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EDITOR

Bishop Giles O.F.M.

PRODUCTION

Mr. Francis Y. No
Bishop Giles O.F.M.

CONTRIBUTORS

Fr. Joseph O.F.M.

CIRCULATION

Bishop Giles, O.F.M.

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The SERAPH
3376 MOUNT READ BLVD
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Tel. (585) 621-1122
e-mail: friars@friarsminor.org
web sites: friarsminor.org and
franciscanfathers.com

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In essentia - Unitas. In dubio - Libertas.
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Thoughts on the Papacy

Bishop Giles, OFM

December brings to our mind the birth of Christ and consequently, His life in the Church today. Intimately connected to the life of the Church here on earth, is the life of the true successors to the papacy. The true popes are the vicars of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Head of the Church, and true popes are His human vicars. Even when the vicars die, the Church continues because the life of the Church is from God not, His vicars. The true Church here on earth is the Holy Roman Catholic Church. We know that the marks of the True Church are four: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The Apostolic mark continues as long as there are true Catholic bishops to succeed the Apostles – even if there is not a current successor to the throne of St. Peter. The Church is (even in the absence of a true pope) One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic as long as at least one true Catholic bishop remains. If there were no true bishops (successors to the Apostles) then the Church would not be Apostolic; and as such would

not be Catholic. Apostolicity is a necessary mark of the True Church.

The Franciscans daily pray for the intentions of the papacy. As we are sedevacantists (We believe that the chair of St. Peter is empty – there is no pope at this time.), many people find this confusing. There are many indulgences that require these prayers in order to gain the indulgences. We do not deny the papacy when we say that we do not have a true pope. Franciscans are one of the most loyal defenders of the papacy. The Rule that St. Francis gave to us is very clear: we must obey all the successors of St. Peter that are canonically elected. We do not believe that the current anti-popes have been canonically elected and so we owe them no obedience. One of the first requirements to joining the Order of St. Francis, is that we must be Catholic. As Catholics, we owe obedience only to God and the Holy Roman Catholic Church. When there are

usurpers and heretics presenting themselves as the hierarchy in the Church, we must reject them and their false worship, just as we must reject Pagan, Jewish, and Protestant worship. To unite with those outside the Church and pray with them is to accept their false worship. This is idolatry and is against the First Commandment of God. We condemn this idolatry that is so often espoused in the Novus Ordo under the guise of ecumenism. We understand the penalty of this crime as excommunication from the Church. It does not matter what title men may claim for themselves, or what title people give to them, the penalty of participating in false worship is excommunication. If a person is cut off from the Church – the Mystical Body of Christ – he is certainly not the head of the Body that he has cut himself off of. Thus the See of St. Peter is vacant.

The question still remains, how can we pray for the intentions of the papacy if there is no current pope? The intentions of the papacy remain the same regardless of who the pope may be, as well as if the papacy is vacant. Principally the intentions of every true

pope, is the honor and glory of God, the exaltation of the Holy Catholic Church, the extirpation of heresy, the propagation of the faith, the conversion of sinners, and concord among Christian rulers (Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, July 12, 1847)

We do not hate non-Catholics or the Modernist Novus Ordo followers. We do not hate the usurpers of the throne of St. Peter or those who follow such impostors. We pray for them, not as if they were Catholics or as the hierarchy of the Church, but we pray for them as we pray for all heretics and non-Catholics. We pray that they may enter the true Church and save their souls for eternity. There is nothing more sad than seeing so many souls lost. We weep with Christ over the destruction of Jerusalem (The Church). The tears are not for the material loss of buildings, culture, or history; but rather, the tears are shed over the loss of souls. So many souls are cold and indifferent to their own eternal happiness. They do not deserve hatred, but rather compassion and mercy. We pray with Christ on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Just as Christ did not come to destroy, but rather to save; so the Church – the Mystical Body of Christ – is here to save, not to destroy. The condemnations of the Church as well as those of Christ, are not meant to crush and kill, but rather to warn, admonish, and save. There will, no doubt, be a time when Christ will judge and condemn to Hell, but this judgment is reserved for the end of lives and the end of the world. It is not our place to do this at this time. We condemn the evil of errors, but we pray for those who have erred.

We desire to live, and invite all to follow, the simple admonition of maintaining: “Charity towards all, and malice towards none.” The Vicar of the Shepherd has been struck and the flock has been scattered; but the Shepherd (Jesus Christ) still lives, rules, and calls out to us. We can still hear His voice in the unadulterated teachings of His past true vicars, and in His true Church (true bishops). We must strive not to read more into their words than is there, nor may we dismiss or disregard what they have said. The material structure has been struck, but the Church lives on in the remnant of true Catholics. There are still true

successors of the Apostles in real bishops, and there are still some true priests and laity who are loyal and obedient to their bishops. The Church is alive, gasping and struggling to live on this earth, but still alive. She is no doubt eternally alive and cannot be destroyed; but She can be reduced to almost nothing as God permits the apparent rise of evil. This will make His return all the more glorious.

As we consider again and again the situation in the Church of today, we condemn the errors and deceptions of the Modernists, and the many apparent Traditionalists that would lead us down a dead end path, or into the false church of the Novus Ordo. We pray that all the faithful, even if the last days of this earth are as in the time of Noe, or as the number of souls gathered around Our Lord’s crib in Bethlehem are few, that we may be found worthy to be numbered among these blessed faithful souls.

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A Sainly President?

Fr. Joseph Noonan, OFM

Part 3

The virtue of justice will be considered in this third and final part. It is quite necessary that this virtue be properly understood as it is to be applied in this realm.

The word *Justice*, if understood in its primary and original sense, means the exact agreement between one thing and something else with which it is meant to conform. Traces of this original meaning still survive in English in the verb to *adjust*. In its derived or metaphorical sense, the word *Justice* is sometimes used to mean the conformity or agreement between a man's acts and the moral law. In this sense Justice would be the sum of all the moral virtues. Thus, we read in Scripture of St. Joseph "being a just man."

The term, however, is ordinarily used in a much more restricted sense. It refers to the mutual relations between two persons, and implies a conformity or agreement between the acts of one and the rights of the other. In this last sense, which is the ordinary one, we may regard

Justice as a habit or virtue of the human will inclining one to act justly. Thus, St. Thomas defines Justice as: *A constant and permanent habit or intention to give each one his due.*

We may, however, look on Justice from another point of view, and consider it not as a virtue or habit of the will but rather as the reality outside the person (viz., the objective relations or proprieties) with which the virtue of the will must be in harmony. Justice considered from this standpoint (viz., *Objective Justice* as the Scholastics term it) may be defined as: *the relation of equality between two persons, in virtue of which one is bound to give the other his due.* Justice, regarded objectively, is nothing else than the law of nature, which demands that each person receive his due or his rights from everybody else.

Objective Justice is based on what is called personal equality. Persons alone can possess rights, and all persons are equal in so far as the rights of all are inviolable. Hence, the acts or

omissions of others, in order to be lawful, must be adjusted to be equal to or in conformity with these rights. This conformity or equation is Objective Justice.

We may note, also, that not only an individual, but also a moral body, such as the State or the Church, may be regarded as a person, and so have rights which are inviolable, just like the rights of individual persons. Such a moral person may also have duties in its corporate capacity. Thus, the relations with whom Justice is concerned may apply not only to an individual person, but also to a moral unit like the State.

The distinction of persons which Justice requires need not always be complete from every point of view. Thus, there can be real relations of Justice between an individual citizen and the State of which he is a member; for the State, considered as a moral person has an end and purpose of its own (which is the common good) and, therefore, a distinct moral personality. In order to attain that end, it needs, and by the law of nature has a right to the cooperation of each of its members. In other words, the State has rights against its own

members. The members, too, have rights against the State. For the citizen needs the help of the State, and has a right to that help. Now, these reciprocal rights and duties between the State and the individual citizens manifestly point to a distinction of personality sufficient for real relations of Justice.

There are two other types of justice which must be explained: legal and distributive justice, although in a briefer review.

Legal justice may be described as *the virtue or law of nature binding every member of the State to contribute his due share in safeguarding and promoting the common good. Legal Justice lies in the fact that the State is a creation of nature like the family, and needs the cooperation of its members in order to perform its essential functions (namely, to procure the common good), or even to exist. Hence, the members of the State are bound by the natural law to give that co-operation; and the State has the duty and the right to exact it.*

These rights and obligations bind all men equally in their relations to one another, while the mutual rights and duties of the State

and its members do not extend to those outside the State. They are the essential ties uniting the members of the State into one whole and differentiating them from others.

Finally, Legal Justice must not be confounded with such virtues as charity, patriotism, and liberality, although the proximate motive of some of the acts of these virtues may be the common good.

“Legal Justice,” says St. Thomas, “resides in the ruler *principally*, as if he were the architect and director of the building: and in the subjects in a secondary way as if they were the assistants.”

Distributive Justice may be defined as *the law of nature by which the State is bound to secure for each of the citizens his due and proportionate share of the advantages and helps which are the end and purpose of civil society; and to allot the public burdens in due equitable proportion.*

The ruler’s duties under Distributive Justice are Juridical - that is, they imply corresponding rights in those towards whom they lie. Hence, the individual members of the

State have each and all the right that the rulers deal equitably with them in distributing the advantages and allotting the burdens of citizenship.

From the basic principles of Distributive Justice, we may deduce the following conclusions:

1.) **Rights of Protection** - All the citizens have exactly the same right to Peace - that is, to security against violent interference with their rights. It is a primary duty of the State to defend and uphold by just laws, fairly administered, and by an impartial administration of justice (sufficiently cheap and expeditious to be within the reach of the poorest citizen), the personal safety, the inalienable rights, the liberty and the property rights of every one of the citizens.

2.) **Access to the Public Utilities** - The use of the public utilities which the State provides, or indirectly subsidizes, from the public funds - roads, railways, postal service, public hospitals, etc. - should be equally open to all. This principle is crystallized in such phrases as: “the King’s highway,” which implies that

the public highway is owned by the King (or by the State) in trust for all the people, and cannot be monopolized by any individual or class.

3.) Taxes should not Infringe upon Necessaries of Life –

No public burdens (such as taxes) should infringe upon the necessaries of life: for, ordinarily, a man's first duty is to himself and his family. These needs should therefore be supplied before he can be justly compelled to contribute by taxes and services to the public good.

4.) All should have a Fair Opportunity of Securing Necessaries –

The Government is bound to adjust the laws regulating property rights so that every citizen of normal capacity and industry may have a fair opportunity of securing by honest labor a tolerable degree of human happiness and well-being. The providing of such an opportunity for its members is one of the essential ends and purposes of civil society; and as the poor and weak are more in need of protection and assistance in this regard than the wealthy, Distributive Justice demands that their needs be specially attended to.

“When there is a question,” writes Pope Leo XIII, *“of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to special consideration ... the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon and must depend chiefly upon the assistance of the State.”* – Rerum Novarum.

From this summary of the virtue of Justice, we understand the necessary responsibilities and duties of leaders of nations regardless of their title (president, prime minister, etc.). The President of the United States would be wrong to favor one group (special interests, such as corporations, etc.) over other groups.

The burdensome regulations of this time are nothing more than the implementation of a socialist political agenda. The only agenda a president ought to have is to work for the common good of all citizens. This does not mean a president should work for political influence by providing limitless government aid (entitlement programs). This is an abuse of power and immoral use of taxpayer dollars. There needs to be an objective

balance between helping the poor and needy and providing an environment where employment is readily available. Political party politics is immoral favoritism. Promoting socialism of any degree (Marxism, Communism, etc.) is sinful. The Church has previously spoken on this issue and has clearly condemned it. Promoting the aborting of the unborn and homosexuality are mortal sins of the highest degree. These sins are especially harmful to the common good regardless of the Supreme Court's decision. There are other issues in this country which need to be addressed but the reader ought to understand the premise of Justice.

It is also important for the citizen to understand their duties to the State. The duties are present even though the government may be immoral. Wrongs by the government do not allow the citizen to also do wrong - "two wrongs do not make a right!" Yes, taxes must be paid and just civil laws need to be obeyed.

It is possible for a president to be a moral and saintly man. The past has proven this. When a nation has numerous bad leaders, it may be a sign that God is punishing a

sinful nation. It would certainly seem to be the case presently in the United States.

How many citizens of this country pray for its leaders each day? We are a nation that likes to complain about its leadership, or lack thereof, but who has been willing to pray for them? Did you give any thought to praying for or having Masses said for the conversion of a president, senator or congressman? Many today mock the thought of a Catholic monarchy, but it seems as though most of the good leaders of nations were Catholic royalty. This, of course, is nothing more than a Judeo-Masonic ruse to undermine the ideal of the Catholic Monarchy.

If one in anyway desires the conversion of the U. S. Government and this nation of many people, faithful prayer is essential. Combine the Church and State and clearly demonstrate this is the only way you will save this nation!



Modern Gnosticism

Bishop Giles, OFM

Today's society is filled with many different and contradictory religious doctrines or beliefs. In the schools an effort is made to present a comparative study of these doctrines with very little, or no effort, made to discern the veracity of any of them. What ensues is generally a universal skepticism or denial of all religious doctrines. It is not uncommon to hear students refer to the "myths of the Bible" just as they would refer to the myths of the various Pagan religions. On the other side of the spectrum are those who see all religions, doctrines or beliefs as good. In both systems truth or goodness is reduced to subjective usefulness, rather than to objective truth and reality. The majority are left with no solid or firm convictions of any faith. Thus, under the guise of education, atheism or syncretic Paganism is instilled into the hearts and minds of our children.

It is important that our education include knowledge of the various beliefs and practices in the world around us, but, with this exposure

it is necessary to give a critical analysis of the falsehoods and contradictions contained in all the false religions. There is only One True God, and every false god and false worship needs to be exposed for its imposture and rejected. We cannot simply show everything to our children and then allow them to choose what they like. Truth is not a matter of tastes or preferences. Nor is truth dependent upon a utilitarian benefit to our selfish passing interests.

To put a label upon what is taking place we can look to Pope St. Pius X, who tells us that Modernism is the synthesis of all heresies. So many "comparative religion studies" end up endorsing whatever heresy is convenient at the moment. And, lest someone might be offended, great efforts are made to present them all as good or worthwhile. A great abuse is then forced upon intellects and reason as they are led to synchronize or harmonize all heresies – evil must be reconciled with good. Truth and falsehood are put on

an equal par. This violence to our intellects and right reason, tends to destroy our ability to discern or judge. Many people are, therefore, no longer able to reason correctly and are easy dupes of every fantastical belief – often accepting clearly contradictory doctrines and practices without ever seeing the incongruity. It is a dangerous false Ecumenism that is foisted upon our youth and is feeding the beast of Modernism with its synthesis of all heresies.

This syncretizing of heresies is not something really new. In the past, there were various beliefs that went under the heading of Gnosticism. The gnostic is one that believes that he possesses or is working to possess some secret knowledge that is necessary for the good of his soul. They scoured and inculcated within themselves various beliefs and practices from the different religions around them. They often practiced magic spells or incantations, as well as various secret signs and symbols. This is very similar if not identical with the beliefs and practices of the Freemasons. Perhaps, if we dig deep enough into our current “education” system we will find at the bottom Freemasons have

designed and implemented these “comparative religion courses” to promote their own gnostic religion.

In the early days of the Church, various Gnostics looked into the Catholic Faith and sought to incorporate Catholic beliefs and practices with all the others. This is the origin of so many apocryphal books that have been rejected by the Catholic Church. The Gnostics wrote various books similar to the gospels, epistles etc. of the New Testament and mixed in them what they found in various other religions. These they presented as containing hidden or secret knowledge. This was (is) a very successful trap to the curious and the incautious.

Today, we witness very clearly this false ecumenism of Modernism, and the syncretizing in gnostic (Freemasonic) style, in the Novus Ordo. This “new religion” worships with all other religions, prays with them accepts their prayers, rituals, and ceremonies; and places all this on an equal level with the true Religion given to us by Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. We only need to reference the travesties committed in Assisi

where all religions were invited to come together and pray together for peace; or the various “popes” who publicly united in false worship and heretical prayers with non-Catholics. The examples are too many to list, but anyone who desires more examples of this need not look far. The Modernists are proud of what they are doing and promote it extensively. These evils are all around us and the more aware we become of them the more we see and understand just how pervasive they are.

The entire world appears to be infected with corruption. Every aspect of our society is broken: religion, education, government, healthcare, entertainment. For those who see and understand this, the temptation is to imitate another aspect of the Gnostics – dualism.

Gnostics believed that the material world is the disintegration of the spiritual world. Hence, the dualistic idea that all matter is evil, and all spiritual things are good. When we address the evils in the world today we are often tempted to say things like: “the government is evil,” “the television is evil,” or “the internet is evil.” Before long

we look for and see nothing but evil all around us. We forget that all that God has made and given to us is good. God is the creator of all things – visible and invisible. St. Augustine informs us that the only evil is sin and sin is not “something” but is rather the lack of something. It is the negation of the grace or virtue that should be there. Just as a hole in a garment is an evil, but is not a real material thing, but is simply the absence of the material that should be in that place in the garment.

All material things are good. They have not been created by devils, they are not the disintegration of spiritual things. Our bodies are good. Pornography and the objectification of our bodies is evil, not because our bodies are evil, but because in these sins grace and virtue are lacking. It is not our flesh that is evil, but rather, the lack of virtue that is evil. In nudity that is promoted so widely and is the source of so many sins, we must not consider the body as the source of sin or evil, it is rather the lack of modesty, the lack of virtue and grace that are the sources of evil.

Therefore, marriage and the primary purpose of marriage

– procreation – are good and virtuous. These are pleasing to God. What is evil is: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, etc. These are abuses of the bodies that God has given us; and they are evil because they are lacking in one or more of the virtues that should always accompany us. Sin is principally in the will. It is the desire that is damning. The man who lusts is already guilty of adultery – the deed is not necessary. In lust, it is not the physical things that are evil, but it is the unlawful desire to have or experience them in the absence of grace or virtue. It is the rebellion against the right order that God has established. It is the tear in the garment of our supernatural lives.

There is always some element of truth or goodness in errors otherwise, they would not be able to deceive us. The heretics have many truths that they have not denied. We must be careful to avoid this snare, it is not the good things that they have that will harm us, but rather the good things that are missing (sin, evil, error) that bring souls into the depths of hell. It was not the good works of the Pharisee that caused Jesus to say that he was not justified. It was pride or the lack of the virtue of humility that caused him to be rejected by God.

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A Chance to Live

Monsignor John P. Carroll-Abbing

(Continued)

In the period between September of 1943 and June of 1944, the walls of Rome showed up again and again covered with crudely painted signs in brilliant crimson. Their meaning was obvious and shook the fraying nerves of the Germans. The signs praised liberty and peace, equality of races, and everyone knew that many of them had been made by the small members of the Roman population.

Unmindful of danger, used to it by this time, they went about at night, small dark shadows lost in the blackout, and accomplished their jobs swiftly and efficiently, armed with a pail, a brush, and a wonderful exhilarating feeling inside.

Most of the signs appeared in the more humble sections of the city, where the crisscrossing streets offered many avenues of escape. One night, in the ancient Trastevere section of Rome, two boys had started their task on the walls of an old palace. They had gone to work shortly before midnight. The alleys

were deserted and they thought themselves safe. Unluckily for them, two S.S. patrols suddenly emerged from opposite corners. Trapped between two fires, they did their best to escape. In the confusion, they dashed down a blind alley. The next morning, they were discovered bleeding and unconscious. One of them died the next day, the other was left a hopeless cripple.

Much has been said in evaluating the fine behavior of these boys in their struggle for freedom. Discussions have grown lengthy about whether to attribute it to heroism or to a momentary exaltation of the spirit. For myself, it is sufficient for me to recall the innumerable instances of self-control I witnessed, the proud consciousness of self, the spirit of independence, of social solidarity, of sacrifice for an ideal. I do not ask myself why.

One Sunday morning the news invaded the capital that the Allies had landed at Anzio.

The weather had been so mild and sunny, I had made plans for taking a group of my

convalescents out for a picnic on the hills of Monte Mario. They needed a change. As we set out, one of the doctors tried to dissuade me, especially since we would have to cross the Tiber to get to our destination and it was feared the Germans might blow up the bridges in their retreat and leave us stranded.

I was against disappointing my men and we started.

“After all,” I told them, “if we are cut off, we can let you have news of ourselves by way of the Vatican Radio.”

I must admit that, as we went along, I had an unpleasant feeling of apprehension. What if we really were cut off? What would happen?

Lunch over, I decided to shorten the trip. We turned toward Rome, and hastened back to the city. A bus was to take us on the last leg of the journey. At the corner where the bus was supposed to stop, we found a carabinieri looking rather dazed and bewildered.

“I don’t think the bus will come,” he said to us. “I think the Americans are in Rome.”

His words did not seem too

strange as all this time a never-ending line of German cars, trucks, and ambulances loaded with wounded was passing us on the road and heading for the North. They had all the appearance of an army in retreat.

We had no alternative. We waited. At the bridge, the sentinels, more rigid than ever, demanded a stricter obedience of orders. Several camouflaged tanks passed us hurrying in the opposite direction.

We found the hospital pervaded by an air of excitement. That evening we climbed the stairs to the roof. From there we could look toward Anzio and watch for the Allied advance.

Rome stretched out below us, murky, sooty. To the right the immense dome of Michelangelo, before us the crowded streets of the Trastevere. In the distance, the white marble pile of the Victor Emmanuel II monument rose out of the surrounding shadows.

Nothing happened that night, nothing for many nights to come. Our waiting hopeless, the stairs became steeper and steeper, our hearts leaden. Even the panorama had turned commonplace. Soon we abandoned our evening vigil.

Throughout the centuries the Romans have had a deep-seated feeling of security engendered no doubt by the presence of the Holy Father. In this conflict also, most of the people placed their hopes in him for the safety and final liberation of Rome.

Many, however, entertained an apprehensive fear that more suffering would come and they prepared themselves to meet the future in a material as well as a spiritual way. "There is no escape. Rome will be another Stalingrad." In the meantime, war raged in unrestrained fury in the zone known as "Castelli Romani." Also known as the Albani Mountains, they form a natural barrier to the east of Anzio encircling Rome as a ring of strongholds, separating it from the wide plains that roll out to the sea.

The Allied troops waged their fiercest battles against these hills where the Germans had entrenched themselves. Thus the Castelli became the favorite target of the Allied bombardiers, since they formed the rearguard of the German lines.

Genzano, Velletri, Castel, Gandolfo, Albani were the tortured towns of those regions

where Nature had been so prodigal in her gifts of beauty and peace.

Immediately after the Anzio landing, I had my first experience with actual warfare.

The proximity of the battlefield to the Castelli and the continuous air skirmishes had made imperative the evacuation of all the childrens' institutes in the area and I had gone myself to organize their transfer to the capital.

I had just reached Albano under a lowering sky, when against the clouds in the distance I spied a formation of heavy bombers speeding toward us. We were walking along the principal street. In a few moments the bombers passed over us, the rumble of their motors now loud, now cut almost to a murmur, while the inhabitants merely gazed at them from window or door. Flat against the sky the compact mass moved on toward Rome and was lost in the gray.

Life in the little town continued as before. A woman went on washing her clothes before her doorstep, children played in the square, the sound of a blacksmith's hammer struck its rhythmic beat.

A few moments and pandemonium broke loose. Another squadron of planes had made its appearance. The same curiosity, the same indifference, the same eyes turned to the sky. The woman stopped a moment in her washing, a baby garment in her upheld hand, the hammer beat on.

The holding of breath, an instant of waiting, a cry, a shout from a dozen throats, a hundred, then a mad dash for safety. A bomb, another and yet another dropped on the village, burst with a deafening roar, earsplitting, shaking the earth under us.

I dashed into a store seeking protection from the flying shrapnel. The owner of the store drew me swiftly toward the rear.

Hardly had we stepped into the room when I had the impression that everything about us was disintegrating. Chunks of mortar fell from the ceiling, the room swayed and we were thrown against the back wall. Then walls and ceiling gradually gave way entirely.

I was stunned, white with the shock and the plaster, but I was still alive. My friend, the storekeeper, was moaning not far from me. Together we managed

to dig ourselves out, climbed over the rubble and found an opening into the street. It was deserted.

Cries and moans came from a house struck in full by the rain of bombs. Clouds of dust, dry throats, coated tongues, choked nostrils . . . we breathed with difficulty. In the far heavens the rumble of the planes.

This was not my first experience of an air raid. I had been under the bombs in many towns, but it was the first time I had felt death so close. And for days the terror continued. Twice the buildings that sheltered me were struck and partly demolished. Somehow I escaped. And without so much as a scratch.

I knew the Castelli well. I had been there often in happier days. It was pleasant to remember the varied green of the trees mottled by the rich brown of the well-tilled field, the long lines of silver vineyards, the giant cypresses that rose unexpectedly in the distance against the blue, the festive air of the crowded villages and hamlets, busy at marketing their wines or their grapes, white, blue, red, black, still touched with the morning dew. I recalled the small blue

trams scuttling from village to village in clattering haste. Life, gay, untrammled, unhurried, an almost patriarchal existence, far from the rush and the bustle of the capital. I shall never forget the profusion of children in the streets, running, shouting, restless, happy, the cup of their joy brimming over as the cup of sparkling wine offered to the visitor. Where was it all now?

A few days later I was asked to go out to the Castelli again to accompany several ambulances that were to pick up a number of wounded and take them to Rome. The ambulances were ready to start on their return journey when a man dashed up to me, his face distorted with anguish. In broken words he begged me to go with him. A two-year-old child was in serious condition and was in need of an immediate operation. Only in Rome could he be saved.

I told the driver to wait and followed the man. He led me through the village and by numerous byways to the region around Lake Nemi. Night had come by this time. Not a light showed in the vast darkness. The waters of the lake held a vague fluorescent gleam, the somber shadows of trees and hill

outlined its gloom. It was hard to see the way.

My guide finally took a narrow, barely practicable path and I followed as best I could. Up and down and up again, along a dyke-like formation until he came to a stop before an opening in the ground. With a brief nod he went in. I found myself in a deep tunnel.

For a moment or two I could make out absolutely nothing. We were in comparative darkness. I stumbled along, then, as my eyes grew accustomed to the blackness, I distinguished dim outlines by the faint lights in the wall of the tunnel. Tiny candles. The path I was treading was a sort of gallery, low, damp. In a single long row, men, women and children huddled, lay, sat, sick with fear, hungry, minds and bodies dulled by the fetid air, by the absence of sunlight. It was a story from the pen of Poe. These were living ghosts from the imagination of a Dore.

The man ahead of me had never stopped in his hurried advance and I had managed to keep up with him. The line of breathing skeletons never seemed to end. I learned that more than three thousand people had taken refuge there.

An indescribable foulness rose from that multitude of beings.

In this ghastly horror men lived, men who had spent their lives in the sun. Children huddled who had danced on the hills. Eyes that had been sparkling with life were now spent, lips had lost their smiles, cheeks their color. For a whole month many had been unable to leave the tunnel. The sick and the old lay as if shelved, on wicker gratings hanging from the ceiling.

For almost a mile the nightmare continued. The sick child was lying on an old coat. The faint light from a candle etched deep shadows on the sunken cheeks, his eyes bright with fever were wide open, suffering and fright filling their depths. Close to him crouched another child, the same sunken cheeks, the same fear.

I lifted the small figure in my arms and returned to the hole in the ground, followed by the prayers of the entombed.

“Pray for us, Father, that all this may soon be over,” they pleaded.

I breathed the cool air and as I held the little one, my thoughts strayed to the hundreds of other tunnels . . . caves . . . holes, where thousands upon thousands

of human beings had turned into moles. . . War!

That crowd of human beings, creatures of God, persecuted, tortured by misfortune never left my mind in the days to come. It would be impossible even for the most hardened mind to forget the horrific vision I had witnessed.

Some way had to be found, even within the limits of present conditions, of assuaging the unbearable tortures of these innocent people.

Genzano, following the bombardment of February 12, 1944, had been almost completely destroyed and while a thousand or so of its inhabitants continued to live in its ruins, the others, close to eight thousand, had burrowed in caves.

Albano, another town, had been completely evacuated under order of the German Command. Part of its inhabitants had been sheltered in the papal villa at Castel Gandolfo, the others repeated the story . . . caves . . . around Lake Albano this time.

Velletri, also had not been spared. Its inhabitants scattered through the hills, directly in the path of the battling armies. These were

probably the most unfortunate, for added to the absolute lack of food and adequate shelter they often found themselves under direct artillery fire.

The civil authorities of the zone established its offices in Rome when the Castelli were declared evacuated. The fact that tens of thousands of poor people still lived in the area was officially ignored. They had to shift for themselves, abandoned, completely isolated.

Few doctors could be found in those miles of regions, but the few, it can be stated without fear of exaggeration, faced the situation with heroism and indefatigable devotion.

During the first week, I saw one of these men operate amidst the most unbelievable squalor. There was no way of getting the patient to a hospital, the operation was not difficult, but it was urgent. On a mattress far from sterile, bare of covering, lay a man still young in years. The only light in the room came from five candles held high by three women. The murky darkness was barely split by the faint glow. In shirt sleeves the doctor cut, his hand steady.

Silence weighed on the scene in the cave, in contrast to the

cannon fire outside. I heard the soft sobbing of a woman, the rasping cough of two old men. The steam rising from the pot of water at the end of the table mingled with the black smoke rising from the candles and increased the surgeon's difficulties.

"I should have been shot for operating under those conditions," he said to me as he finished. He had taken a big chance, and in taking it he had only done what he felt was his duty.

The problems facing us were many and the solution not a simple one. Everything was needed and we had nothing to give, no food to distribute, no medicine, no clothing. Besides all this, the zone was a military one. All means of communications had been interrupted or destroyed. The situation was enough to discourage even the most stout-hearted.

What was to be done? Where was I to begin?

I decided to limit my activities for the present to the organization of medical relief.

In the caves crowds waited and watched. They feared the spread

of an epidemic and realized their inability to fight it. A great number had already died, the very old and the very young, the sick, the wounded struck down during the air raids. A little care, a small supply of medicine, some indispensable drugs and they might have been saved.

Friends and acquaintances, informed of my purpose, began to send me some of the money I so much needed. With it I was able to buy a great quantity of disinfectants and thus provide for the disinfecting of the grottoes and shelters, where the greatest danger lurked. Furthermore, my shelves began to boast of the much-wanted sulfa drugs, bandages, gauze and other first-aid necessities.

One of my friends showed a certain degree of surprise when I went to him for help.

“I thought that for you priests, charity was only a means for reaching the soul,” he said to me.

“You are right in a way,” I countered, “it would be wrong for us not to think primarily of the soul, but charity of a material nature has its great value also. It is up to us to see that suffering is relieved.”

He smiled in a knowing way.

“But are you not always preaching that the good things of this earth have little worth, that we must resign ourselves to our sufferings?”

“Resign ourselves to our own sufferings yes, in order not to waste their value. But we cannot resign ourselves to the sufferings of others, nor should we forget that there is a certain value to the good things of this world. They are, after all, the means by which we reach our final destiny. Very often, it is true, we allow them to become obstacles in our path. You can see that for yourself. The man who is deeply attached to the riches and honors of this world has hardly the time and the desire for a close relationship with other people’s troubles. He fears too much the loss of his wealth and power. It is those who have little who are lavish with their time and their money.”

“Suffering, school of love . . . have I not heard that before?” concluded my friend and reached for his wallet.

I looked at him with a smile.

“You blackguard! You have made me waste my time talking to you.”

Another problem I had to solve was how to provide for the transportation to Rome of the seriously wounded cases. I appealed to the director of the hospital, explained the whole situation to him and without any further ado, I begged him for ambulances from the Military Order of Malta, these to be used exclusively in the Castelli area, but, probably through an oversight, no prohibition explicitly mentioned the Order of Malta or the Ministry of Public Health. The German authorities had given the order that no ambulances of the Italian Red Cross were to leave the capital. It was my plan to take advantage of this to set up a first-aid service. Cardinal Canali, in charge of the civil administration of the Vatican City State, authorized me to draw on their small gasoline reserve for this purpose.

As soon as news of this new organization began to spread, a score of teen-agers offered their services to me. They collaborated splendidly with me even from the start. Our efforts gave rise to the Medical Assistance Corps for the stricken areas of the Castelli Romani. In future months it was extended to include the

Frosinone and Cassino zones and then it became known as the War Zones Medical Corps.

On set days we started out at an early hour with our ambulances. We made our rounds of the hill towns, picking up the wounded and the sick, and leaving in our medical centers the supplies we had bought.

Once the ambulances had been filled, they returned to Rome, leaving us in whatever village we had chosen as our starting point for the week. There was so much to be done and we needed more and more help, but in a few weeks we were able to see some improvement.

We walked hundreds of miles along country roads and pathways strafed by machine-gun fire and aerial bombardments in search of patients, scattered and hidden in the hills, in hundreds of caves and burrows. Everywhere we found the same misery, thousands of starving sick people.

(To be continued)

Sister Agnes' Favorites

“The Lamb of God-His Christmas gift to you-was to be laid in a manger which stood in a cave that had been hollowed out of one of the chalk hills near Bethlehem. That cave and manger are really the center of your world. Almighty God was the sculptor. Year after slow year, with wind and rain, He sculptured. Only in the fullness of time did He consider His work finished. It took Him centuries to arch the roof to that span which would allow the bleat of the Lamb to sound down all future centuries so that no one born of woman might ever say he was without a perfect Christmas gift. He worked aeons to make the entrance wide enough for all mankind. And during all this time he had you in mind! It is not often you think of wind and rain as instruments in the hands of God who is working for you. But now that you have been reminded how the Cave was fashioned, every storm of wind and every shower of rain will be the Voice of God speaking lovingly to you. And when you find yourself in the midst of spiritual storms, you will know that God is hollowing out a befitting birthplace for His Son, sculpturing a place where His Christ may be born anew-and nothing else. Since He labored so long and lovingly over the cave in which Jesus was to stay for but a few hours, how, think you, will He labor over that soul of yours which is to hold Jesus all the days of your life? Every day is Christmas day-for Christ is born anew.”





Franciscan Saints

DECEMBER 20

THE SERVANT OF GOD

ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA

Widow, *Third Order*

In 1554, there was born to the German Emperor Maximilian II a daughter who was named Elizabeth. Like her holy patron Elizabeth of Hungary, she was destined to be an honor to her house and to the Third Order. At an early age Elizabeth manifested tender sympathy for the needy, and such piety that she would sometimes arise at night and spend several hours on her knees absorbed in prayer.

When she was only fifteen years old, she was married to King Charles IX of France. But her spouse died within four years of their marriage. The nineteen-year-old widow now returned to Vienna. She resolved not to marry again, but to devote her life solely to the service of God and in godly deeds. She publicly entered the Third Order of St. Francis and provided the

Tertiaries of Vienna a most edifying example. Dressed in the plainest garment, so as to escape all notice, she visited churches and took part in processions and other devotions. At home she always spent much time in prayer, observed rigorous fasts, and avoided all public merriment.

She took much pleasure in serving the sick in the hospitals. She also visited the homes of the city in search of the poor sick and provided them with medicine and other supplies. To many of these people, her charity and cordial service gave even greater comfort than the corporal aid she rendered them. Occasionally she invited poor people to dine at her home, where she herself sat down to table with them, especially on Thursdays, when she would prepare a plentiful

table for poor people in honor of the Last Supper.

In the spirit of humility she often performed the lowliest duties in a convent of Poor Clares which she had founded, often cooking the meals for the poor there. She was also much interested in the upkeep of churches, but she was even more concerned to have worthy priests conducting the services and attending to the care of souls. She loved to help talented young men who felt called to it, pursue their studies and get a good education for the service of the Church.

After accomplishing a great amount of good in the twenty years of her widowhood, she died in Vienna in 1592, to the great sorrow of the entire imperial city. The humble queen had chosen the following text from the office of the dead for her epitaph: "Since I sin daily and yet do not do penance, the fear of death disturbeth me. As in hell there is no redemption, have mercy on me, O God, and save me!" Several miracles occurred at her tomb.

ON SOLICITUDE FOR GOOD PRIESTS

1. Among the many good works undertaken by the servant of God Elizabeth, surely the

noblest and the best was her solicitude for good priests. What a blessing a good priest is for a Christian community! "When a priest celebrateth," says Thomas a Kempis (4:5), "he honoreth God, he rejoiceth the angels, he edifieth the Church, he helpeth the living, he obtaineth rest for the dead." And what an amount of good the priest does in his sacerdotal activities! He is the educator of youth, the counselor of adults, the savior of sinners, the comfort of the sick and the dying. Those who provide the Church with a good priest are assured of sharing in all these blessings. — Have you given due thought to this opportunity?

2. Consider how we can provide for good priests. Parents can provide their sons with the education needed for the clerical state, and brothers and sisters can co-operate in this great charity. Of course, no parent may compel a son to embrace the priesthood, or cajole him into it with worldly prospects. Such a boy might easily prove a hireling or even a wolf to the flock of Christ, and then, woe to the one who led him into the state. But to consent that a son may follow the vocation, and to make sacrifices that he may achieve his goal, is a highly meritorious

work. Perhaps we can contribute to the education of young men who wish to become priests. All of us can at least pray for good priests. The Ember Days have been especially instituted to obtain worthy priests from God by means of penance, fasting, and prayer. What Holy Scripture says about the need of priests is applicable to our times as well: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few" (Matth. 9:37). — Have you done your duty in the past with regard to this matter?

3. Consider that our solicitude for good priests should manifest itself in a special way by supporting them in their activities. We should gladly follow their advice, cheerfully contribute to the good works they promote, and help establish their influence. It is only when

well-minded persons give them this cooperation that priests can hope to labor with success. Do not criticize what they say, even if it does not always suit you. They are ambassadors of Christ, God as it were, exhorting by them (2 Cor. 5:20). Beware of undermining their influence and of giving them a bad name. That would put you under dreadful responsibility. Often pray that God may keep the priests of His Church free from scandal and that He may bless their activities.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*(Fifteenth Sunday after
Pentecost)*

Let Thy constant pity, O Lord, cleanse and defend Thy Church, and since without Thee she cannot abide in safety, may she ever be governed by Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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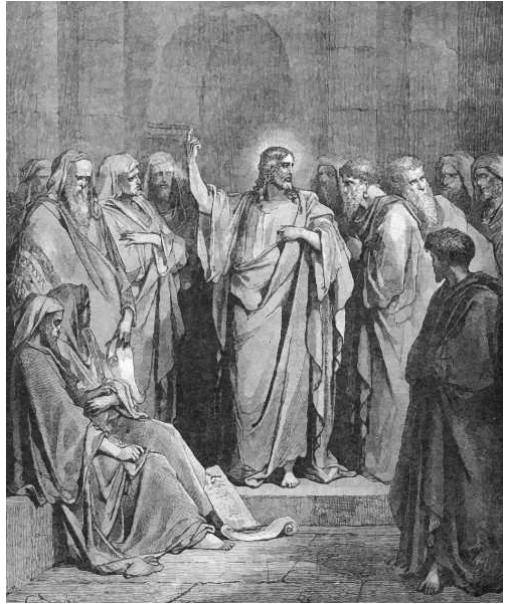
OR,

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 VII.

ON THE MEANS OF SECURING OUR SALVATION.

ACKNOWLEDGING, as we do, that the business of our salvation is, of all others, the most important, we ought consequently to feel, that it therefore behoves us to attend to it with care, — to give to it that share of our esteem, which corresponds in some degree to its benefits; and that measure of our exertions, which bear some kind of proportion to its difficulties. It is thus that we reason, and act, in all our various pursuits in life, — adapting our affection; and regulating our industry, according to the value, or the intricacy, of the objects, which we are striving to attain.

To imagine, that salvation with its

eternal rewards; heaven with its unspeakable delights, can possibly be obtained without the efforts of industry, — this is a notion too unreasonable to be seriously entertained even by the most sensual, or unenlightened. For, if the trifling advantages of this world, — its fleeting riches; its unsubstantial honors, — cannot be earned without the arts, and exertions, of assiduous labor, — how absurd must it be to suppose, that riches, which never fade; honors, which never die, can really be purchased without a considerable share of industry, and attention. But, above all, how preposterous must it be to imagine, — as too many of us seem to do, — that these unspeakable blessings will finally be secured to us, although, meanwhile, we continue to live on in indolence, and neglect, — amid

the gratifications of our self-love; or the enjoyments of sensuality. If heaven could be thus won, it would be ignobly earned indeed.

I. The first means, therefore, of securing our salvation is *zeal*, — attended as zeal always is, by its inseparable companions, — fervor, industry, activity, &c. The reason is, that, — besides the fact, that all great benefits should be acquired by great endeavors, — everything also in religion inculcates to us this principle, that we in vain look forward to the attainment of future happiness, unless we devote to it the best energies of our industry, as well as the warmest affections of our hearts. Thus, in the sacred Scriptures, we are, for ever admonished, and commanded, to fight manfully; to labor earnestly, to subdue our passions; and, above all, to love God with all our souls, and with all our strength. Whence, in the same holy pages, the just man is described, as a person heroically engaged in combating all the enemies of his salvation; — performing faithfully all the duties of his station, — seeking in all things to please God; and striving, daily, to ripen into perfection. Such is the just man, as he is depicted in the Scriptures.

In like manner, if, referring to our annals of piety, we consult the lives of those fortunate beings, who, having “fought the good fight,”

are now enjoying the fruits of their victories, — we here find, that such also as the above was the constant tenor of their conduct. Salvation, to them, was everything. Full of the conviction of its infinite value, they pursued it with unceasing, and unfired, diligence. Thus, we see them constantly engaged in cultivating all the arts of religion, praying, fasting, meditating, nourishing their piety by the use of the holy sacraments, &c.: whilst, of course, they, at the same time, fled, and generously abhorred, everything, that is sinful, — avoiding the dissipations, sacrificing the pleasures, contemning the vanities, of a worldly life. Such were the men, whose manners, and conduct, we read of, in the instructive annals of our church. Enlightened by Christian wisdom, they had the consistency to feel, that great rewards are due only to great exertions.

But, independently of this maxim, there are many other considerations which should convince us, how essential are the efforts of zeal, and how fatal its neglect, in the business of our salvation. Thus, we cannot but be sensible, that God is too great to be served with indolence; too good, to be treated with coldness, and that virtue is too noble a conquest to be obtained by the puny exertions of softness, and sensuality. Whilst, again, how manifest it is, that to subdue the violence of our passions; to overcome the temptations, and

allurements, which on all sides surround us; to resist successfully all the artifices of our spiritual enemies, — are difficulties, which, if we reasonably expect to triumph over them, must essentially seem to require on our part a considerable share of animation. In short, (and let this feeling be deeply impressed upon our hearts; and rooted in our memories) the Holy Mountain of Sion, to whose delightful summit we are striving, — or at least hoping, — to ascend, is steep, and lofty; so that it is only by means of ardor, and activity, that we can wisely hope to climb up to its blest abodes. If we are lifeless, and devoid of energy, our own weight will bear us down the precipice. Hence it is that St. Paul calls out earnestly to us: “*Be renewed; be renewed,*” hence, that we *are* constantly reminded, that “*the kingdom of heaven suffers violence,*” and that “*the violent only bear it away.*” The fact is, that, in the work of our salvation, we must do much, or we do nothing. If we do not go on, we go back. If we languish, we are sure to die. Repose is reserved only for our journey’s end.

II. The next qualification that is required to give success to our warfare, is *prudence*, — accompanied again, like zeal, by the train of its sister virtues, — attention, watchfulness, &c. Important always; and everywhere necessary, even in the ordinary transactions

of the world, — prudence is, here, peculiarly requisite, and essential. It is required, from the nature, and propensities, of the human mind, which being naturally corrupted, must, — if we wish to preserve ourselves free from the contagion of vice, — be watched over with unremitting vigilance. It is required, from the dangers, and example, of the world, — which acting forcibly upon the weaknesses of our hearts, acquire easily, — if not incessantly guarded against, — an influence, that is ruinous to our innocence. It is required, from the character of our spiritual enemies, who being always vigilant; armed with malice; and formidable in cunning, demand all our diligence to counteract their artifices. It is required, even from the nature itself of piety, and virtue; for, as even piety, and virtue, are exposed to errors, and illusions, so is prudence their best guardian, and protector. Prudence is, indeed, that light, which, better than any other, enables us, in the whole series of our conduct, to act with consistency, and wisdom. It is, therefore, hence that, both in the Scriptures, and in the histories of the church, we everywhere find, that the characters of the virtuous are always described, as having been particularly distinguished by the features of this heavenly virtue.

What the measures of our prudence, or the precautions of our vigilance, ought to be, — these, of course, are

circumstances, which must vary with our respective situations, in life; be adapted to our particular difficulties; and measured to the dangers, with which we may, each of us, have to contend. The following, however, are some of those general precautions, which religion earnestly warns us to adopt. Impressed with a deep sense of the importance of our salvation, we should make ourselves accurately acquainted with the means, and instruments, established by the divine wisdom for our sanctification; — should learn, how to escape unhurt through the dangers of the world; and how, with success, to combat, and overcome, our temptations. We should form for ourselves a regular, and well-digested, plan of life, reaching through all the order of our conduct, and the bearings of actions; and keeping this, as a pillar of light, before our eyes, we should endeavor everywhere to follow it with steadiness, and consistency. In order, too, to render the cultivation of virtue the more consoling; and its security the more certain, we should make it our custom often to frequent the holy sacraments; and to cherish those enlightened practices of piety, and devotion, which are suited to our respective states, and circumstances, in society. Such are some of those rules of Christian prudence, which, if followed, would effectually promote, and ensure, our sanctification.

III. We are apt to form to ourselves the notion, that salvation is a very difficult task, — beset with hardships; and surrounded with uneasinesses, gloom, &c. Such ideas are unfortunate, as they are unjust. It is true, — salvation, as a great work, has various difficulties. But the real fact is, that all, or nearly all, the difficulties relating to it are of our own creation, — the effects of our own passions, indolence, and self-love. Of itself, salvation is neither a very arduous, nor a very perplexing, conquest. “*The commandment,*” says God, “*which I give thee, is not above thee; nor far of from thee. . . . It is not in heaven, nor beyond the sea ; but it is very nigh unto thee,*” — that is, within thy reach, and dependent on thy own will, — “*that thou mayest do it.*” And does not our Saviour, in like manner, assure us, — alluding to the work of our salvation, — that, provided only that, in the midst of our real, or alleged difficulties, we will simply pray, — asking for what we please in His Name, — and it shall be readily granted to us? “*Ask, and it shall be given to you, &c.*” In reality, it is inconsistent with every notion, which we entertain of God’s benevolence, to suppose, that He has placed the very object for which alone we have been created, beyond the reach, — or even beyond the easy reach, — of our endeavors. Such is His solicitude for our happiness, that He not only wills, and wishes, it; but He even

wills, and wishes, it, more ardently than we do, or can do, — ourselves. Hence, all His tender solicitations, and urgent entreaties; hence, all the wonders, which His mercy has performed in our favor, giving to us not only His own Divine Son to be our guide, but providing for us *every* means to assist, and to help us forward. A Being, surely, Who loves us thus; and Who has thus provided for our salvation, would not, of course, have rendered, either its pursuit arduously perplexing; or its attainment painfully difficult. Proposed alike to us all, — to the weak, as well as to the strong; to the ignorant, just equally as to the learned; to the poor as much as to the rich, — so, consequently, both its pursuit, and attainment, are adapted to every state, situation, and character, in life. What, therefore, in reality, renders the task, — as we often find it, — so very arduous, is the weakness of our faith, the coldness of our hearts, and the torpor of our self-love. These are the evils, that create our difficulties; — these the obstacles, that make the paths of piety seem to us so rough, and cheerless. But, let us only subdue these hindrances; — let us only enliven, and animate, our faith; — let us but warm our hearts; and generously resist our sloth, — and soon, everything, that now seems hard, will become easy, and delightful, — the rough ways will early become smooth; and the dark paths brighten into gladness.

One obvious reason is, that we shall then do from love, what, at present, we do from fear. Whilst, moreover, impressed deeply with the conviction, that heaven, with its immortal, and unspeakable, blessings, is well worth all our care, — we shall, under this feeling, think little or nothing of the few hardships, that may occur to obstruct our journey towards it. Seeing habitually before us the gates of the blissful mansion already open to receive us, and crowns of glory prepared to reward our fidelity, we shall go on with cheerful animation, and alacrity. The few thorns, that obstruct our passage, will even be changed into roses: and we shall fear, or heed, little else, than this one *evil*, — *sin*. For this alone can defeat the security of our aims.

For these reasons, then, let us not, any longer consider the work of our salvation, as that painful thing, which, hitherto, through indolence, and the want of faith, we have been accustomed to regard it. What principally, — or rather, what alone, — God requires of us, is that we should *love* Him. He does not demand from us any extraordinary actions, — neither any painful austerities; nor any brilliant works of charity; nor that we should bury ourselves in the gloom of solitude. What He requires, — speaking of us in general, — is merely, that we should live in the practice of simple, and common, virtues; performing

our respective duties well; and seasoning them by a spirit of piety, and religion. Thus, it is a fact, that the far larger portion of the bright inhabitants of the heavenly Sion consists of those plain, and simple, beings, who, in the broad, open, walks of social life, cultivated only the ordinary obligations of Christianity, — the poor, who had borne their afflictions with resignation, — the rich, who, without pride, had employed their riches in doing good; — the tradesmen, who had been upright in all their dealings; — domestics, who had been faithful in their trust; — husbands, and wives, who, loving each other, had loved each other in God. In reality, everyone is virtuous, who, impressed with the love of God, performs the duties of his station well. Ordinary virtues, well practiced in our respective states, and situations, of life, are more pleasing to God, than extraordinary actions in the sphere, where Providence has not placed us. Simplicity of conduct, combined with great simplicity, and purity, of mind, constitutes very exalted perfection. God loves simplicity. He loves to crown the very smallest of our virtues, — ensuring a reward even to the trifling gift of a cup of cold water, if presented by the hand of charity.

Wherefore, feelingly sensible of the infinite importance of our salvation, let us attend to the great business

with zeal, and assiduity, — neither disheartened by the suggestions of our passions, our weakness, or our self-love; nor scared by the interposition of a few obstacles, or pretended difficulties. Or if, indeed, we have any real difficulties, have we not too, the most ample, and powerful, means to overcome them? If we are weak, have we not remedies to support us; and graces to subdue our weakness? Above all, have we not always with us a Saviour, who, loving us tenderly, is ever ready to console, and cherish, us under the conflicts of every trial? Such certainly is the case. So that thus, we have no excuses to palliate our neglect; no subterfuge to screen our indolence. There is nothing, that, on the occasion of the last grand assize, will awaken in our breasts more lively feelings of confusion than the sight of those immense multitudes of the just, who, clothed once in the same flesh with ourselves, and surrounded by the self-same difficulties, either preserved their baptismal robes unstained; or, else, washed them again white in the purifying streams of penance. These will, all, stand in judgment against us, — proving clearly, that weakness itself may triumph, whenever it is disposed to combat. They will show us, by what they have done, that we, — had we chosen it, — might easily have done the like.

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