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October

Bishop Giles, OFM

October is the month of the Holy Rosary, and the month draws to its close with the Feast of Jesus Christ the King on the last Sunday. Mary is the way to Jesus Christ the King. She is a creature of God and is thus very far beneath Him in every way. However, she is much closer than any of us will ever be.

We are creatures of God and are, therefore, far beneath Him. God is infinite, we are finite. God is perfect, we are imperfect. God is all holiness, we are sinful. We have been made by God and for God, but we are unable to even approach God simply because of our sins. This vast gulf that men are unable to cross is no problem for God. This is exactly what He has done for us. Since we cannot go to Him, He has come to us. Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself our very nature and became One with us. However, even in His Humanity, Jesus is still far away from us. We have been invited to take up our daily crosses and follow Him, but our

sins bear us down and turn us away from Him and the cross.

Mankind has truly put himself at a great disadvantage through sin. We cannot approach God in His divinity, so He has come to us in His Humanity; and still, we shy away from Him. Yet, God still has not abandoned us. He has come to us through the Blessed Virgin Mary and He, likewise, allows us to come to Him through her. Mary is the conduit through which we can approach God and ultimately fulfill our reason for being – sharing in the eternal glory of God. Through Mary, we come near to her Son – the Son of God; through the Son of God, we are then able to approach God the Father.

Since the fall of mankind, we have cut off the necessary graces for us to find Truth and Happiness. Jesus Christ came to cover us with grace and virtue. Many have rejected this, simply, because one of the conditions that Jesus has laid out for us is the doing of penance. Cut off

from God and His graces, we become insensate and even unaware that we are in need of Him. In this pitiful situation, we see there are many who say and live as if they have no need of God or of His help. The sacrifice and the many mercies of God are unable to soften their cold and calloused hearts. It is for the likes of these that Jesus wept when He wept over Jerusalem. These poor souls that will not listen to God or receive of His goodness, are punished by receiving exactly what they desire. They desire not to be disturbed by their consciences, and so it happens that their consciences are deadened. They merrily go on their ways to Hell, never truly understanding that this is where they are headed. This is what occasioned the prayer of our Lord on the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing."

It is said that while there is breath there is still hope, but these individuals have done everything that they can to stifle and crush out all hope. Not so much abandoned by God, but rather they have abandoned God. They have turned away from God, Who is Everything; and in

turning away from Everything they have turned to nothing. How are they, if ever, to be returned to their real purpose in life, if they have rejected grace and have turned away from God? How will they ever see or find the Truth, if they have their backs turned against Him?

It is only through the prayers and intercessions of others, that such souls as these can ever be turned around. They need God's grace but have rejected it. God does not owe them anything. Justice suggests to us that they should receive what they desire eternal separation from that which they have rejected. St. Paul tells us that in his miserable sinful state, it was only through the merits and prayers of St. Stephen, that he obtained the grace of his conversion. St. Augustine, likewise tells us that it was through the prayers and tears of his mother, St. Monica, that the grace of conversion was won for him.

We are members of the Church, the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. Each of us receives the life-giving graces of God through this Body – not based upon our own merits, but rather through

the merits of other members of this Body. We, in turn, must reciprocate and pray and do penance for others. We can be cut off from this Body and the Body will continue, but we will not. We need the Church, more than the Church needs us. It is through the prayers, sacrifices, and merits of the Church that so many sinners obtain the grace that stings their consciences and eventually returns them to God.

The greatest member of this Mystical Body is the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is through her that God has come to us and it is through her prayers that graces are given to so many who are truly undeserving and unworthy of them. She seeks us out no matter how many times we have offended her. She loves us, in spite of the many times we have despised her love. It is through her that God offers us

one more chance. Because God loves her, He gives us another chance. Many sinners who had just a barely remote devotion to Mary, soon were showered with the necessary graces to turn their lives around and back toward God. Just as Christ could not refuse His mother at the wedding feast, so even in Heaven He grants her every desire. It is through Mary that we may approach Jesus, and it is through Jesus that we may approach God the Father.

Let us give greater honor than ever to Our Blessed Mother, and beg her for the graces of conversion and perseverance in grace for all those who have turned away from the Light and now wander in darkness. Let us thank her and all those who have prayed for us by doing our part in turn and offering prayers and sacrifices for others.

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A Sainly President?

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part 1

We live in such an age that when one thinks of civil rulers he would laugh at the idea of the person being a saint. In a country such as the United States, in recent years, it seems as though candidates to the highest offices are also the most corrupt. It wasn't always this way.

There have been a number of rulers of nations who have become canonized saints. St. Louis of France, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Stephen of Hungary, St. Edward the Confessor, St. Elizabeth of Portugal and St. Ferdinand of Spain are the best known among Catholic monarchs. They clearly proved that it is possible to lead a nation and sanctify oneself at the same time.

For the individual who seeks a high office, a basic question must be asked. Why do you seek this office? Are your motives selfless

or selfish? Whose interest do you have at heart? What is your plan of action if elected?

Although the ideas would be laughable to many, there ought to be two basic purposes for all candidates to high offices. The first of these is to promote the Kingship of Christ throughout the land. The second is to rule principally through the virtues of charity and justice.

The first of these purposes, the Kingship of Christ is fundamental to ruling a nation according to the Divine Will. Fr. Denis Fahey, C. S. Sp., in his book *The Mystical Body of Christ and the Reorganization of Society*, explains in great detail the union which ought to exist between Christ the King and His subordinate rulers of nations in this world. My apologies for the following long excerpt.

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST AND TEMPORAL RULERS

Though Our Lord's Kingship is primarily spiritual, and as such, specially concerned with the diffusion and safeguarding of the Supernatural Life of men, yet He is also King of the Universe. His Temporal Royalty is Universal, not particular, that is, not restricted to any one race or nation. Pope Leo

XIII and Pope Pius XI insist both on the reality of Christ's Temporal Sovereignty and on its universality. In the Encyclical Letter, *On the Kingship of Christ*, we read: "That Christ's kingdom is in a special manner spiritual and concerned with things spiritual, is quite plain from the extracts from Scripture

above quoted: and Christ's own line of action confirms this view. For on many occasions when the Jews, and even the Apostles themselves, wrongly supposed that the Messiah would emancipate the people and restore the kingdom of Israel, He effectively rejected that idle hope and fancy. When the admiring throng surrounded Him and would have proclaimed Him king, He refused that title and honour by taking flight and lying in concealment. In presence of the Roman governor, He declared His kingdom was not of this world He, however, would be guilty of shameful error who would deny to Christ as man authority over civil affairs, no matter what their nature, since by virtue of the absolute dominion over all creatures He holds from the Father, all things are in His power.

“Nevertheless, during His life on earth He refrained altogether from exercising such dominion, and despising the possession and administration of earthly goods, He left them to their possessors then, and He does so today. It is well said: *Non eripit mortalia qui regna dat caelestia* – He does not seize earthly kingdoms Who gives heavenly kingdoms.¹ And so, the empire of our Redeemer embraces all men. To quote the words of Our immortal Predecessor, Pope Leo XIII: ‘His Empire manifestly

includes not only Catholic nations, not only those who were baptized and belong to the Church by right, though error of doctrine leads them astray or schism severs them from her fold: but it includes also all those who are outside the Christian faith, so that truly the human race in its entirety is subject to the power of Jesus Christ.’²

“Nor in this connexion, is there any difference between individuals and communities, whether family or State, for collectivities are just as much under the dominion of Christ as individuals. The same Christ assuredly is the source of the individual's salvation and of the community's salvation: ‘Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.’³ ... ***If rulers, therefore, of nations wish to preserve their own authority and to promote and increase their country's prosperity, let them not refuse, themselves and their people, to give public observance of reverence and obedience to the rule of Christ.*** ... If men recognized, both in public and private life, Christ's royal power, wonderful blessings would immediately be vouchsafed to all society, such as, true liberty, discipline, tranquility, concord and peace. For Our Lord's royal

2 Encyclical Letter, *Annum Sanctum*, May 25, 1899.

3 Acts, IV, 12.

1 Hymn for the Feast of the Epiphany.

dignity, just as it invests the human authority of princes and rulers with a religious significance, ennobles the citizen's duty of obedience. ... If princes and magistrates duly elected be convinced that they rule not by their own right, but by the mandate and in the place of the Divine King, assuredly they will exercise their authority holily and wisely, and, in making laws and administering them, they will take into consideration the common good, and also the human dignity of their subjects. The result will be order and stable tranquility, for there will be no cause of discontent remaining. Men may see in their king or in other rulers of the State, beings like themselves, unworthy perhaps and open to blame, but they will not for that reason deny their right to command if they see reflected in these rulers the authority of Christ, God and man."⁴

All authority is from God, "for there is no power but from God. ... he that resisteth the power, resisteth the order willed by God."⁵ Christ "holds absolute dominion over all creatures from the Father," therefore all authority on earth is a participation of Christ's authority. Of course, it is in itself and in its essential nature that authority comes from God. The *mode of accession* to power may be either legitimate or illegitimate; in

the former case, it comes from God, in the second, from the perverted ambition of human beings. Finally, the *exercise* of power may be in conformity with or contrary to God's laws.⁶ When a Government has been declared legitimate by the Church, that does not mean that the Church guarantees that all the actions of such a Government are in accordance with the moral law. Just as a father who is lawful head of a household may act wrongly, so also a legitimate Government may act wrongly toward its subjects.

Our Lord, then, as the Sovereign Ruler and Supreme Judge of all Kings and Rulers, has the right to rule them as a body, to dictate His laws to them, to reward or punish them for the good or bad use of their power. To the rulers of the earth it belongs to legislate in civil affairs, to determine sanctions for their laws and to judge their subjects guilty of transgressions of these laws. Our Lord reserves to Himself the right of pronouncing the final judgment on the Last Day on the purely civil administration of all earthly rulers as well as on their attitude to the Supernatural Life. **All Temporal Rulers will have to render an account of their subjects in matters purely political. All will, in addition, be judged on the manner in which they behaved towards the Divine**

4 Encyclical Letter, *Quas Primas*

5 Rom., XIII, 1, 2.

6 Cf. *Comment. S Thomae in Ep. Ad Rom.* (XIII, 1).

Plan for order, in proportion to their knowledge of it.

The objective order of the existing world demands that the temporal prosperity of society should be sought in such a way as to favour the development of the true personality of the members by the advance of their Supernatural Life and love. **Temporal Rulers must seek the natural Common Good of the States subject to them in a manner calculated to aid their subjects in the development of supernatural charity as members of Christ, so that they (the subjects) may advance steadily in love of God in Three Divine Persons, and attain the goal of eternal life.** “Civil society,” writes Pope Leo XIII, “established for the common welfare, should not only safeguard the well-being of the community, but have also at heart the interests of its individual members, in such wise as not in any way to hinder, but in every way to render as easy as possible the possession of that highest and unchangeable good for which all should seek.”⁷

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Source of Supernatural Life of which the effect is resemblance to Himself, will judge, not only the subjects of rulers themselves, on their attitude towards Him. “The very celebration

7 Encyclical Letter, *Immortale Dei*, On the Christian Constitution of States.

of the Feast (of the Kingship of Christ),” writes Pope Pius XI, “**by its annual recurrence, will serve to remind nations that not only private individuals but State officials and rulers are bound by the obligation of worshipping Christ publicly and rendering Him obedience.** They will be thus led to reflect on that last judgment, in which Christ, *who has been cast out of public life, despised, neglected and ignored,* will severely revenge such insults; **for His kingly dignity demands that the constitution of the whole State should conform to the Divine commandments and Christian principles,** whether in the making of laws, the administration of justice, or in the moulding of the minds of the young on sound doctrine and upright morals.”⁸ “Christ Our Lord must be reinstated as the Ruler of human society. It belongs to Him, as do all its members.”⁹ St. Thomas teaches that “**kings are anointed at their coronation to acknowledge the fact that they receive from Christ the gift of their powers and that they are meant to reign under Christ over a Christian people.**”¹⁰

To be continued

8 Encyclical Letter, *Quas Primas*, On the Kingship of Christ.

9 Encyclical Letter, *Tametsi*, On Christ our Redeemer.

10 IV Sent., dist. 19, Q.I, a.I; Q.3, a.2.

Is Religion Entertainment?

Bishop Giles OFM

It has been said that sports are the new religion. Just as the liturgical seasons change, so do the sports seasons. Just as religion once occupied our Sundays, so now our Sundays are occupied with one sporting event or another. Many will not even think of God, simply because they are too occupied with watching (following) their favorite team. Religion is being systematically replaced with the ancient principle of “bread and circus,” in order to manipulate or control the populous.

The televised games are only one aspect of a much bigger problem. The entire entertainment industry has systematically undermined every dutiful thought of God. It does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that the television industry, the movie industry, the fashion industry, and the music industry are all anti-God. The heroes of the tabloid industry and the media are unmistakably almost all amoral, if not outright anti-moral. They are not just immoral souls that have fallen, but they have become instruments and

tools of demonic spirits. They are being used to bring down all of society.

Society, today, has pursued inclusiveness to the ultimate limits of the demonic adage of the satanic Allister Crowley “Do what thou willeth.” The entertainment industries are relentlessly promoting every manner of evil to make it acceptable and palatable to the masses. Our poor young souls that feed on a daily and constant diet of this filth, soon fail to see anything wrong with it. They are even “inspired” to imitate this because their idols portray this in acting or in their real lives. This is how every perversity has become “fashionable.”

As souls are led away from God, they are also led away from the various “Christian” churches, and religion in general. For years we have witnessed the struggle by many false religions to regain the attention of the populous through various television ministries; and mega-churches. These are often successful in drawing in crowds as well as very large collection

plates filled with donations. Many “ministers” have taken to the imitation of the entertainment industry to great success. However, their ministries are nothing less than infomercials. They have a product to sell so that they can make money and they are selling it. For Protestant ministers, it is easy to fall into this mentality because they are truly hired servants. They are paid to tell the people what they want to hear – to make them feel good about themselves. If they cannot successfully do this, they are soon out of a job. Many would-be Catholics in the Novus ordo have likewise fallen for this temptation.

The world measures success in quantities: how much money is taken in; how many viewers; how many leads; etc. God is not interested in quantities; He is interested in quality. St. Theresa once said that “God and I make a majority.” It has also been given to us that: “one drop of sanctity is worth more than an ocean of mediocrity.” God desires saints, not crowds, or mobs. The saints follow faith, reason, and correctly formed consciences. They are on a steady, but rocky, road to heaven.

The crowd or the mob, are as fickle as the reed turned by the breeze. The world changes directions with every new “fashion.” The worldly fashion of the moment takes hold and carries away many. What is almost humorous (if it were not so tragic) is the fact that so many, carried away by the fashions, insist that they are expressing their “uniqueness” or their own “personal individuality.” For example, the cut and style of hair, the piercing of various body parts, or multiple piercings, the desecrating of their bodies with tattoos, the cut and style of clothing, their sexual orientation, etc. all are fashions that these alleged “individualistic” people follow like dumb animals. The rise of so many perversities, is the result of imitating the idols in Hollywood. Children hear that their idols are: homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, etc. so they want to imitate that. We naturally identify with the characters in fiction or the people who portray these characters. What they do we also desire to do. This entertainment industry appears to be the maker and breaker of fashions, and it is obviously under the control of evil spirits bent on desecrating the temples of the Holy Ghost

(our bodies) and even more importantly our souls. In forgetting God, we likewise forget that we are made in His image.

The lines between religion and entertainment have been deliberately blurred to the great misfortune of many. Perhaps it would be good to refresh our minds with some clear definitions so that we can distinguish the differences between them. In a secular dictionary, “Webster’s,” we find that the word “*entertain*” is taken from the Latin “*inter*” (among, between) and “*tenere*” to hold. 1) receive guests; 2) hire someone; 3) to engage the attention of, with anything that causes the time to pass pleasantly, as conversation, music, or the like, to divert, to please; to amuse. Obviously, it is the third definition that we are interested in.

The strict definition shows us that entertainment is not evil but is rather passive. We can be legitimately entertained and not sin. We may even find entertainment uplifting and, therefore, a tremendous good. There exists, no doubt, wholesome and good entertainment and perhaps even indifferent entertainment.

However, what we are concerned with is evil entertainment that entices and leads to sin. This is what appears to draw in the largest crowds and the most money.

Entertainment gets us to suspend our reason and often our consciences to live vicariously through the actors or players that we are observing. Their success becomes the success of the viewers. What makes entertainment good, in the eyes of the world, is its ability to carry us away and make us “feel good” in the end. We will open our purses very wide for this illusive “feeling.” It is, in this sense, not very much different than drugs or alcohol. The Communists have declared religion to be the “opiate of the people,” but it seems that the entertainment industry more appropriately deserves this title.

Let us now consider what the term “religion” means. Again, we take from the secular “Webster’s Dictionary.” (We do this not to promote secularism, but to avoid the accusation of being prejudiced.) *Religion comes from the Latin “religio,” from “religare” – “re” and “ligare” (to bind) – to rebind*

together. Definition: 1) Belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe. There are other meanings of the term but this is the one that applies to what we are speaking of here. As Catholics, we know that there is only one true God and, therefore, only one true religion and that is the Catholic religion. We, therefore, disregard the plurality indicated in the secular dictionary.

Religion is the rebinding of ourselves to God. The original bond with God was severed by Original Sin. We reunite ourselves to God by obeying Him and worshiping Him in the manner that is most pleasing to Him. Religion is not about making us feel good about ourselves. When we are properly obeying and worshiping God, we will undoubtedly experience happiness; and this is a legitimate reason to obey and worship God. Perhaps we should make a distinction between “happiness” and “pleasure” at this point. True happiness pertains to the soul and excludes anything that leads us away from God who is the only source of real happiness. Pleasure, on the other hand,

is principally experienced in the body; and it is possible to experience sinful pleasure. This pursuit of pleasure has led many souls into Hell. Many confuse these terms and, therefore, easily fall into temptation. We have heard some, trying to justify their marital divorce, say: “God wants me to be happy, and my current spouse makes me unhappy; therefore, divorce is good.” Just because we no longer find pleasure in keeping a vow to God does not mean that there is no happiness in it. On the contrary, we can find the greatest happiness in denying ourselves or sacrificing many pleasures. This has been confirmed absolutely by Jesus: “If you deny yourselves; take up your daily cross and follow Me; I will make your cross sweet, light, and a joy.”

We have presented all this in the hope that the reader will now clearly see and understand that religion and the entertainment industry are opposed to one another. They have different goals. The entertainment industry wants to make us forget our problems and feel good about ourselves (often to experience sinful pleasure without remorse). Religion seeks, not to make us

feel good, but to make us happy now and in eternity by reuniting us with God, Our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Religion and happiness often demand the denial of certain pleasures that are not permitted to us. Faith, reason, and a properly formed conscience guide us safely through these various temptations of pleasures that ultimately only bring about pain and suffering. True religion leads us to truth and happiness in God.

It may be argued that Jesus told parables. Is this not a form of entertainment? We may admit this in a broad definition of entertainment, but these parables were given to instruct us in greater principles. A priest may often use fiction to illustrate a point, and in this he imitates Jesus. It is by way of illustration that these are used. We do not desire to say that all entertainment is evil. There are legitimate and good forms of entertainment. We must, however, examine carefully the spirit that is behind the entertainment. Sometimes it can be indifferent, but often there is a clearly bad or even evil spirit behind many productions. The entertainment industry, however, seems to be predominately filled

with those trying to undermine: morals, faith, and religion in general. These attacks we should be aware of and avoid at all costs.

Perhaps the question could be put: what are our thoughts after the entertainment is finished? Are we inspired to be good or to do better? Then, the entertainment is good. If, however, we are led to relish evil thoughts or desires, or to seek illicit pleasures; then the entertainment was evil. If we honestly and objectively ask ourselves this question when we happen to see a show or movie trailer, it seems we will have a good idea if we should or should not view the entire production. We must also be aware that something that is questionable may not lead us to evil, but it may weaken our moral guard. In this way, what one production does not accomplish, a subsequent one may. This is the simple process of gradualism. This can also work in the positive direction if we allow it. A sermon may not move us to become a saint today, but it may set the ground work for a subsequent one to inspire us to religion – reuniting ourselves with God.

We must also be very cautious so that we do not allow entertainment (even good or

innocent) to usurp the place of religion in our lives. God must come first. St. Augustine struggled with allowing singing at Mass because he feared that we may be entertained rather than practice religion. Ultimately, he allowed it, seeing that more good may come from it than evil. There are many Traditionalists that appear to hold on to the Latin and the music because it pleases them (entertains them) rather than from a motive of love of religion. The beautiful ceremonies of the True Mass carry them away and make them feel good, but do they aid them in religion (reuniting them to God)? If St. Augustine was concerned with being carried away by singing and thus losing the goal of serving and worshipping God; should we not be even more concerned? These beautiful works were approved and used by the Church and given to us to aid us in the practice of true religion – not to replace it. Many Traditionalists are willing to overlook doctrine or morals as long as they are given a beautiful “Mass.” They seek entertainment, not the practice of religion. We must beware and truly resist this temptation also.

Let us no longer confuse religion

and entertainment. We go to church, to Mass, or to hear a sermon; not to be entertained, but to reunite ourselves to God. We attend or watch: sports, television, movies, etc. to experience pleasure for a brief time – to help us forget our problems and worries for a moment. We should not be turned away from the Church because the priest does not entertain us. His job is not to entertain but to offer worship and sacrifice to God in the Mass and allow us to, not only unite ourselves to God spiritually, but also physically when we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Those who come to the True Church to be “entertained” will be greatly disappointed. There are many false churches that seek to entertain and often do a wonderful job with this; but this is not true religion, and cannot offer real happiness, but only its imitation: fleeting physical pleasure. Also, we must not look for religion in the entertainment industry. There are false gods in the entertainment industry and they can only offer temporary pleasure, but not real happiness.

Franciscans and the Protestant Revolution in England

Francis Borgia Steck, O.F.M.

PART SECOND

UNDER THE STUARTS 1603-1649

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Franciscans in prison during the Commonwealth — Early reign of Charles II — Peace and prosperity — Death of Father John Gennings — Activity and influence of the friars — The Maryland Mission — Franciscans and the Titus Oates Plot — Two martyrs: Ven. John Wall and Ven. Charles Mahoney — Four die in prison — Ominous signs — Fall of King James II — Franciscans forced to flee from the continent — Many of their number seized and imprisoned — Peace restored — The province at the height of prosperity — Two Franciscans die in prison: FF. Paul Atkinson and Germanus Holmes — Decline of the province — Subversive State laws — The French Revolution — Franciscans flee to England — Their number gradually decreases — The province canonically dissolved.

the execution of Charles I and the ultimate triumph of Puritanism. We will conclude our narrative, therefore, with a brief account of the Second Province during the remaining two centuries of its existence.¹ Naturally, the eleven years that Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans were in power proved another period of sufferings for Catholics. Among the many priests who languished in the prisons at this time we find a number of Franciscans. Under the year 1653, the chapter register has the following entry: "Three fathers have suffered imprisonment, and have with danger of their lives undergone their trial, showing great constancy." Another entry was made three years later, reading: "Since the last chapter three fathers have suffered imprisonment." One of these, it seems, was Fr. Lewis Wrest. After a long confinement in Lancaster Castle, he at last obtained his freedom and returned to Douai, where he died in 1669, aged 73 years. Whether the other friars were also set at liberty or were left to die a lingering death in

The reader may wish to know how the English Franciscans fared after

¹ The following facts and figures are compiled chiefly from Thaddeus, *The Franciscans in England*.

prison, is not known.

The Catholics looked forward to brighter days when the royalist party at last gained the upper hand and, in 1660, placed Charles II on his rightful throne. The popularity which the Franciscans enjoyed at this time and later, is best seen from the many bequests made to them, and from the fact that so many young men applied for admission into their ranks. Since 1649, not less than 175 new members were added to the province, so that by the end of the century the total number of friars (living and deceased) amounted to, 228, of whom 89 were still living in 1700. Their zeal for the strict observance of the Franciscan vow of poverty was truly remarkable. In 1676, the superiors of the province drew up a solemn declaration, in which, among other things, they protested: "We repudiate all property in common as well as in private, admitting only the use of what is necessary, given us either as a free gift or alms or as retribution for our labors: not as if we had a strict right to those things, but being content with their simple use." The instructions with which the provincial in 1704 sent Fr. John Capistran Eyston to England, show what spirit guided the friars on the mission "Be courteous, civil, and obliging to all," he tells

the young priest, "familiar with few, and with none of the other sex. Compassionate the poor, helping them when you can. Be tender and careful of the sick ... Omit not daily mental prayer, nor an annual recollection. . . Let not your manners contradict your doctrine, nor life and actions belie your words. Be zealous for the conversion of souls, but temper zeal with prudence and discretion. Meddle as little as may be with the temporal concerns of your flock, or economy of families; and be not forward in recommending servants or making matches. Remember, perfect expropriation is our great treasure, which we must endeavor to preserve by renouncing all dominion: in the case of money we ought to be very moderate; and in *all* matters of moment have recourse, if possible, to the Superiors."

About six months after the accession of Charles II, the friars on the mission received the sad news that the founder of their province, Fr. John Gennings, had passed away. After the first provincial chapter in 1630, he at once returned to England and continued to labor there as missionary till 1659. In that year, he attended as commissary provincial the chapter held in London. Being now over ninety

years of age, and wishing to prepare for his last hour, he asked and obtained leave to return to the friary at Douai. Here, on November 12, 1660, he passed quietly to a better life. He had served three terms as provincial and had repeatedly held the offices of custos and definator. In 1651, he published his *Institutio Missionariorum*, in which he bequeathed to his brethren the fruits of his long experience as missionary in England. The records describe him as “a man of exemplary and blameless life, steadfast in his purpose, and beloved by all.”

Of the Franciscans conspicuous for their activity and influence we mention only a few. Fr. Francis Davenport, whom, before the outbreak of the Civil War, parliament had designated as greatly responsible for the increase of popery, was still exerting a wide influence, especially at court. In 1670, he effected the conversion of Anne, the Duchess of York; and it was, without doubt, largely owing to him, as one of Queen Catherine’s chaplains, that Charles II was at heart so favorably disposed toward Catholics. Fr. Francis died in 1680; he had spent fifty-seven years on the missions and had held the highest offices

in the province. Another learned and influential Franciscan at this time was Fr. John Baptist Canes. Among his writings we note especially *Fiat lux*, a controversial work on the religious troubles then agitating England. Selected by the Catholic party to defend the faith against Dr. Stillingfleet, the learned friar wrote and published his *Diaphanta* or *Exposure of Dr. Stillingfleet’s Arguments against the Catholic Religion*. Other distinguished writers on historical, ascetical, and dogmatical subjects, were Fr. Angelus Mason, who is known especially, for his valuable *Certamen Seraphicum*, the work which formed our chief source of information regarding the five Franciscans who suffered during the Civil War; Fr. John Cross, who wrote on ascetics and Scotistic philosophy; and Fr. Antony Le Grand, who is recognized as “the first philosopher of the age that reduced the Cartesian system to the method of the schools.”

But the second province did not restrict its activity to England. In 1672, the chapter answered the appeal of the Jesuits, who were then serving the English Catholics in the Maryland colony, by sending Fr. Polycarp Wicksted and Basil Hobart to their assistance. Three more friars joined the American mission in 1675. They labored

here with the sons of St. Ignatius in “fraternal charity and offices of mutual friendship,” as the Jesuit records put it, until the year 1589, when the English crown passed over to the Prince of Orange, and the prosperity of the Maryland mission came to an end. Lord Baltimore was deposed as governor of the colony, and in 1792 Protestantism was established there by law. But the Catholic missionaries did not forsake their flock. In fact, as late as 1699, two Franciscans again set out for the English colony. One of these, Fr. James Haddock, was active there till his death which occurred in 1720.

During the religious persecution that broke out in 1678, in consequence of the Titus Oates Plot, two Franciscans died on the scaffold for their faith and sacred profession, while four underwent the hardships of prison life. Venerable John Wall, known in religion as Joachim of St. Anne, was laboring successfully in Worcestershire when, in December, 1678, he was arrested at Rushock Court. On his refusal to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, he was cast into the jail at Worcester. Here he languished till the following April, when he was brought to trial and condemned to death. Four months elapsed, however, before orders

were given for his execution. The people of Worcester were opposed to it, maintaining that till then no one had been executed in their city solely for being a priest. Like so many others, Fr. John was, therefore, taken to London, in order that the more serious charge of complicity in the supposed plot against the king’s life might be proved against him. How little his enemies succeeded in their base design, we learn from a letter which the friar wrote to a friend of his, on July 18, shortly after his return from London?²

Sir: — With my service I return you thanks for the twenty shillings. I am safe returned from London, whither I was sent to be examined by Mr. Oates and Bedloe, Dugdale and Prance, to see if any of them had anything against me, as guilty of concerning these great disturbances of the times. I was very strictly examined by all four, several times over, in that month I stayed in London; and thanks be to God I was after the last examination, publicly declared innocent and free of all plots whatever by Mr. Bedloe, who examined me last; and he was so kind to me, that he told me publicly that if I would but comply in matter

² This letter and other details regarding Venerable John Wall are taken from Hope, *Franciscan Martyrs in England*, pp. 286 seq.

of religion, that he would pawn his life for me that for all I was condemned yet I should not die. I was also offered the same after my first examination, though I should have been never so guilty if I would have done what was against my conscience. But I told them I would not buy my life at so dear a rate as to wrong my conscience. How God will dispose of all of us that are condemned none know. Some think it is concluded we all must die; and yet, because it will not appear grateful in the eyes of rational and moral men to see us die merely for conscience' sake, I have been several times informed from London, since I came down, that if possible some will do their best to bring some of us, some way or other, into a plot, though we have all at London been declared innocent after strict examination. God's will be done! The greater the injury and injustice done against us by men to take away our lives, the greater our glory in eternal life before God. This is the last persecution that will be in England; therefore I hope God will give all His holy grace to make the best use of it. All these things have been sufficiently prophesied long since; and I do no way question the truth, though it is like some suffer first, of whom I have a strong imagination I shall be one. God's will be done in earth as it is in heaven, and in

mercy bring me happy thither!

I subscribe, sir, your faithful servant,

Francis Webb.³

The holy man's presentiment that he would be among the first of the condemned priests to die for the faith proved correct. Feelings of joy and gratitude thrilled his noble soul when he learned that his execution would take place on August 22. Prayer and acts of penance filled out the remaining days of his life. Shortly before his martyrdom, he received the sacraments at the hands of a priest who obtained permission to visit him in prison. On the appointed morning, he was drawn on a hurdle to Red Hill, near Worcester, and martyred in the usual bloody manner. His mangled remains were laid to rest in the Catholic churchyard of St. Oswald, while his head was given to Fr. Leo Randolph, who had it conveyed to the brethren at Douai.

Ten days before, another Franciscan suffered death for the same cause in another part of England. It was Venerable Charles Mahony, a member of the Irish Province. Apparently, he had been ordained

³ He went by the assumed names Francis Webb and Francis Johnson. Dodd in his *Church History of England* (Vol. III, p. 400) mentions him by the latter name.

priest only a short time before, and was on his way to Ireland, when the ship on which he sailed stranded on the coast of Wales. While he was traveling through this region, government spies detected his priestly character and arrested him. At his trial, which took place at Denbigh, Fr. Charles openly confessed that he was a priest. Accordingly, he was condemned to death and sent to Ruthin, where on August 12, 1679, he obtained the crown of martyrdom.

Of the four Franciscans who were thrown into prison during this persecution only one, Venerable Francis Levison, is known to have at last succumbed to his sufferings. He died in prison on February 11, 1680, after fourteen months of close confinement. Fr. Marian Napier was tried and sentenced to death; but, in 1684, the sentence was commuted to banishment for life.⁴ The other two Franciscans, FF. Bernardine Langworth and Francis Osbaldeston, after languishing in prison for six years, were set at liberty when James II ascended the throne.⁵

4 On Dodd's list (ibidem, Vol. III, p. 400) he appears under the assumed name William Russel.

5 FF. Charles Parry and Gregory Jones also are commemorated as having suffered imprisonment at this time for their priesthood; the former by Dodd (ibidem, Vol. III, p. 400), the latter by Hope (ibidem, p. 243) on the authority of Oliver. The

Despite these persecutions, the number of Franciscans in England increased from year to year, so that the sphere of their activity assumed broader dimensions. In 1687, nine new residences were established in different parts of the country. That same year, in November, it was decided that a friary should be erected next to their chapel at Lincoln's Inn Field, in London. Work on the new building progressed rapidly, and the following spring ten friars were assembled there, wearing the religious garb and performing all the exercises of a well-regulated community. Soon after, the novices were placed there, and nine new members were added to the community. But the friars were to enjoy their peace and happiness only a few weeks. On Sunday, November 4, 1688, the very day on which William of Orange, landed with his army at Torbay, on the coast of Devonshire, a mob attacked the friary and would have destroyed it and expelled its inmates had not the king sent a body of armed soldiers to disband the mob. Meanwhile, the Prince of Orange had marched northward, so that the king was compelled to leave London and rally his forces at Salisbury. Anxious for the safety of the Franciscans, he requested

matter is not mentioned by Thaddeus.

them to quit their friary for the present.

The fall of James II and the accession of William of Orange, a staunch adherent of Calvinism, spelled hard times for the Catholics in England. Together with their Belgian confreres, many of the Franciscans took refuge on the continent. "So great," writes Thaddeus, "was the rush to Douai, that there was not room enough for all the fathers who continued to arrive, and the clerics had to be sent out to different houses of the Order in Belgium." Others, however, defying all danger, remained on the missions and continued to minister to their persecuted countrymen. Of these, six are known to have been seized and imprisoned. Fr. Gervase Cartwright, after being condemned to death and languishing in the jail at Leicester for twenty-eight months, was at last banished by the Prince of Orange. FF. Francis Hardwick and William Lockier were thrown into Newgate in the beginning of the revolution; they were still there in September, 1689, when the chapter appointed the former titular guardian of Canterbury and summoned the latter to Douai, where he was master of novices in 1691. FF. Daniel Selby and Lewis Grimbalsen were confined for several months in York Castle and Fr. Bernardine Barras in the

dungeon of Kidcote prison.

With the return of more peaceful times, many of the Franciscans went back to England and resumed their missionary labors. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the province prospered as perhaps never before or after. In 1756, it counted about 100 members, of whom, in 1758, at least 40 were active in England. Accordingly, many new missions could be taken over, to the great joy of the people who welcomed the friars with open arms and by generous benefactions sought to relieve their temporal needs. Thus the Franciscans were enabled to rebuild some of their friaries, notably those at White Hill and York. In the latter place and at Edgbaston they conducted a school for boys; while the one at Osmotherley was soon restored to its former flourishing condition.

Among the writers of this period we mention in particular FF. Antony Parkinson and Pacificus Baker. The former compiled a valuable history of the Franciscan Order in England, which we have had frequent occasion to consult in the course of our narrative. It was published in London, in 1726, under the title *Collectanea Anglo Minoritica* or *A Collection of the Antiquities of the English Franciscans*. Fr. Baker wrote a

number of ascetical treatises. One of his works, entitled *Scripture Antiquity*, is of a controversial nature. "Without much originality," Thaddeus observes, "all these works are remarkable for unctiousness, solidity, and moderation."

Before recounting the decline and ultimate dissolution of the province, we must commemorate two friars who suffered and died in prison at this time. In 1698, Fr. Paul Atkinson was elected definitor of the province and was summoned to London to take part in the deliberations of the chapter then in session. But he failed to appear, and on further inquiry it was learned that he had been apprehended for being a priest, and on his refusal to take the required oaths he had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment in Hurst Castle. His death which occurred thirty years later, on October 15, 1729, is thus recorded: "In Hurst prison, Hants died the venerable Confessor of the faith and of Christ's priesthood, Father Paul Atkinson, formerly professor of theology, definitor of the province, and a jubilarian in the Order, who, during a continual martyrdom of thirty years, reflected honor on his prison, on our Province, and on the English mission; who, though not cut off by the persecutor's sword, still, as we piously trust, did not

forego the palm of martyrdom. Wherefore we do not so much recommend him to the prayers of our brethren as propose him as a model for their imitation."

During the religious persecution revived by the Stuart rising, in 1745, Fr. Germanus Holmes was seized and cast into Lancaster Castle. The provincial necrology commemorates him in these terms: "The veneral confessor of Jesus Christ, Germanus Holmes, at one time professor of philosophy in our college at Douai, who, after suffering various insults from the insolent dregs of the populace on account of his priestly character, was consigned by the magistrate to Lancaster Castle and loaded with iron chains, where for four months he fought the good fight, and happily, as we *hope*, *finished the course of his mortal life, having contracted the fever through the filthiness of the place; but not without suspicion of poison administered to him by the wicked woman who brought him his food.*"

The decline of the Second English Province became noticeable about the year 1770. In assigning the causes, Thaddeus points to the State laws then enacted against religious communities, which in turn necessarily meant a scarcity of vocations to the

Order and a gradual falling off in men and means. In 1773, the French government, in its hostile attitude toward the Church and her institutions, prohibited youths from making religious profession before they had completed their twenty-first year; and in 1790, another law was passed, pursuant to which no one under French rule was permitted to take vows in a religious Order. Douai in Flanders, where the English Franciscans had their novitiate and house of higher studies, was at the time subject to France, and to their dismay the friars saw how these obnoxious State laws were beginning to effect the province. Already in 1779, they had no clerics to take up the theological course, and by 1790 the province numbered only forty-eight members.

Matters came to a head when the French Revolution broke out. On December 19, 1791, the Franciscans were placed under arrest in their house at Douai, and two years later, on August 9, an order was issued by the civil authorities giving the friars one day's time to leave the town. With a heavy heart, the sixteen resident friars departed for Belgium and took up their abode in a house at Tongres, which the Carmelites generously placed at their disposal.

But darker days were yet to come. The triennial chapter of the province, held in London, on July 31, 1794, had just made provisions for the house at Tongres, when in the midst of the deliberations the friars of that place arrived with the sad news that their stay in Belgium was no longer possible, since French hordes had invaded the country and were threatening the lives of priests and religious.

Henceforth restricted to their mother country, the English Franciscans did all in their power to avert the total extinction of the declining province. Friends were not wanting to encourage them by offering them material assistance. A novitiate was opened at Osmotherley and later at Aston. But applications for the order continued to be few and far between. In 1813, the province numbered only twenty-one members, and, in 1838, but nine were left to attend the chapter held at Clifton. At this chapter, Fr. Leo Edgeworth was elected provincial. But for obvious reasons the minister general hesitated to confirm his election and appointed a commissary in the person of Fr. Francis Hendren. Meanwhile, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda had taken the matter in hand and, in January, 1841, Rt.

Rev. Thomas Joseph Brown, O. S. B., Vicar Apostolic of the Welsh district, notified the Franciscans that the Holy Father had appointed him their visitor apostolic. With this provision, the English friars ceased to exist as a province.

It will be remembered that we set out to relate the story of the English Franciscans during the first century of the Protestant Reformation. The reader, we are confident, can now judge for himself how wholly unfounded, as far as the sons of St. Francis are concerned, is the charge that schism and heresy was possible in England because the so-called "old Orders" had degenerated and looked on with indifference when the great upheaval began. That the Franciscans were the first to feel the smart of Henry VIII's vengeful fury, can be accounted for solely by the fact that they were the first who dared to set themselves against his lawless policy, and that, on account of their traditional loyalty to the Holy See and their acknowledged influence with the masses, they were rightly designated by those in power as the most formidable and inflexible defenders of truth and justice.

With them imprisoned, banished, or executed, it was a comparatively easy task for Queen Elizabeth to complete the work of her father

and sever the last tie that bound England to the Church of Christ. All during her reign, however, the few surviving Franciscans were waiting for an opportunity to rally their scattered forces. Hence, when James I ascended the throne and the Catholics began to breathe more freely, the friars banded together and established what is known as the Second English Province. We have seen how the members of this new foundation were imbued with the true spirit of St. Francis, and, like their forefathers of the first province, labored even unto imprisonment and death for the defense and propagation of the true faith. Five of their number died as martyrs during the terrible struggle that ended with the downfall of English royalty and the proclamation of the Puritan Commonwealth. Thus, throughout the century, from Henry's attack on the divine rights of the Holy See down to the nation's renunciation of the king's authority, the Franciscans never for a moment wavered in their defense of a just and holy cause. It is safe to say that, humanly speaking, Protestantism would never have gained the ascendancy in England, if in the beginning of the religious upheaval, the bulk of the clergy had been as faithful and fearless in defending the Catholic faith as the Franciscans.

Sister Agnes' Favorites

Petitions to St. Augustine



*O Lord Jesus, let me know myself, let me know Thee,
And desire nothing else but Thee.
Let me hate myself and love Thee,
And do all things for the sake of Thee.
Let me humble myself, and exalt Thee,
And think of nothing else but Thee.
Let me die to myself, and live in Thee,
And take whatever happens as coming from Thee.
Let me forsake myself and walk after Thee,
And ever desire to follow Thee.
Let me flee from myself, and turn to Thee,
That so I may merit to be defended by Thee.
Let me fear for myself, and trust in Thee,
And ever obey for the love of Thee.
Let me cleave to nothing but only to Thee,
And ever be poor for the sake of Thee.
Look upon me, that I may love Thee;
Call me, that I may see Thee,
And forever possess Thee. Amen.*

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Franciscan Saints

OCTOBER 23

BLESSED JOSEPHINE
LEROUX

Martyr, Second Order

Josephine entered the convent of the Poor Clares at Valenciennes when she was twenty-two years old. In 1770, she made her vows. Then the French Revolution broke out, and the religious were rudely forced from their convents. Josephine at first returned to her family. But when Valenciennes was captured by the Austrians, Josephine could not resist the impulse to return to the enclosure. As, however, the convent of the Poor Clares at Valenciennes had not yet been rebuilt, she took refuge in the convent of the Ursulines, where her own sister lived.

But the victorious revolutionary army retook the city, and Josephine was ordered under arrest as disloyal to her country. Without being in any way perturbed, she confronted the

band of soldiers come to arrest her and said: "It was hardly necessary to make so much ado to take a weak woman captive!" Then, having served her captors with refreshments, she followed them to prison.

Because she had resumed the life of a religious contrary to the laws, Josephine was condemned to death. With holy serenity and perfect resignation to God's holy will, she accepted the death sentence and prepared for it by receiving the Bread of Heaven for her journey to the Divine Bridegroom. With a cheerful countenance she went out to the place of execution, singing sacred hymns along the way. She declared herself truly fortunate at being deemed worthy to give her life for the Catholic Faith. "Could anyone fear to leave this place of

exile,” said she, “when he reflects on the beauty of Paradise?”

At the scaffold she gratefully kissed the hand of the executioner, and in a clear voice forgave everybody. Then she placed her head on the block. Her sister, Mary Scholastica, and four other companions shared the martyr’s death with her. This was on October 23, 1794. Pope Benedict XV enrolled her among the Blessed.

ON THE TEST OF LOVE

1. The test of love is sacrifice. Christ met the test in the sacrifice of the cross, and He demands of those who love Him that they prove their love by the test of the cross. Blessed Josephine knew this and desired to show her loyalty to her Lord. So, after being forced from her convent by the civil authorities, she left her place of retirement and returned to the enclosure of the convent despite the fatal risk involved in her act. She was arrested and willingly made the sacrifice of her life for the love of her Spouse. — Are we as ready and as courageous in showing our love for Christ?

2. We can and must sacrifice ourselves in life. There are thousands of opportunities offered for making small

sacrifices for which we need no permission. Let us make them. Let us be loving and generous, for it is love that gives value to sacrifice. Each time we deprive ourselves of anything for Jesus’ sake, we are thinking of Him and loving Him. — Does He not deserve so much of us?

3. One of the noblest acts of oblation is the sacrifice of self-love. Our Lord builds His sanctuary on the ruins of self-love. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). But to decrease is not enough in this matter. Self must disappear, so that “I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). The secret of sanctity consists in loving much, but this love presupposes interior and daily warfare. Let us be generous, let us be valiant, so that, like Blessed Josephine, we may in the end also be victorious and pass the test of love.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pour into our hearts, Lord Jesus, fear and love for Thee, so that upon the merits and example of the holy virgin Josephine, we may rather choose death than ever consent to offend Thee. Who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

THE PRUDENT CHRISTIAN

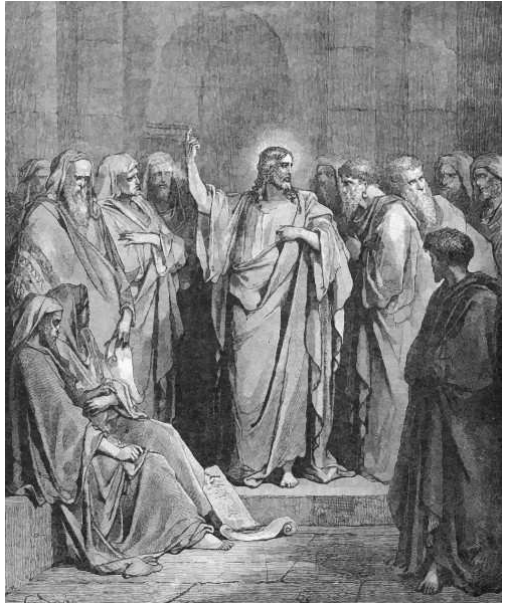
OR,

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.



CONSIDERATION V.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF A VIRTUOUS LIFE.

PRECISELY as the understanding is created for the cultivation of knowledge, so also is the will formed for the exercise of love. Each faculty is alike designed by the Divine Wisdom to conduct us to our sovereign good, — the attainment both of present, and of future, happiness. It is for this reason, that we, all of us, attach ourselves naturally, — or rather, necessarily, — to some object, or to some pursuit, or other, in which we expect, or hope, to find this blessing. There is not so much as an individual in life, but what longs for the inestimable treasure. The ignorant and the learned; the rich,

and the poor; the barbarian, and the Greek, — all equally desire, and pursue, it. We represent it, indeed, to ourselves under a great variety of forms, — some, under the form of riches; some in the shape of pleasure; some in the splendors of dignity, honors, &c. We are, all of us, without any exceptions, alike anxious to be happy.

To seek for happiness is wise: because it is seeking for our greatest good. But, here is the misfortune: We seek for it, where it does not reside. We seek for it, not in the real mansions of peace; not in the seats of piety, and religion, — that “land of the living;” that Paradise, which has been prepared, and laid open to us, by our Merciful Redeemer, — but, in the frail, and transitory, satisfactions of the world, — in the

avenues of pleasure, in the pavilions of sensuality; in the paths of riches, interest, ambition, &c.

Wherefore, in the quest after happiness, the main circumstance, which it behooves us to understand, is this, — To ascertain correctly the real value of things; and to select with prudence such objects only, and such pursuits, as, being worthy of our affections, are calculated to ensure peace to our hearts; and to promote both our present comfort, and our future welfare.

I. It is a maxim, then, too plain to be called in question, that real happiness, or substantial peace of mind, must essentially repose upon something, which is, itself, real, and substantial, also. The foundation of the most essential of all our interests cannot, of course, be anything superficial, or imaginary. These truths, therefore, admitted, — let us here ask the question, what, in the first place, is the nature of those things, — those *worldly* objects, and pursuits, — to which we devote ourselves with so much eagerness? Important, and useful, question! For, if we seriously interrogate these objects, they will, all, and each of them, with one voice, inform us, that they neither confer any real happiness, nor yet any solid satisfaction. They will tell us, that they are far too frail, and fleeting, to do this, — too mean, and trifling, to satisfy the boundless desires of the

human heart. Thus Solomon had enjoyed all, that his ambition could covet; all, that riches could procure, or that the arts, and inventions, of sensuality could devise, — and yet he has declared, that he found nothing in them all “but vanity, and affliction of spirit.” In fact, have not we too, ourselves, in our own pursuit of them, made the same discovery? — discovered, that we have been running after visions; and grasping but at shadows?

Abstracting from all other considerations, — such as the inherent emptiness, and vanity, of all earthly things, — the mere circumstance of the precarious tenure, on which we hold them, is, itself, more than sufficient to convince us, how very little they are fitted to form the foundation of our happiness. Indeed, as we see by every day’s *experience*, no possession is more insecure; no enjoyment so uncertain. Neither all the arts of our prudence; nor all the foresight of human wisdom, can shelter us from reverses; nor find out a remedy against accidents, and misfortunes. Let us guard one avenue, the evil steals upon us from another. Let us strengthen the foundation, the storm falls upon us from above. Often, what we look upon as the principle of our defense, turns out the very source of our ruin. Nay, sometimes the hour of possession, and enjoyment, is, itself, the hour of privation, and

distress. We are but ill-instructed novices in the history of human life, if we do not know this; or if we do not own the instability of all worldly things; and the uncertainty of all earthly enjoyments. Whence, also, it is vain to consider these as the principles of human happiness.

II. But, if so, — if neither the possession, nor the enjoyment, of worldly things are calculated to make us happy, — how much less so are the disorders of sin, or the dissipations of pleasure? True indeed is here that sentence of the prophet: “*There is no peace for the wicked.*” At war with his God, as well as with himself, and his own better feelings, — the sinner, so far from tasting any true peace, tastes only bitterness and affliction: — for, the passions have their pauses, when the conscience speaks, and Religion lifts her voice. The conscience, during these painful moments points out to him, in forcible language, the folly, and imprudence, of his conduct: whilst religion, in a voice still louder, and more austere, reproaches him severely with his ingratitude, and his guilt. Addressing him in terms, like the sounds of thunder, it says to him: “You have sinned: — Tremble. You have sinned; and you shall *be* called upon soon to appear before a dreadful tribunal; there to be condemned to pay the debt of your present pleasures.”

Such is the situation of the sinner. As for real contentment, he has none. The truth is, that setting aside every other view of sin, — whenever our hearts are detached from their proper center, — whenever we violate the laws of reason; and oppose the dictates of our consciences, — we are so constructed, that we always do, — and must, — experience the secret feelings of self-reproach, and the sentiments of regret. The heart is wounded; and the mind, haunted with painful recollections. In short, certain it *is*, that it is neither in the seats of sin; nor in the bowers of pleasure, that happiness resides. On the contrary, these are the very regions of distress, slavery, and death.

III If then, once more, it is neither in the enjoyment of worldly advantages; nor in the gratifications of sinful pleasures, that it is possible for our hearts to find anything like real contentment, — where are we to seek, or *where* find, the sacred treasure? The answer is not difficult; because there are only two kinds of objects, and pursuits, to which we can devote our hearts. These are God, and His creatures; — *God*, beloved, and worshipped, in the sentiments of piety, and religion; — His *creatures*, possessed, and cultivated, either in the enjoyment of worldly benefits; or in the pursuit of sinful pleasures. And these we have seen, are not the sources of contentment. The consequence,

therefore, must *be*, that, if we do desire this blessing, — if we really seek for substantial happiness, — we shall find it nowhere, but in the service of God; and the exercises of Christian piety, — according to that sentence of St. Austin: “*Thou hast made me, O my God, for Thyself; and my heart is restless, and uneasy, until it rests, and reposes, in Thee.*” Accordingly, let us, for a moment, consider the feelings, and situation, of the virtuous Christian.

IV It may so happen, — and the case is not, perhaps, unfrequent, — that, upon the first entrance into the paths of piety, the heart may not experience at once those interior consolations, — that fullness of pleasure, — which we so often read of in the lives, and histories, of the saints. It may even, on the contrary, experience drynesses, difficulties, and temptations, according to that admonition of the divine goodness: “*My Son, entering upon the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation.*” Such as this is, sometimes, the order of God’s wisdom, — thus trying the fidelity of his servants, and the constancy of their resolution.

However, — these passing trials once over, — behold, soon the mind begins to taste the delights of virtue; and the consolations of the Holy Ghost. It now enters into the regions of peace, and calm repose. For, the effects of vice,

and the consequences of virtue, as St. Gregory has remarked, are directly opposed, and contrary, to each other. Entering upon the paths of vice, everything, at first, appears pleasing to the sinner. The avenues seem smiling; the sun gilds the scene; and gives a brightness to the landscape. But, ah, soon, — very soon, — the prospect begins to change. The mind, disconcerted, droops. It finds itself disappointed. It finds, that what it had cherished, as a source of pleasure, is false, and unsatisfactory. “This,” it says to itself, “is not what I sought for; nor expected. I wanted something real; and I find nothing but illusion.” Such are the early feelings of the sinner, — hopes disappointed; and expectations changed into bitterness, and gloom. Whereas, (directly the reverse of all this) entering upon the paths of virtue, and piety, in proportion as we advance, each difficulty begins to lessen; and our trials become light, and easy. The mountains gradually subside; and the vallies are filled up. Even the very bitternesses of life are converted into sweetness; and the labors of mortification into comforts. The heart experiences satisfactions, of which neither the sinner, nor the worldling, can form any correct ideas. “I have travelled,” says a distinguished writer, “through almost every part of Europe. I have frequented almost every scene, from the palace to the cottage. I have conversed

with men in every sphere of life; and I have never, nor anywhere, found but one class of happy, and contented beings. These were the individuals, who, cultivating virtue, made the practices of religion; and the business of salvation the chief subjects of their care, and occupation.”

V. The above effect is naught but natural. For, while it is the property of virtue itself to render man happy, it is, at the same time, true, that the force of *grace*, acting upon the soul, is unspeakable. It operates wonders. Its powerful, but yet gentle, dews, once infused into the heart, render it the very seat of contentment. But, where, after all, is the wonder, that the individual, who is attached to his God, — the real source, and center, of peace, — should be happy? The wonder would be, if he were not so. Yes; he is happy. — No remorse agitates his breast: no fears, nor misgivings, distress, or disturb his feelings. Going through the duties of the day, careful at each step not willfully to offend his God, — he, at night, reclines his head upon his pillow in the tranquility of calm repose, — in a sleep, gentle almost as the sleep of infancy. In short, he tastes pleasure, in its very best relish, here; and he looks forward with confidence to the increased relish, and full enjoyment, of it, hereafter. And oh ; when he reaches the last stage of life, — the border of the

grave, — enlivened by faith, and animated with all the best feelings of religion, he placidly resigns himself to the arms of the Divine Mercy; and without uneasiness, or fear, passes away from a short, and precarious, existence to the joys, and rewards, of eternity.

Wherefore, if we do really *long* for happiness; — if we seek for peace of mind, and repose of heart, — let us pursue these blessings, where, alone, they can be found, — in the practice of virtue, and the cultivation of piety. “*Take My yoke upon you,*” says our Divine Redeemer, “*and you shall find rest to your souls.*”

Hitherto, we have, perhaps, borne the chains of our passions, or the yoke of the world; and we have experienced under them only uneasiness, and disappointment. In fact, disunited from God, we could not reasonably expect any other consequence. Hence, then, wiser for the time to come, let us take upon ourselves the amiable yoke of Jesus. He, in recompense for our service, will give, as he assures us, “rest to our souls,” We shall calmly enjoy the passing comforts of this world; and secure to ourselves the immortal comforts of the world to come.

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