, modesty, always explored the faithful and purity. This example is of to pray to the Blessed Mother significant importance regarding for intercession and protection. our eternal salvation. Many The reason is obvious. She is people go to Hell because of the Mother of God and as such the opposing sins. Man has has the highest concern for the struggled with these virtues from salvation of souls. Her concern the earliest days of his existence. for us is only second to the Man's weak nature is exposed in Blessed Trinity. this area perhaps more so than any other.

The Blessed Mother's desire to intercede for us has been documented numberless times over the centuries. Catholics the world over have been assured through the writings of the Church as well as those of the saints.

We have been likewise told of her desire to protect each of us. She watches over us to protect our physical well-being but is more concerned with our spiritual state of soul. There are times when the two are connected to each other, i.e., the physical harm done to a person presents grave spiritual injury of death to a soul.

Blessed Mother Mary has, in addition, been the model for

The Flood was mainly the result of man's sinfulness in these areas of vice. These sins have affected man and his life like no other. Sodom and Gomorrah are other examples of God's wrath regarding these sins. Where else have we witnessed the direct destruction of two cities because of the sins committed against chastity and purity?

In the present time, the world has spiritually spiraled into depths which may have been previously unthinkable. The sins are not new. The depth to which they have invaded all walks of life and influenced the politically powerful in both Church and Society would seem to be unprecedented.

The troubled Modernist clergy has homosexuals throughout its ranks, from the diocesan office to the Vatican. A recent reliable report estimated that about fifty percent of the U. S. clergy are homosexual. This is simply astounding, but ultimately not too surprising when one considers that homosexuals have been systemically recruited into the “Catholic priesthood” since at least the late 1960’s. This has been documented for a number of years and apparently not denied by the Modernist hierarchy.

About thirty years ago, reports began to surface about Catholic youth, mainly boys and young men, being assaulted by Catholic priests. The news at the time shocked the Catholic world. There have been an unending number of reports of the same nature since the late 1980’s. It is known that some of the accusations have been judicially dismissed. There are far too many, though, which are apparently accurate. This is evidenced by the fact that multiple dioceses have paid out a total of about \$3 billion as of 2014. According to multiple news reports, very few priests go to jail, mainly because the crime

is not reported within the statute of limitations. The Modernist bishops have chosen to bankrupt their dioceses by paying out millions to quiet the victims.

The sins of the clergy are the real issue here. Clergy have always had to carry their own personal crosses in the struggle of fallen nature, but that which has occurred over recent decades has all of the signs of intentional systemic vice designed to destroy the Catholic priesthood. It must be added that once clerical discipline was undermined in the late 1960’s, the door was opened for a spiritual flood of problems and, therefore, sins.

It has been noted previously of the unfortunate parallels between the events occurring in the Church and society since the 1960’s. The issues of this article are yet another example of these parallels. Briefly, once the Modernists gained control of the Church, suppressed the True Mass and changed the Sacraments, the lack of grace changed the world. It became much easier for the devils to get people to sin.

Moral standards throughout the world have basically disappeared over the last half-century. Sins

which were rare or generally hidden are now committed quite openly and boldly. Examples include abortion, contraception and living in sin instead of men and women marrying each other. The standards of modest dress ought to be included here. The lack of decency among a growing number of women of all ages is appalling in the least and simply tragic to the greatest possible degree. They seem to lack the proper understanding of their high dignity. Far too many present themselves in public as nothing more than common prostitutes.

As shocking as these sins were in the 1960's and 70's, it didn't take long for society to accept them. This would seem to be a lesson in the importance of the standards which Holy Mother Church and basic ethics or morals of life, as given to us in the moral law, are in the everyday life of people everywhere. Once morality was undermined and Catholic clergy said little or nothing about morality (chastity, purity, modesty), the laity was left to themselves. The last fifty years has shown how weak and frail human nature is.

We should not forget the

manipulation of the godless elite who pull the levers in society for an intended end. Their pursuit to destroy the morals of men is evidenced in what is currently taking place today. Newspapers, magazines, and the internet are a few important examples.

There is nothing new about Satanism or Luciferianism. This diabolical religion has been with us since Man's fall. Its end is the damnation of souls. The devils' desire is to have men sin in any way possible, but especially through sins of the flesh. They also desire to have men adore them. Quite often, this is accomplished because men will do anything to gain wealth, fame, or power.

In recent years, society has witnessed a dramatic increase in homosexuality. Once sins such as adultery, fornication, and common everyday promiscuity were accepted by a greater number of people, men soon accepted homosexuality. This has happened in a short span of time due to their moral corruption. Sins which had taken place in the past, primarily by adults, now involve children. It wasn't that long ago that homosexuality was unheard of among children

and teenagers. It has spread like a wildfire throughout the world.

These quick changes in the world are connected to conditions in the Church. Once the hierarchy morally compromised itself, the world fell quickly. Few have made this connection which is so vital to understanding the cause and effect of such matters. Contrary to many, this moral corruption is not the result of a “modern” society but a world which lacks the graces or refuses to use the available grace to overcome all such temptations.

The question of “transgenderism” would seem to be a perversion of homosexuality. It presently seems to be “fashionable” to be a transgender. This is an indication of just how fast and far men have fallen.

There exists a tremendous problem with the youth and young adults being abducted into what is called today “sex-trafficking.” The young, mainly girls, are kidnapped or lured into prostitution or sex slavery. These unfortunate children are trapped into this life, quite often, for many years until they are either rescued or are able to flee their captors. Drug cartels

are responsible for some of this immoral activity, but the rich and powerful are also involved. As of 2016, there are an estimated eight million children worldwide (800,000 children in the United States) who are missing. Authorities believe they have been forced or coerced into the “sex-trafficking trade” which also includes pedophilia.

Pedophilia is not a new sin, for there are no new sins. The present concern is the growing number of people involved and the children who are abducted. The reader will not find a lot of news on pedophilia today because there are too many rich and powerful who are involved. They don’t want the truth to be made public. News reports as of April 2017, indicate that about 3,000 persons have been arrested. They are in some way connected to pedophilia rings.

Furthermore, Satanic rituals are involved in some of these cases. After a child is abused (this usually means multiple rapes), he or she is ritually murdered by these disgusting demonic deviants. Americans are woefully ignorant of these Satanic rituals. In all likelihood, these rituals have probably

always taken place but in recent years it would seem they have increased dramatically. Honest law enforcement agencies have confirmed the Satanic connections to sex-trafficking as well as those children who have escaped the hands of these evil persons.

There have also been an unknown number of children who have been raised for the sole purpose of either being ritually sacrificed or of becoming sex slaves. There are some cases where the slavery begins while the child is still an infant. The same can be said of the human sacrifice.

Catholics ought to take this information and understand the vital necessity of storming Heaven, especially with prayers

to the Blessed Mother. She is the model of chastity and purity, and as such, she will do all in her power to protect these innocent victims from these heinous crimes. The crimes committed against children at this time would seem to be unprecedented. As we pray for an end to abortion, homosexuality and other immoral practices of our time, please remember these children in your prayers. How many souls are lost and lives ruined is obviously unknown.

We are reminded of the words of Our Lord when the disciples wanted to dismiss the children from His presence, “*Suffer the little children and forbid them not to come to Me: for the Kingdom of Heaven is for such.*” (St. Matthew, 19: 14)

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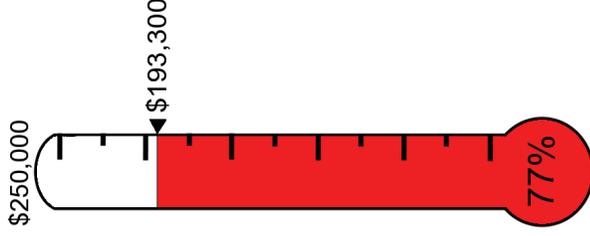
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+Bishop Giles OFM

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View of future Sanctuary (Dec 2016)

The Authority and Dignity of the Priesthood

St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor

[Editor's note: Dear Readers, We present this sermon from St. John Chrysostom in its entirety. We priests often ask for the prayers of our people and this sermon will, hopefully, impress upon us the need to continue these prayers and sacrifices for those who have been given the awesome obligation of bringing Jesus to us in the Mass, and often speaking to us in His Name.

While we have many false priests with doubtful or invalid orders making claims to this honor, we must not group the true priests of Jesus Christ with them. It is true that, in priests we also find human faults and failings. May we not become discouraged or disheartened, but rather increase our prayers and sacrifices and do all that we can to aid them in this heavy burden we have become to them. As we see from this sermon, the priest's salvation is intimately bound up with our own. We will only have to answer to God for our own sins, but our priest will have to answer for his own as well as ours. Having become this burden to his conscience, let us pray ever more fervently for him.]

St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor

The Authority and Dignity of the Priesthood

Mary related to them the vision she had seen, and the words she had heard; and by this they were comforted. Since it was likely that the Disciples on hearing these things would either not believe the holy woman, or believing would grieve that they had not been thought worthy of a vision, though He had promised that they were to see him in Galilee, so lest they be troubled thinking this He did not let even the day pass, but having awakened their longing through knowing He was risen, and from what they heard from the holy woman, and when they would be all eagerness to see Him, and fearful as well (which made their longing greater), when it was evening He appeared in their midst, and in a truly wondrous manner.

Why did He appear to them in the evening? Because it was probable that they would then be most fearful. But the wonder is why they did not think He was a phantom. For He came of a sudden, and while the doors were

shut. This was certainly because the holy woman had prepared them beforehand; giving them great confidence. Besides, He presented Himself clearly, and with a mild countenance. He had not come by day, so that they might all be gathered together. For their amazement was indeed great. He did not knock at the door, but all at once stood among them, and showed them His hands and His side, and at the same time His voice calmed their troubled minds as He said to them: Peace be to you; that is: Be not troubled; recalling what He had said to them just before His Crucifixion: Peace I leave with you, and also, In Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress (Jn. xiv. 27).

The Disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Behold how His words are now truly fulfilled! For that which He said before His Crucifixion: I shall see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you (Jn. xvi. 22), has now in this moment come to pass. All this wrought in them a most exact faith. And since they were engaged in deadly warfare with the Jews He repeats frequently the words: Peace be to you; bestowing this grace to comfort them in the war. These were the

first words He said to them after His Resurrection, (and because of this Paul also everywhere says, Grace be to you, and peace). But to the women He gave joy (Mt. xxviii. 9); for that sex was in sorrow, and on them He bestows joy first. Aptly does He announce peace to the men, because of their warfare; and joy to women, because of their sorrow. Then His own sufferings ended He recounts the fruits of the Cross; and these are peace. For since all things that stood in its way are now banished, and He has won a glorious victory, and has restored all things to right order, He says to them: As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. You shall encounter no difficulty, both because of what has been accomplished, and because of My authority Who send you. Here He uplifts their souls, and made clear to them the ground of their confidence, if they are willing to take His work upon them. And now no longer calling upon the Father, but of His own authority, He bestows on them this power. For He breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. For as a king sending forth His governors gives them power to put a man

in prison, or free him from prison, so Christ sending these forth gave them this power. But why does He say, If I go not, He (the Comforter) will not come to you (Jn. xvi. 7), and yet give them this Spirit? Some say that He did not give them the Spirit, but disposed them for receiving it by breathing on them. For if Daniel was struck with fear at the sight of an angel (Dan. viii. 17), what would these men have not suffered had they received such an unspeakable favor, unless He had first prepared them for it while they were His Disciples? And so He did not say: You have received the Holy Ghost, but: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Yet a man will not err who says they received some spiritual power and grace; not so as to raise the dead and perform wonders, but so as to forgive sins. For the gifts of the Spirit are manifold. And so He goes on: Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained, indicating what kind of power He was bestowing. Later however, after fifty days, they received the power of miracles. And accordingly He says: You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea. They became witnesses

through signs and wonders; for ineffable the grace of the Spirit, and manifold His gift. This has come to pass that you may learn that One is the Authority and the Gift of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. How then is it that, no man comes to the Son, except the Father draw Him? (Jn. vi. 44). But this is shown to be also the property of the Son; for He says: I am the way: No man cometh to the Father but by me (Jn. xiv. 6). And see also how the same belongs to the Holy Ghost; for No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost (I Cor. xii. 3). And again we see that the Apostles are said to have been given to the Church, now by the Father, now by the Son, and now by the Holy Ghost; and that the diversities of grace belong equally to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Let us then do all things that we may have the Spirit of God within us. And let us treat with reverence those to whose hands the work of the Spirit has been entrusted. For great is the dignity of the priesthood. Whose sins you shall forgive, He says, they are forgiven; and because of this Paul says: Obey your prelates, and be subject to them (Heb. xiii. 7), and hold them in great reverence. For you have but the

care of what concerns yourself; and if you look well after that you will not be held accountable for what others do. But the priest, even should he order his own life in a fitting manner, yet does not scrupulously have due care for both your life, and the lives of those about him, shall go with the wicked into everlasting fire; and so he often times while not failing in his own conduct will perish because of yours, if he has not done all that belonged to him to do.

Knowing then the greatness of their danger, treat them with much consideration, for as Paul goes on to say: They watch for your souls; and not simply this, but as having to render an account of them. Because of this you must treat them with honor. And should you join with others to insult them, then neither will your own affairs prosper. For as long as the helmsman is in good heart those on board are safe. But if he is grieved by their abuse, and by their hostile behavior, he can neither keep a good watch, nor perform his task properly, and unwillingly involves them in many disasters. And so likewise the priest. If he is held in honor by you, he will be able to take care of what relates to yourselves. But if you throw them

into despondency, weakening their hands, and making them easily overcome, you expose both them and yourselves to the waves, however courageous they may be. Remember what Christ said of the Jews: The Scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses (Mt. xxiii. 2, 3). Now we can say that the priests are seated, not upon the chair of Moses, but upon the chair of Christ. For it is from Him they have received their teaching. Because of this, Paul says: For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us (II Cor. v. 20). You see that in the case of those who judge in the world outside that all are subject to them; even those who may be superior to them in family, in conduct, or in intelligence. Yet out of respect for the King, who gives him his authority they do not consider this, but uphold the authority of the king, whoever the person who exercises it. And if there is such respect where a man gives authority, are we to slight the authority of one who is appointed by God? And shall we despise his authority, and abuse him, and humiliate him with constant faultfinding? And though forbidden to judge our brethren, we sharpen our tongues against the priests. And how can

this be pardoned; when paying no attention to the beam in your own eye, you are very concerned with the speck of dust in another's eye? Do you not understand that judging others in this manner you are preparing a more difficult judgment for yourself? And I am saying this to you, not as excusing those who may exercise the priesthood unworthily: for such as these I weep and sorrow exceedingly: nevertheless I declare that it is not fitting that they be judged by those they rule; especially by the ruder kind. And though their conduct may be greatly criticized, you, if you pay heed to yourself, will suffer no harm from them in regard to the things entrusted to them by God. For if He made use of the voice of an ass to speak, and bestowed spiritual blessings by means of a soothsayer; because of the Jews, working by the mouth of a dumb beast, and by the unclean tongue of Balaam how much more for you who are worthy, even though the priests be wholly unworthy, will He do all things, and send His Holy Spirit upon you?

And neither does a mind that is pure draw down grace because of its purity; it is the divine favor that does all: For all things, it says, are yours, whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas (I

Cor. iii. 22). For what the priest has had entrusted to him it is God alone Who bestows; and however much human wisdom may help us, it will ever appear less than grace. And I say this, not that you may be careless with regard to your own life, but so that should those who have the spiritual care of you be neglectful of their conduct, you whom they guide may not heap up evils for yourselves. But why do I say priests? For neither an angel, nor an archangel, can do anything in regard to what is given us by God. It is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Who disposes of all things: the priest but lends his tongue, and puts forth his hand. For it would not be just that, because of the wickedness of another, they should suffer injury who draw near in faith to the symbols of our salvation. Keeping all these things before our mind, let us both fear God, and hold His priests in reverence; showing them every respect, to the end that, through our own worthy manner of living, and because of our obedience to them, we may receive from God a great reward, by the grace and kindness of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be there honor, glory, and empire, now and forever, world without end. Amen.

A Chance to Live

Monsignor John P. Carroll-Abbing

III

HEROIC HEIGHTS OF UNSELFISHNESS

*“... by the thousands who
strong in their resistance
against misfortune, sorrow and
temptation. ...”*

In the midst of all the horror, I continued to meet those who were sincerely dedicated to bringing about a modicum of good out of so much evil. The greater marvel was to be determined not by men steeped in evil by the passions of the hour, but by the thousands who, strong in their resistance against misfortune, sorrow, and temptation stretched upward to such heroic heights of unselfishness.

The luminous and sublime example of the Holy Father gave supreme comfort to these elect souls, to these apostles of charity, whether they lived their quiet lives in a convent, or struggled on in their miserable hovels, caves, and grottoes of the war zones. He spurred them to ever greater achievements.

Several years had passed since the day I had knelt before him at

MAY 2017

the close of the conclave which had elected him Supreme Pontiff. Notwithstanding the passing of the years, the depth of my feeling toward him was ever the same. His personal austerity, the self-control that commands the respect of all, the tranquility of soul that transpires from his glance and has so strong an effect upon anyone who comes in contact with him, the simplicity of his manner, his kindness, his understanding, the sweetness of his smile can never be forgotten.

Men of good will throughout the world looked toward Rome with veneration and hope. The Romans in particular held for him a sentiment of profound filial devotion.

The evident proof of the esteem in which the people of Rome held His Holiness was fully demonstrated in the manifestation of loyal devotion and affection the refugees and the native population gave him on March 12, 1944.

On that memorable date when the road to be traveled seemed hardest, while the proximity of the battling armies weighed heavily upon the city and the threat of

17

an ever-increasing danger grew, while fear of a catastrophe tensed the hearts of men and women, his words poured balm upon their troubled souls. Bitterness was quenched by the comforting knowledge that protection was granted to them under the mantle of Peter.

A tremendous crowd filled the huge square, two-hundred to three-hundred thousand; men and women of all walks of life, of every political affiliation, hobbling old men, strong mature men, children, toddlers, babes in the arms of their mothers who held them close, tears on their gaunt cheeks.

Cold dampness from the air bit into the bone, the sky dark with clouds threatened rain, but this had not stopped them, nor had the probability of air bombardments or German incursions. They had heeded the call of the Father and come to the protector of the hopeless, the dispenser of God's charity, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

“We feel and recognize in the bitterness that fills our minds, how unequal and inadequate all human aid is, when compared to the excess of nameless misery that is engulfing us. There are misfortunes for which the hand of

man, even the most generous one is not sufficient.”

The words of the Holy Father fell upon the assembled multitude from the balcony where a white figure etched itself clearly against the imposing façade. The gray of the sky, the gray of column and arch, the gray of the atmosphere enveloping Rome and the world was suffused with light by that pale slender figure hand uplifted in benediction.

People applauded, trembled, wept, and prayed. After the benediction, in an atmosphere of silence that was almost overpowering, men, women, children seemed to have suddenly acquired a new lease on life. Heads were held higher, eyes looked less spent.

“It is not true that all is lost. He has said so.”

The Holy Father had followed and encouraged the activities of the Medical Corps. After encouraging our efforts in a number of ways for the betterment of conditions among the homeless, he suggested that the time was opportune for a closer coordination among the workers.

Thus came about the Pontifical Commission for Aid for the Refugees. I was asked to become part of it, and was in this way

able to continue my activities in the zones which had, as it were, become my own and where naturally I could carry on with greater efficiency.

On April 19, the day after the Commission was founded, the German authorities sent out the order for the evacuation of several towns in the Castelli area.

These towns, as I have mentioned before, had been abandoned by the greater number of their inhabitants, but hundreds were still trying to eke out a meager existence in the ruins and the rubble.

It is a well-established fact that the Italians, those in the southern regions of the Peninsula especially, succeed only with the greatest reluctance in tearing themselves away from the hearth to which a long tradition binds them. This attachment is an almost patriarchal one, the Italian lacking to a certain degree the nomadic spirit present in younger races. The secular love of the soil is still alive in them, the soil of the ancestors who preceded them and who worked and suffered there to give life to succeeding generations. The ruins or even the cave close to the humble bit of ground that had been and they felt was still theirs, represented

everything to them, family, homeland ... ancient, present, and future hopes.

The problems that cropped up on the order of evacuation were serious and difficult to solve. The short time allowed, the threat of the concentration camp, the lack of means for the transportation of so many people, as well as the search for new quarters, increased the hardships and made the solution an almost impossible task.

However, much was accomplished. With the help of busses furnished by the Holy See, close to eight thousand migrated to Rome, a number of these even finding a way of taking with them their household goods.

Tragi-comic incidents often took place on the trips. I was riding one day on one of the busses that the Germans used for the transportation of workers assigned to the Anzio battle area. These men had the task of clearing away the ruins and also of constructing barbed-wire fences.

It happened that in spite of military orders to the contrary, the drivers, for a small fee, let civilians travel on the busses, when, empty, they made their return journey to the capital.

The seats had all been removed to provide more space. I sat on a huge box and listened to a goat, bleating pitifully in its hiding place behind a wooden chest.

There were six of us in all and the conductor had a hard time climbing over tables, bags and bundles while trying to collect his fares. Everything, including a number of cackling chickens and the bleating goat and what not belonged to a single refugee. He had succeeded in persuading the driver to allow him to board the bus with his lates and penates, although this was strictly against the rules.

The journey was proceeding smoothly for a time. Then, just as the road narrowed and became hazardous because of the presence of the constabulary and the German patrols, the motor developed trouble and we were forced to stop.

Fearing more trouble, the driver saw himself obliged to ask the evacuee to leave with his chickens, the bleating goat, the furniture, the bags, and the bundles.

“What am I to do now?” he wailed, but he had to obey. Not a house around. Bare fields under a hot sky. Now and then cannon flashing in the distance.

It was a case of either waiting for hours or walking. We decided on walking and started off toward Rome. We left our former companion on the bus sitting on a chest, his face thoughtful, but resigned. The chickens pecked contentedly in the field, the goat licked the milestone by the road.

Many of the refugees from the Castelli regions found a haven in Castel Gandolfo and the pontifical villa adjoining it in the surrounding park.

This summer home of the Holy Father was soon completely filled, as he had given orders that no one was to be refused. In consequence, the magnificent gardens lost much of their serene beauty and their peaceful orderliness. Lawns and flower beds lay trampled. Improvised tents dotted the landscape.

The stairs of the villa were lined with mattresses, every available space having been utilized. Even the throne room and the private rooms of the Pope were occupied. It seemed unbelievable that such a multitude could be accommodated. The place had become a veritable town in miniature, where men and women and children lived again in peaceful surroundings. And yet the cannon and the air raids did not spare it entirely.

On the day set for the final evacuation of the territory, I made a tour of inspection of towns and hamlets to assure myself that orders had been scrupulously obeyed and that no surprises lurked.

I arrived at one of them. I found a deserted village, a graveyard of homes succeeding one upon the other, cold, empty, most of them shells of their former selves. Shutters bolted and barred. A door or a blind, hanging from a single hinge, clattered to and fro, loud and harsh in the quiet. Thick grime and dust covered everything, as in the halls of an ancient palace abandoned for centuries. I had the impression that no order existed, no disorder, that among those lonely walls there breathed neither good nor evil, but that life stood still, mute in its solitary waiting, not useful, not useless; pitiful witness to our miserable, selfish littleness.

The only inhabitant of Ariccia who had remained there was the village priest. He had been born in the little town and to it he had given his whole life, all his efforts in helping and comforting his flock. I found him waiting for me on the steps of his small church. A few words of greeting and then we entered the sacred edifice and knelt to pray. After that short

prayer, he arose and walked to the belfry tower. In the vast solitude, one by one the strokes of the Angelus rolled out into the air, calling men to prayer, calling them back to God. It sounded in our ears alone and we raised our hearts to the Almighty, that an end might soon be put to the devastation. We prayed that the little church might once again be crowded with simple worshippers, devout souls, that streets might ring once more with the laughter and shouts of children chasing one another, that doors might be reopened, that the skeleton homes might come alive, that no passer-by might be aware of only one sound, the whining of a shutter, swinging on a single hinge.

At five o'clock sharp, the death sentence was to be imposed on anyone found within the proscribed areas, so I hastened back, crossing the line at the established hour.

Later, I obtained special permission from the German Command to visit these zones whenever I felt that it was necessary.

Ten days had been granted for the evacuation. Each transfer was preceded by the distribution of food sent by the Holy Father. Inadequate were these distributions, but so welcome and

so helpful in those extremities when the small quantity of a gram of spaghetti or macaroni had inestimable value.

The women accepted the offering gratefully. Notwithstanding the tragic moment, they were happy and with them their little ones. They felt comforted by the fact that they could satisfy their most urgent needs, even if in so small a way.

In my contacts with the German authorities, the latter were finally persuaded of the impossibility of providing for the complete transfer of the refugees within the prescribed time. They acceded to my request for a longer period, but gave no official order for the concession. This was of great help as the evacuation was accomplished with more calm and with no added tragedies.

In the order given on, April 19, no mention had been made of Lanuvio, a small town situated close to the battlefront. Its citizens were hopeful that the Germans, hard put as they were by more pressing and urgent matters, would forget about them. They stayed on, clinging to what was left of their homes, risking their lives under the threat of the continuous bombardments.

I cannot state with complete certainty whether the subsequent order on May 19 was good or bad for them. What frightened everyone was the way in which the peremptory order, “by three o’clock of this same day,” was carried out. No means for transportation were provided. Furthermore, the town was blocked at all exits.

The population gathered at the appointed spot and on foot followed their guards to the concentration camp of Terre Gaia ... Gay Tower. Paradoxical name!

The long column moved along in irregular formation. Women wept quietly, eyes staring straight ahead, not to see the abandoned home, not to think of the faraway husband. A child tugged at his mother’s hand, gazing at her as if begging her not to cry. The aged pleaded for a moment’s rest by the side of the road, longing not to take another step, not to suffer another pain, only to be allowed to close their eyes and perhaps wait for death as a liberation.

To be continued.

Sister Agnes' Favorites

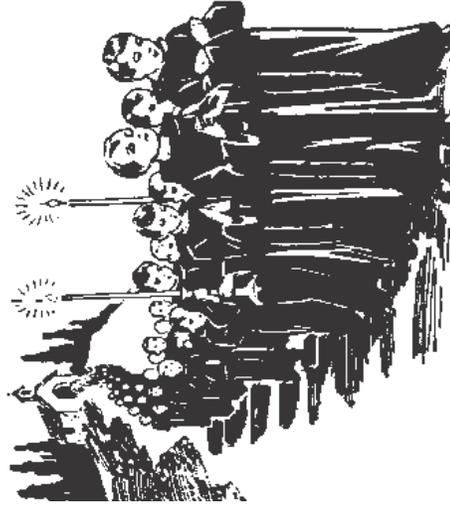
*You were within,
and I without, and there I sought You.
You were with me
when I was not with You.
You called, and cried out,
and burst my deafness.
You gleamed and glowed,
dispelling my blindness.*

*You touched me,
and I burned for Your peace.*

*For you have made us for Yourself,
and our hearts are restless
until they rest in You.*

*Too late have I love You,
Beauty ever ancient, ever new.
You have burst my bonds asunder;
I will offer up to You
an offering of praise.*

~St. Augustine of Hippo



Franciscan Saints

MAY 26

BLESSED MARY ANN
OF JESUS DE PAREDES
Virgin, Third. Order

After the death of Mary Ann of Paredes, a beautiful lily and so she has been styled the Lily of Quito. But in far greater measure did she deserve the name by the innocence of her life. She preserved it unsullied in the midst of a wicked world, carefully protecting it with the practice of rare austerities.

From her earliest childhood Mary Ann felt altogether drawn to God and to heavenly things. Meanwhile she attached herself to the Immaculate Virgin with unbounded confidence and tender devotion. She received the habit of the Third Order from the Franciscans in her native town of Quito, Ecuador, and in consideration of her great virtue, she was permitted to take the three vows of religion. Then

she repaired to her home where she led a life hidden in God and devoted to prayer and penance.

She quitted her home only when she went to attend divine services in church or when charity toward her neighbor required it. On such occasions she won the hearts of all whom she met, even the most depraved among them, by her polite and friendly manner, and succeeded in leading them back to the path of virtue. Incidentally it may be remarked, that Almighty God favored His faithful servant with extraordinary mystical gifts in support of her apostolate. By means of the Sign of the Cross or by sprinkling holy water she restored many sick persons to health; she also raised a dead woman to life.

When the plague broke out she offered her chaste young life as a sacrifice to God in behalf of the stricken citizens. God accepted the sacrifice. She died shortly afterwards, in the twenty-eighth year of her age, in 1645, and was beatified by Pope Pius IX.

ON CONFIDENCE IN MARY

1. Mary wishes to help us. She proved that in the Incarnation of our Savior. She knew that the mother of the Man of Sorrows would have to become the Mother of Sorrows, yet she acceded for the sake of the children of men, whom she loved most affectionately. That is why she uttered those most saving words: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word” (Luke 1:38). How commendable it was, then, that Blessed Mary Ann clung with such fervor and fidelity to the Mother of God, the mother of all mankind. — Imitate her in the practice and recommend your chastity to Mary Immaculate.
2. Mary can help us. For that reason she became the Mother of the eternal Son of God. St. Bonaventure cries out: “Thou canst do all things by Him

and through Him.” She is the intercessory omnipotence at the throne of God. Blessed Mary Ann experienced her power in an eminent degree. — Foster the most profound and filial confidence in the Blessed Mother of God.

3. Mary will help us especially in the time of danger. That was foretold by the words: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman” (Gen. 3:15). To the evil spirit Mary has become “terrible as an army set in array” (Cant. 6:3). If Satan contrives to destroy souls, Mary is God’s appointed champion to save them for eternity. — Pledge yourself to be a good child of this good Mother, and you will insure your salvation.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

O God, who didst will that amid the allurements of this world Blessed Mary Ann should blossom forth in virginal purity and continual penance like a lily among thorns, grant, we beseech Thee, that through her merits and intercession we may shun vice and strive ever more and more to attain perfection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE PRUDENT CHRISTIAN

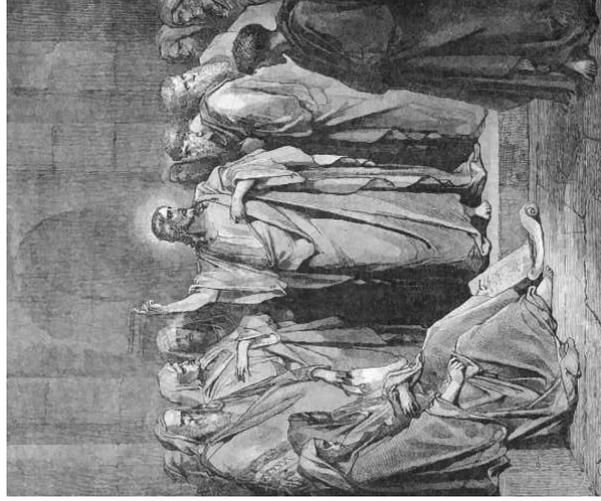
OR,

CONSIDERATIONS ON
THE IMPORTANCE, AND
HAPPINESS, OF ATTENDING
TO THE CARE OF OUR
SALVATION.

BY THE REV. J. FLETCHER, D.D.

“Give me understanding, and I
shall live.” — PSALM cxix.

1834.



XII.

CONSIDERATION ON HEAVEN.

BY a piece of inconsistency, which is at once the violation both of our faith, and our reason; as well as of our acknowledgments, and experience, — we look for happiness where, we know, we cannot find it. We look for happiness in this world. And this world, we both believe, and are well assured, is not the seat of its abode. However gay, and splendid, may be its mansions, they are not the temples of real, and substantial, comfort. They are not those delightful scenes,

described by the Psalmist, on which the sun of pure, and genuine, pleasure sheds its beams, without either cloud, or interruption.

Again, we seek for happiness in objects, and pursue it by methods, which are neither designed nor adapted to its attainment. Under the guidance of our passions, and the influences of our self-love, — the two great levers of nearly all our actions, and opinions, — we aim at this invaluable benefit, — some of us, in the pursuit of riches, honors, rank, and splendor: — some, in the noise of riot, and dissipation; some, in the disorders of vice, and sensuality.

Such are our too general notions of what we now call happiness; and such the objects in which so many of us are pleased to place it. Unfortunate delusions! For, what, after having cherished any one, or all, of these flattering visions, — have we not always found to be the consequence? Have we not always, and very soon, to our cost, and mortification, discovered, that our expectations were groundless; and our researches fruitless, — serving but to plant in our hearts new cares, fresh wants, and increased distresses? The reason, in fact, of all this is obvious: We are not made for this world. Its pleasures, its pastimes, and its benefits, are, all of them, too trifling, and inconstant, to satisfy the longings, or to fill the vast ambition, of the human soul.

Wherefore, in order to awaken in our breasts a sense of our glorious destiny; and of the bright reversion, which, — provided we be virtuous, — awaits us in the life to come, — the wisdom of God bids us often place before our imaginations the joys of His heavenly kingdom. He does this, in order to stimulate our ardor; and to urge us on to labor earnestly for their attainment.

Let us, therefore, often, — as it is our duty; and our dearest interest, — consider these divine objects with serious attention.

I. To form any adequate ideas of “the good things,” which the mercy of God has prepared for us in heaven, as the rewards of our exertions here, — is not, of course, within the reach of the present imperfect state of the human capacity. The saints alone can understand them. The tongue of an angel only could describe them. St. Paul tells us, that “neither the eye has seen; nor the ear heard; neither has it so much as entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God has prepared for those, who love Him.” Speaking of heaven, and its glories; he again assures us, that all the greatness, and splendors, of this world, are mere “dirt” in the comparison. Thus, too, in order to impress our hearts with a sense of these transcendent blessings, — our Divine Savior, in the midst of the torments of his Passion, is described to us as looking up to the joys of His heavenly kingdom; and in that blissful contemplation, despising all His sufferings: “Having joy set before Him, He endured His cross, despising the shame.”

But, notwithstanding our inability to comprehend the greatness of the rewards, which God has prepared for His elect, — still, from the consideration alone of what He has done for His creatures here, we may form some ideas of their splendor, and multiplicity. For, if He has created for us here, — mean, and sinful, beings as we are, — so magnificent a palace; if He has adorned it with so many beauties; filled it with so many comforts; bespread it with so many delicacies, — what, ought we not to infer, must, of course, be the glories, and the happiness, of that kingdom, which He has formed for His beloved friends? How ravishing must be the delights; how infinite the riches; and how splendid the banquet, at which His own dearest children are seated? Thus, from the consideration of the favors, which God has conferred upon us here, — guilty creatures as we are, — we may judge, how much more ample are the rewards, which — provided we serve Him faithfully — He has prepared for us in His heavenly kingdom.

II. In order to assist our reason to form some slender notions at least of these inexpressible

blessings, it has pleased several of the inspired writers to present to us a few glimpses of their surpassing grandeur, — just lifting up a corner of that mysterious veil, which hangs before the eternal sanctuary, concealing its glories from our sight. Thus, they exhibit it to us as the seat of every possible delight; the masterpiece of God's omnipotence; and the grand effort of His wisdom, and His love. Borrowing the images of those objects, which we admire the most in this world, the sacred penmen tell us, that the walls of this wonderful city are composed of precious stones; that its streets are watered with crystal streams, flowing from the throne of God; and having on their borders the beautiful tree of eternal life. They tell us, that, in this bright abode, there is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor night, nor gloom, — none of those inconveniences; nor much less any of those evils, which either incommode, or distress, us here, — nor pains, nor sickness, nor death, nor sorrows: "Death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more." Accordingly, representing the happiness of the blessed inhabitants of this

lovely abode, they again inform us, that they are inebriated with its plenty, — perpetually drinking joys, and delights, from the overflowing torrents of the fountain of life; and, in melodious strains of ecstatic happiness, singing perpetually songs of gratitude, and praise, to their eternal benefactor.

Thus then, although we are unable, either to comprehend, or to conceive, all the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem, — we still know enough respecting this blessed kingdom to induce us to feel, that its happiness, and its comforts, are infinitely great; and enough, therefore, to inflame our desires, and to stimulate our exertions, to obtain it. In reality, (this is the consideration, which best proves its glories; and which should rouse all the ardor of our ambition) heaven is the habitation of God Himself, where He displays all the grandeur, and beauties, of His divine perfections. It is the Temple of Jesus Christ, in which He unfolds all the trophies of His victories; and all the fruits of His conquests. It is the City of the angels, and the saints, — of all the children, and friends, and favorites, of the Eternal King. These fortunate, and happy,

beings share in all the splendors of their loving Monarch. His happiness, His joys, His honors, are theirs. All is common, in this blessed kingdom, between the King, and His people. Thus it is, that Our Divine Redeemer expresses Himself respecting his elect: — “I have given them that brightness, O Father, which Thou gavest to Me, — that they may be one, even as We are One.”

III. Having thus formed to ourselves these ideas of the happiness of heaven, let us now reflect; and consider within ourselves, what must be the transports of a soul, which, having spent the few days of this life in the cultivation of piety, — all trials, and dangers, and temptations, over, — is, at once, ushered by the hands of angels into this blissful region. Why, if, to the prisoner, who has been long immured in the darkness of a gloomy prison, the recovery of his liberty, and the light of day, are sweet; — if, to the shipwrecked sailor, after a long tedious, voyage, amid storms, and dangers, — the escape to the harbor of security, and to the bosom of his family, is consoling, — let us think, what, to the virtuous Christian, — called

away from this vale of tears, must be the sensations, which he experiences, when, amid the welcomes, and congratulations, of the whole heavenly host, he is introduced into the paradise of life, — there to receive from the hands of his God the crown of glory; there to live forever in the society of the elect; and with them to enjoy forever, without change, or interruption, far more than the most ardent longings of his heart could either have coveted, or his imagination have conceived. Feeble is every image, weak every expression, that would pretend to represent the happiness of such a soul in its present bright reversion.

And let us just think, too, what now its sentiments must be concerning this world, both in regard of its transitory advantages, and its passing pleasures. All these, of course, appear to it now, — plunged as it is in the vast ocean of eternal joys, — contemptible, and insignificant. Its great satisfaction in their regard is, that it had not, whilst on earth, the weakness to have been seduced; or the folly to have been captivated, by such trifles. It now blesses God, — and will do so forever — that, assisted

by His grace, it had the happy wisdom to have preferred to these the delights of virtue, and the consolations of religion; — doing a holy violence to its passions; and despising the allurements of worldly vanity. Such as these, in relation to all earthly things, are the feelings of a soul, that is just introduced into the tabernacles of its God.

St. Paul, we have remarked, has told us, that the eye has not seen, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has done for those, who love Him. Still, it is true, that, even with our present defective vision, and imperfect faculties, even we, — did we but seriously contemplate the rewards of heaven — should be ravished with their splendor; and induced, for their sake, to disregard all the momentary pleasures, and advantages, of time. The sensual man himself, in the attentive contemplation of their brightness, would learn to abhor his empty satisfactions; the rich would contemn their riches; and the ambitious despise their honors. A wise indifference to all worldly things would then actuate us all: — because then, as St. Paul again assures us, we should consider them as little better than so much “dirt.”

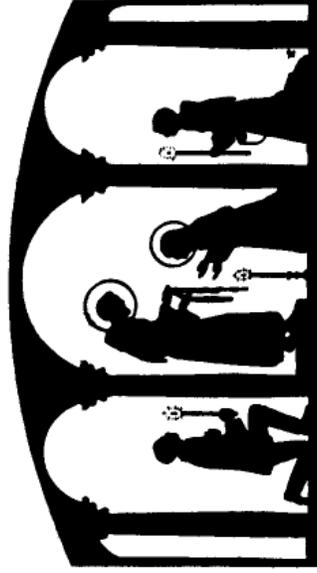
IV. Having thus considered the glories of the heavenly Sion, let us now, turning our thoughts upon ourselves, ask the important question, — by what means we may succeed in making these blessings ours? Certain it is, that such, if we please, may be our happy lot. Those glories, and joys, are made, and prepared, for us. There is a place, — a tabernacle, and a throne, — marked out, and allotted to each of us, in heaven, which even we are tenderly invited to accept; and which it is our own fault, if we do not, one day, possess and enjoy them.

And what, then, are the means, which we are to make use of for this purpose? Ah, we know this, too. The means have been often pointed out to us. The path, that conducts to heaven is deeply marked by the footsteps of Our Savior, and the example of His saints. It is too plain even for our indolence to mistake it. In fact, not only this, but our good sense cannot but sometimes tell us, that, if we do aim at rewards, we must endeavor to deserve them; — if we do look for victories, we must fight; — if we aspire at repose hereafter, we must labor here. It is thus we reason, in relation to the advantages of this world.

We know, there is nothing here, that is great, or useful, that can be obtained without exertions; — that the soldier must be brave to earn his honors; the merchant industrious to purchase riches; the scholar studious to store up learning. Therefore, we cannot be so unwise as to imagine, that heaven, with its infinite rewards, can be purchased by a life of luxury, and indolence. “To pass from delights, and pleasures, here,” says St. Jerome, “to delights, and pleasures, hereafter, is contrary to the law of the Gospel.” Yes; the kingdom of heaven must suffer violence. If we expect to share, one day, in the glories of Thabor, we must also pass, more or less, through the hardships of Calvary. The future inhabitant of heaven must be generous, and brave. A life, that is even half holy, and half profane; half Christian, and half sensual, will not suffice to save us.

Wherefore, let us consider well, — we are created for heaven; let us not forfeit the splendid claim. We are born for glory; let us not give up so fair a title. We are destined to immortal happiness; let us not resign the unspeakable blessing. “I have conquered,” says Christ Jesus,

“and I am seated, victorious, at the right hand of My Father and he, that overcometh, shall be clothed in white garments; and I will confess his name before my Father, and His angels; and I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; ... and I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne.” Oh; with such promises, and prospects, before us, we, surely, shall not be so lost to all sense of our true interests, as to neglect them; — not so foolish, as to sacrifice eternal honors, and delights, for the sake of a few transient, trifling,



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