

I. The Soul's Destiny

001.

Published in the *Grail* magazine

To Eva

A few more days like today -
Some more of grief and of joy,
Will finish the dull tiresome play -
Oh Death! What hast thou to destroy?

Not the hopes, and the dreamings of youth,
Not the throbs of the fetterless soul,
Not the faith in unchangeable Truth,
Nor the trust in that Faith's far-off goal.

Go! flesh, and be food for the worms.
Go! Pride, and be humbled to dust.
Thy perishing only confirms
The judgment and right of our trust.

Fresh from the mouldering clay
The tireless spirit shall spring,
Will guilt clog its upward sway
Or Love render swift its bright wing?

Oh! Christ, take my heart in Thy hand,
Be Thy love my rest and repose.
Enclose Eve in the self-same bright Band,
Tonight, in, and after life's close.

Written by Bishop Rosecrans to Eva Watkins in her album on the day she left St. Mary's of the Springs, in 1872. Published in the *Grail*. Eva, a native of Owensboro, Kentucky (1855-1951) married Thomas J. Mooney and lived in Evansville, Indiana.

2 - God's Share

002.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 24, 1875 (4)

God's Share.

We are made up of goods of soul, body, and fortune--all gifts--of which we have the temporary use until the Day of Settlement. The soul has will, memory, and understanding; the body its senses, its shape, and vigor; fortune its wealth, position, friends, gain.

Will we or not, God's share in all these goods is the controlling one. He is no fretful and obtrusive proprietor; but He is a tenacious and irresistible one. He will bide His time, but will not lose a tithe of His rights. The understanding and the will must be subdued to His dominion--if not lovingly by accepting what He reveals and fulfilling what He commands, then forcibly, by knowing Him in His judgments. The body must be made His by being brought into subjection at the bidding of our own will or, later, of His might. What fortune brings must be made His, by being received and yielded back at His bidding and for His honor. In this, our day, we can do as we choose with our gifts--trade in them, squander them, or hide them away-- but in His day, which is not far off, He will bring us to settlement for them all, and hear what we have to say about their use.

How foolish it is for us to forget this and live as if we were without a Master. How idle for us to talk about believing what we please, studying what we please, and keeping ourselves ignorant of what we please; to run without thinking at any vocation in life; to indulge the whims and appetites of our bodies; to squander wealth, influence and position on the gratification of our own self-love and pride! This life is rushing by with the speed of the wind. The footsteps of the coming Master may almost be heard, so nigh is He at the doors. His share is all the goods; our share is the use only. And He is coming to claim His share.

003.

Preface, *The Divinity of Christ*

The Soul's Destiny.

Without being fully conscious of it, even believers are influenced very much by the views and sentiments of those about them. They pray every day, "Thy kingdom come;" they believe in the future judgment and life everlasting, yet they feel, in regard

3 - The Soul's Destiny

to comfort, honor, very much as worldlings feel, very much as they talk. The reason is, because they have never argued out their own position; never settled where they stand. Their lives are not logical. It is not precisely that they believe one thing and do another; but that they hesitate about believing any thing, all the time they are acting. They do not hesitate about believing abstract truths, such as: God exists; the wicked shall be punished; the just rewarded;--but about the application of these truths to themselves. There is the question before each of us always, Am I in friendship with God? am I going on, as the days pass, and the nights glide by, in the way that leads to life? but it is very seldom thought on enough to be answered. Sometimes we defer answering it to a more convenient season, saying, It shall be my occupation after I have disposed of what is now pressing on my mind; but, generally, we let it glide away from our attention without any greeting or promise, because we are not so much afraid of it as we are preoccupied with other matters. There are so many beauties in the world, so many pleasures, or vexations that we are quite engrossed by them; therefore we do not feel the time passing and eternity coming on-- we take no thought of the morrow.

Yet, why not answer it at once, with honesty and sincerity? You can not avoid any pain by not looking whence it comes. You know that you must die and be judged according to your works. Why not anticipate the judgment, and make up your accounts before you enter on the interview about the final settlement?

It is the question of questions; the only one you can not afford to leave unanswered. It is pure bravado, if not phrenzy, to talk about taking your chances, and letting yourself remain adrift on the sea of life until you strike. You can not afford to take your chance; you can not endure to dwell in the "devouring fire" and with the "everlasting burnings;" you can not afford to be lost.

It is said that some diplomatic agent, when he saw that the difficulties between the two parties were being rapidly adjusted, all at once stopped proceedings by the question, "But, gentlemen, what is to become of me?"

That is the question of the soul. The world is busy at political matters and commercial prospects, and war and peace, making arrangements about progress and changes of all kinds; and common prudence calls upon us to ask, in the midst of this shifting about, and rising and falling, what is to become of me? The world will go on in the circle it has been following for ages; nations will set forth and flourish as of yore; wars and pestilences will leave fields waste and firesides desolate; youth will wanton, and old age drivel, as in times gone by; the sun will be shining on, the mountains lifting up their heads, the ocean still heaving and tossing in its mighty bed, and what will have become of me?

Human prudence, I say, ought to bring this question home to every heart; for it is a question of more than bodily life and death. Each one of us is to live for ever:--To

3 - The Soul's Destiny

LIVE, to love, hate, enjoy, suffer, desire, to think, to remember, to understand. We have not words to express all that life is. It means all that the soul can do or suffer. It is the life of the soul that rules the body; that sways the muscles at its will; that makes the heart throb, and sends the blood leaping through the veins--and this life is to last for ever. For ever the understanding will be busy, and the will be loving and hating FOR EVER! The stars will grow old and fade out in the heavens; the solid rocks will be worn away by rains, and dews, and winds: but the soul will never grow old; never approach its end. What is now in the visible world being destroyed, a new fiat may go forth; a new creation spring into existence, run through its countless changes and close, and still the soul will be living on.

We do not, we can not bring this idea, in all its fullness, home to our hearts. It is too vast for us to take it all in. We say, "live for ever" and "for all eternity," as lightly as we speak of going to breakfast; but we do so because we utter these words without catching their sense. Short periods of time that we can measure by counting, as it were, our sensations, we can understand better, yet not fully. To one in pain how wearily the hours drag by, and how intolerably long before he can hope for relief! In the midst of enjoyments how many delicious sensations can crowd themselves into a single hour! What would you say to a year of pain? What to a single month of unmingled delight? Yet, a year is less than an atom to the bulk of the mighty earth, in our endless life. A year is but the revolution of the earth around the sun a single time; yet, when its revolutions have ceased, and its track through space is left void, eternity will be no nearer its end than now.

We talk of this life in the flesh being long to groan in; to bear burdens of hunger and thirst, of heat and cold, and heaviness of heart; and we lose courage, grow faint and sigh for death. But in our impatience we deceive ourselves. Life is, at best, but a few score years--the average but thirty--the most prodigiously long a little over a hundred. What are a hundred years to Eternity?

To the fallen angels it seems but yesterday when they were hurled, like lightning, from the battlements of Heaven. The spirits of the just say, "To-day we entered into the joy of the Lord;" for with them it is for ever to-day.

You know the legend of the Jew who denied our Saviour a cup of water, on His way to Calvary from Jerusalem. He was condemned to live on in the flesh to the end of time. His malediction fell back upon his own head, and passed into his bones and blood, quickening them with preternatural life. So he lived on. His children and grandchildren, and their children grew old and gray, and died. He, too, grew old and gray, but did not die. He lived on until those of his own blood became strangers to him, and his thoughts and feelings were those of a forgotten generation. In his loneliness he sought to die, and could not. He went into the thickest of battles; all fell on the gory

3 - The Soul's Destiny

plain about him; he alone untouched. He sought shipwreck, and the waves would not swallow, but cast him on the shore. He trod upon the nests of adders, and they could not sting him. He grappled with the plague in crowded cities, and, when it had spent its fury, sat with the unburied corpses piled about, alone alive. In the midst of earthquakes, the shattering walls and crumbling earth left him a spot to stand on in hated safety; and the lava, hissing from the volcano, rolled on, devouring all else, harmlessly by his feet. And so he is to walk on, until finally the Archangel's trumpet shall sound the hour of his deliverance, and he has worked out, to the last letter, the awful sentence, "Tarry till I come." Yet, his deliverance will be at the end of time--at the beginning of Eternity. If his desolation seems long what will be the desolation of souls that are lost, over whose ending no trumpet shall ever sound?

There is, also, a legend, told in many ways, of Brother Francis and the Bird of the Silver Voice. Brother Francis left the monastery one afternoon to gather from the surrounding wood an arm-load of sticks, for fuel. When he reached the forest his ear was greeted by the sweetest warble that ever came from the throat of a bird. He must pause one moment to hear the end of the song before beginning to gather his fuel. So he stood still, and the warbling went on, so full, so rich, so sweet, that he almost held his breath in ecstasy. When it ceased, "How short it was," he said; then gathered his fuel and returned. He rang the bell at the monastery gate, which was opened by a porter that he did not know. "Who are you, that take the place of Brother John?" he inquired. "Rather, who are you?" was the reply. "Ah! I am Brother Francis." "There is no Brother Francis." The Prior came, and he also said there was no Brother Francis. Then the oldest brother of the house was called, and he tottered in on his cane, and told how in his youth he had heard some gray-haired brothers tell, that long ago, when they were young, Brother Francis had gone, one afternoon, for wood, and never returned; killed, doubtless, by the wild beasts. So they counted the years, and found that Brother Francis had listened to the bird's song one hundred and fifty years, and thought it still too short.

So in Heaven, the heart stands still, in the fullness of its joy; and, as it began, will remain transfixed for ever.

Saint Teresa built a hermitage in her uncle's garden, and sought to flee from every sound and sight; and when asked why she desired to dwell in solitude, answered the one word, "Eternity." I must live through all eternity. All that God has made is very beautiful, it is true: the sounds that fill the ear, the sights that chain the eye, the affections that seize the heart, are sweet indeed; but they are passing, and the soul lives on forever. You see the flash of the meteor, and it is gone before you can say to your companion, "Look there!" A cloud-shadow darkens the plain, and it lies black, on the mountain beyond, ere you have done saying, "How sombre!" So pass the joys and

3 - The Soul's Destiny

sorrows of this life of the flesh!

Youth, full of hope and fire, is gone ere the heart knows what it hopes, or why it is warm. Manhood fades away ere the soul has set itself to begin the struggle of life; and old age freezes in death, while trying to lie down to a little repose. "The figure of this world;" all that appears to the eye, and ear, and touch, and taste, "passeth away," swift as the north wind over the prairie--and eternal life remains.

You and I must live on in this same individuality that each of us calls I, for ever and ever. All other thoughts are of little weight in comparison with this. We must live on, thinking, remembering, hating, loving, enjoying or suffering as eagerly as now, for ever more.

Poets and artists grow enthusiastic over fame and men speak of winning a place in history, as of some thing worth the labor of life, and life itself. In the Day of Judgment all accounts will be made up, history will be closed, and shame and infamy, in the sense in which we use them, will be buried and forgotten; yet the Day of Judgment is but the opening of life, the threshold of that house which is to be our home for ever, and that home will be of our own choosing, either in darkness or in light. Which shall we choose? is the question of the soul.

The true grandeur of human nature has its root in this power of choice. It is not that mind can rule matter, enslave the winds, and make lightning its messenger; but it is in the awful power it has of choosing its own destiny for eternity; of modifying, at its pleasure, the face of God's universe, in a manner as enduring as God Himself.

You have this tremendous power. I have it. Each of us is great, because he has it: so great that he may well stand in awe when he thinks of it. This is the essential quality in which all men are equal. The distinctions of sex, age, condition, those based on gifts of mind, and body, and fortune, are but accidental and transitory; but the power of choice will remain, for ever, in its results. Which Eternity will you choose? is the question that lies at the threshold of every reason-guided life. Put off answering it, and you simply put off the use of reason, but do not escape its responsibility. You can not find the answer to it in sense, or feeling, or sentiment. I do not say that the world that seeks your heart and thoughts is not beautiful. It is beautiful, but not beautiful enough for the soul. Art, nature, pleasure, success in life, wealth, friendship can charm the sense--they can not fill the soul. "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing."

The soul was not made to sit for ever in the prison-house of the flesh, and look out upon the universe through the windows of sense. It is one day to be brought face to face with Truth and Goodness. "All is vanity," not because there is evil in it, but because whatever there is of good and beautiful is not the kind for which the soul hungers. It is figure; the soul wants substance. It is transient; the soul wants the enduring. Let not

4 - Why God Made Us

this question of the soul wait for an answer longer. I ask this, not because God needs you, or the Church wants you, or society claims you; but, because you need yourself.

Trifle no longer with the mighty issue of your everlasting destiny. There is a task allotted to you: use your reason to find what it is, and your energies to accomplish it. For this, time was given you. For this, the sun shines over you, and your "Heavenly Father feedeth you." For this, you have all you have of breath, and life, and wit, and sense.

If you are a Catholic, you know the task; you know the commandments, and have but to do them. If you are in sin, you know the remedy; if in doubt, you know where to seek instruction. Attend to it at once. If you are not a Catholic your first duty is prayer; your next, study, to find what you know, and what you do not know; what you believe and what you doubt: and see what farther can be done.

Sailing on the sea of life, you and I meet here in these pages, for one moment, perhaps, never to meet again: and may my warning cry ring upon your ears, and echo back on mine, to be heeded by both. "Look well whither you are going--and God speed!"

004.

Lecture, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, March 21, 1866 and Sermon Book 2, No. 19

This lecture appears in Bishop Rosecrans' own hand as Sermon 19 in Book 2 in the Archives of the Diocese of Columbus. It is clear that the typesetter had this manuscript in front of him when setting the Telegraph in 1866, but a few changes were made. The manuscript version is indicated by {braces}. Punctuation, primarily the use of commas, differs between the two versions and has been slightly modernized here. Its title in the Telegraph is "Religion and Progress" but that is not appropriate and is the same title as Lecture No. II.

[Why God Made Us.]

Lectures in St. Peter's Cathedral--Lent 1866, No. III.

Some travelers were once admitted as guests into a beautiful house by the wayside, and having been shown into a room, and told to speak for what they wanted, were left to themselves. Making themselves at home they soon became so absorbed in examining and admiring the books, pictures, maps and other curiosities of the room, that the time flew by to the hour of rest, without their having bespoken any refreshment or any sleeping accommodations.

The host came around with his light, and said "excuse me gentlemen, we close

4 - Why God Made Us

the house at this hour, and extinguish the lights. You must retire." "But," remonstrated the travelers, "we have had no supper and ordered no beds." "I am sorry, but it is too late now to order either--you will have to leave the house now." And in spite of their protests and urgent regrets, he drove them out into the darkness and saw them no more.

This visible world is the house by the wayside and we are all travelers, a long procession of generations moving on into eternity. Each one of us is admonished by his consciousness of free will within, and by manifold teachings without, to seek rest and refreshment for himself. How many of us become absorbed in examining and admiring what the world contains and forget to provide against the hour of retiring to rest! How many are startled when the candle is lit by their bed-side and the Host says we close at this hour! And, worse still, how many are driven out into the darkness to be seen of God no more, to their infinite disappointment and chagrin.

But of all that go astray, the most disappointed and humbled must be those who professed to follow science. They know so many things that it must be mortifying to find themselves ignorant and unprovided on the only point that could be of use to them. They labor so tirelessly that it must make them heartsick to be convinced that they have labored in vain. Their intellect was so sharp and so far-reaching, yet it never pierced through the shell of the visible! With all their forethought, they never provided for what they knew was inevitable.

It is very easy for us to impose on ourselves: to imagine ourselves doing great things when we are doing very little things, to think ourselves wise when in truth we are silly, to become enthusiastic about what is even less than common-place.

In the noise and feverish hurry of a sensual life, we can forget the life of the soul; and gazing with eager eyes on the visible, never think of its true meaning, or remember the swarming Spirit World which is our everlasting home.

It is bad enough to be deceived thus, when we are tossed with the fever of desire and passion, when the glitter of pride is dazzling untried ambition, or when the fascination of sense is first weaving its charms around the yet untainted heart. But in our days worse happens. Disregard of God and forgetfulness of eternity are set up for a philosophy, and made axioms of wisdom, avenues to what is called success in life. Not only do the simple, now-a-days, as they have done in all ages, serve their bodily wants and desires, through life, but the learned are hard at work to persuade us that man *has* no other than bodily wants and desires. Here we find a scientific man arguing that there is no Providence; there one who asserts in the teeth of history that no supernatural events or miracles ever happened. From one press issues a book asserting Jesus Christ to be an imposter, from another an essay showing that man has no more soul than the gorilla and monkey. In one pulpit, the preacher speaks compassionately of the

4 - Why God Made Us

ignorance and superstition of those ages when men thought that salvation was worth the sacrifice of wealth and pleasure and ambition. In another, he exhorts the people to lay hold of this life, to realize at once, by fire and sword, their idea of perfection in the political world, as if, losing the present, they lost all. Here one tells us that all religions are equal, which, if it means anything, means that all are false. There, another, that sin is only misfortune, and that criminals are to be pitied, not punished.

The mind of the age seems to have entered heartily into the service of matter, and to exercise its ingenuity with wonderful zeal, in showing that it will profit a man much to gain the whole world, and he need not be at all concerned about the loss of his soul.

The material world is like the moral world in one respect, at least; viz.: that what you will see of it depends upon where you stand to look at it. Down the slope of the hill the view is cramped, confused and misty; but from the summit you can trace the limits of the cities, the courses of the streams, the windings of roads, and the trend of coasts and mountain ranges. So, if in trying to understand the meaning of the universe, you begin with your own fancies and cupidities, you will see but little, and that little not distinctly. But if you begin, as both faith and common sense direct, from God, and seek to find the value of all things from His estimate who made them, your range of vision, though not comprehending all things, will be very vast and very clear. Given the center of a sphere, it is not hard to trace its outlines. But if you assume for center a point which is not its center, all your attempts to see where the limits are will be vain.

The philosopher starting on the hypotheses that not God but something else is the measure of all goodness and truth and beauty falls into endless perplexities and perpetual contradictions.

Christianity and common sense place God in the center of the universe, and so, though not making, what the Infinite Mind is alone capable of grasping, plain to human understanding, yet casts such light upon all things as to leave no room for logical perplexity and contradiction. The believer can always know where he is, what he has to do, and what to expect, at each stage of his existence, and is therefore never in the peril of being carried about by every wind of doctrine, or disturbed from the even tenor of his way by any cries of "Lo! here and lo! there, is he that brings salvation."

To set this forth, I must recur to one of the primal and most simple statements of the little catechism, "I believe in God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth." In that article of the Creed, there is more explanation of the meaning of the universe, than in all the writings of philosophers, from Confucius down to this day. Let us analyze and try to appreciate what is stated as belief.

When we think of God our mind naturally runs to consider, not what He is in Himself, but what He is to us; that is, we think of Him as our maker, our helper, our redeemer, our judge. But to understand the article of the Creed, let us prescind from

4 - Why God Made Us

these relations and consider what He is in Himself. Far back in duration, there was a period when neither man, nor earth, nor sun, nor stars existed. What is now space was then void. Where is now light there was neither matter to make light nor matter to need it. There was no angel throng in heaven. One Being alone existed. The eternal Father in whom existed His co-eternal Son, and in one essence, the co-equal Holy Ghost. The Father, first, in origin, (not in time,) the Son, His subsisting intellect, the Holy Ghost, expressing hypostatically His infinite love, three in one essence. He existed from eternity, of necessity. As in duration, so in all perfections, His being is without limit. With Him TO BE is to be all that is conceivable of reality. Power is a reality. Therefore He has it to a limitless degree, or is almighty. Wisdom is a reality. Therefore, He is infinitely wise. Goodness, justice, holiness, are realities. Therefore He is infinitely good, just, holy. Freedom of will is a reality. Therefore, He is infinitely free. So argue of all you can conceive of life and perfection. For the eternity preceding creation He had wanted nothing to make Him happy. In creating He was under no necessity--but was perfectly free to create or not create; or having determined to create, was free to make the universe all angelic or all material; to choose which He pleased out of countless possibilities.

To create is to make out of nothing. We can make, but not out of nothing. With God, as with us, to make is first to conceive in the mind a type or plan of what we want, and then resolve--but here the likeness ends. When God resolves the thing is made. But we must obtain our material, and our instruments, and put our resolve into act by toilsome degrees. God does not make out of any material. When he is said by theologians to have imparted a ray of His own intelligence to Adam, or of His own beauty to His creation, you must understand, not that He took something from His own substance, but that He made out of nothing, something which resembled His own intelligence and His own substance, as dew-drops resemble the water of the ocean, and that something was created intelligence and created beauty. His creatures belong to Him, but He does not belong to them. Their life, their substance, and their happiness flow not from His essence, but from His free will. "He *spoke* and they were made. He *commanded* and they were created." Creator of heaven and earth, God made all that is spiritual, and all that is material, out of nothing, and His empire over both is as absolute, as His will was free.

The scriptures make mention of nine different kinds or orders of angels (the Church calls these nine orders, choirs) and teaches that man is next in order lower than the angels "crowned with glory and honor."

The only question that interests us is, what end did God make man to accomplish? What work is he to do? What rest to find? What use did the Creator intend him to make of the spirit world and the world of matter?

4 - Why God Made Us

For, beyond all question, God's intention or will is the sphere of each creature He has formed. The author alone has the right to say what disposition he will make of his manuscript. The sculptor alone determines what shape he will give to his block of marble. All things that came forth from the Almighty return to Him for happiness: some, indirectly, as matter and the brute creation; others directly, as the angels and man. Now, there are two ways of learning what God intended us to do, and wherein to find our happiness.

First, from His direct teaching, which we have in the Catholic Church.

Secondly, from natural reason on our capabilities and our experience.

The first comes to us with wonderful clearness and simplicity on the first page of the smaller catechism. "God made me that I might know, love and serve Him in this life, and be happy {forever} with Him in the next," and in the succeeding pages we are instructed in the details of what we are to know concerning Him, and how we are to love and serve Him.

The second manner of knowing what end God made us for, is from the use of reason. We have a right to assume that God made us to be happy. The assertion of Calvin, that He may reprobate us, in virtue of His supreme dominion over us, and not for any evil we do in His sight, is a horrible blasphemy. Hence, if we can find what will make us happy, perfectly, supremely, and enduringly happy, we have a right to say for that God made us. From this, Catholic theologians have reasoned that God alone can make us happy, as follows. Our perfect happiness will be found where the intellect stops inquiring and the will stops desiring. But the intellect stops inquiring only in the first cause, and the will stops desiring when it has gained the infinite good. Therefore, the perfect happiness, the stable rest of the soul, is God who is first cause and infinite good.

Here, then, is the Catholic theory of the Universe. God--eternal, self-existent, loving, thinking, almighty, free--is the center. From Him all things come forth by creation, to Him they all return by judgment. He made all things for His own sake, because He wanted to make them, and express in them His divine attributes; and this end of His cannot be thwarted. Subordinate to this end, He made all things that they might be happy with a happiness suited to their natures, and this end, being conditional, free will can thwart, but without defeating the plans of the Creator. It belongs to the dignity of rational nature that it must make its happiness its own by freedom, and must be able to choose unhappiness if it wills.

This theory explains, in general at least, the limits and value of all that exists to us.

I do not know, of course, all the details of the origin and nature of created things; but I know of what use they can be to me. There are mysteries, still, in the physical and

4 - Why God Made Us

moral world; but none whose solution I need to guide me to a favorable judgment and a happy eternity, where they will be all unraveled.

The darkest mystery that besets the pathway of the mind is the origin of evil. How came it into the universe? How came ignorance to the understanding, sin to the will, death to the body? How simple yet how clear this mystery becomes in the light of faith! Evil is first the perversion of the created will, its departure from the line of the Creator's decrees, and afterward, all the other disasters that are the penalties of forfeited innocence.

But did not God foresee that His creatures would sin? Most undoubtedly. Could He not prevent it, by not creating them? Certainly, yes. Why then did He not prevent it? Because He was not bound to prevent it. He gave them light and knowledge and power to do well and be happy. What more could He do? Could He seize upon their free will and force it in the right direction? That would be changing their nature and depriving them of the power of being happy. He placed fire and water before them and gave them the power to choose which they would; and could not, without violence to the dignity of their nature, compel them to choose that which would make them happy.

This explanation, tracing moral evil to the free will of the creature and all other evils to it, is clear, practical and sufficiently full. When we know the nature of evil well enough to avoid it, we know it well enough for this life. Those who refuse to accept this theory will have to do worse; for there is no other that is not darker than the mystery itself. But two other explanations that I know of have been attempted, both refuted by common sense. One is the Manichaeian explanation, making the author of evil an independent, self-existent, principle or deity. But this is absurd, 1st, because evil is no substance, but only a negation, and, therefore can not exist as a substance, and 2d, because in the hypothesis of two opposing principles of good and evil, either the good would be stronger than the bad principle, and then there would be no evil at all; or the bad principle would be stronger than the good, and there would be no good at all; or else the two principles would be equal in power, and then there would be neither good nor evil.

The second explanation commonly put forward, in modern times, is to assert that there is no evil in the world. But this is either a mere quibble, or a denial of facts patent to all. If it means that there is no absolute evil, no evil that will triumph over God, of course, it is true. For He shall reign over all, in mercy over the elect, in justice over the reprobate. But if it means that there is no evil to men in the world, it denies facts which you and I and all feel and see every day. Grant that our race is going to be happy some day, and that all that happens day by day is carrying us on to perfection and felicity, so that the groans of humanity are the creaking of the wheels of progress, and the rivers of blood shed by assassins and in battle, are waves washing our race

4 - Why God Made Us

toward the goal of earthly bliss. Still, are the millions who groan and sweat ere the goal is reached to have no remedy for their woes? If any one's wrongs are to remain forever *unrighted*, if the mask is never to be stripped from the hypocrite, if the tongue of the calumniator is never compelled to recant, if the red-handed murderer is never to be brought to any bar of justice, is it not evil? If virtue is unacknowledged, if the innocent are circumvented and then trodden upon, if the weak are oppressed, and the pure sullied, is it not an evil? How they mock the tears of humanity, these charlatans of progress, standing in public places and saying, as the news of strife and bloodshed and arson and murder flies along the telegraph from every quarter, "Be of good cheer, all is well. The world is moving on to felicity!" Be of good cheer, O widow, standing there over the grave of your only child, who sank into it, the broken hearted victim of deceit and unhallowed violence. Stifle your sobs over your desolation, and the disgrace of your name. The darling of your heart is gone to be sure, and her destroyer swaggers among his riotous companions with no appearance of regret. But be cheerful. With you, things will always remain as they are. But long after this, in a far future generation, somebody else will be happy, and you ought to be delighted with the thought that the anguish you suffer contributes to that magnificent result.

Be joyful and glad, O weary laborer, as seated in your squalid home among your sick and almost starving children, you feel that the pain in your bones is not weariness, but coming typhoid. Winter is on you. You have no money to buy food, fuel or medicine, and the sickness that has kept the family prostrate so long has seized at last upon you. You have been wrongfully accused of stealing, and your wages unjustly kept from you. In the wide world you have none to help you. Rejoice, man. You will starve and die amid your starving and dying children, and there is no judgment and better world before you. But far-off posterity shall have plenty to eat and drink and clothe it, and each man, white or black, shall have a vote in the elections! The World is a good consoler to him who needs no consolation; in the flush of triumph, the glow of health, the pride of physical strength, it can pamper insolence with vain promises. But to one whom the hand of God has touched, its words are hollow mockery, more agonizing than the pain it seeks to soothe.

The Church's account of the origin and meaning of sorrow is the only one not absurd and contradictory, and the only one that gives a clue to the remedy for evil. According to this, sin is the only pure, unmitigated evil to man in the universe, and the cross of Christ its only remedy. There are other partial evils, evils to the body, to honor, to pleasure, to fortune. But these are only temporary and can be turned into good; but sin destroys the soul in hell, and once at its goal knows no remedy, even in the cross of Christ.

This, then, is to you and me, the meaning of the universe, in the midst of which

4 - Why God Made Us

we stand alone. Center of all is God the supreme Father, Son and Holy Ghost, pervading all, yet distinct from creatures. About Him, and above us, the nine choirs of angels, subtle, powerful, beautiful beings, to whom we owe at once the love of companions, and the veneration of inferiors, ourselves, as it were, fluttering in the illimitable space between heaven for which God meant us, and hell, which we may yet choose for our portion. Below us, matter which we must subdue, and the fallen angels whom we must, by the aid of grace, defeat.

To cling to God is our only good; to let go of God, our only evil. Our understanding clings to God when we accept His teaching in the holy Catholic Church. Our will clings to God when we keep His commandments. According to this grand principle we must find the meaning and fix the value of all that we encounter in life. Whatever is, in so far as it helps us to cling to God, is good; in so far as it takes us away from God, is evil. What happens to the body, therefore, is a matter of simple indifference. What is agreeable to it is not to be sought, what is painful to it is not to {be} shunned for its own sake, but only for its bearing on our soul's fidelity to God. The soul, rightly balanced, therefore, will contemplate with equal desire poverty or wealth, health or sickness, long life or short life, honor or obscurity, and be ready calmly to choose out of any two opposites that one which seems more calculated to make it firm in faith and persevering in obedience, regardless of the preference felt by passion and sense. This rule removes all perplexities from the mind about practical matters. If you want to know whether to be glad or sorry over anything that is past, see whether it carried you toward God or away from Him. If you doubt whether or not you ought to be satisfied with your present condition, see whether you are now living in the belief God teaches, and the practice of His commands.

If you have not decided yet whether to engage or not in some enterprise for the future, see whether to engage in or not would make [you] more faithful, more humble, more devout, more chaste, and then decide accordingly.

If thine eye is single, thy whole body will be full of light.

It is good to cling to God. It is the breath of our spiritual life, the sole food for the hunger of the soul, the sole beauty towards which all the desires within us are ever struggling with wild and sometimes aimless eagerness. "It is good to cling to God," for God always has His way, is never thwarted nor disappointed; and so the soul that clings to Him lives in a region of unalterable peace, above the atmosphere of weariness and remorse and despondency and heartache, as it is above the region of the dark passions that give them birth.

To cling to God, my beloved friends, is not a work far above you or me, which only one of a generation can accomplish. It is what the soul was made for, and Jesus Christ redeemed it for, within your power and mine, and every one's. It is simply to

5 - Knowledge for Eternal Life

believe God and obey Him. It is simply to say, "I will leave the world to those who love it, and act myself to live in preparation for the judgment." All can do this, and find in it a practical solution of all difficulties, a sure guide to peace; and so when the night comes on they will pass through it without shrinking to find beyond it their everlasting rest.

005.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 9

Knowledge for Eternal Life

The Pharisees were the dominant political party of their time and country. They had long ceased to regard the obligations of religion, truth, justice, charity, otherwise than as means of securing influence and authority. Whoever was with them was secure in the commission of any crime; whoever was not with them must be crushed at all hazard. When the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, doing good to every one, blessing, teaching, healing, kindling hope and planting love in the hearts of the poor, they never thought to imagine whether He came from God, but instinctively feeling that He would never belong to them, they determined to compass His destruction. They used much cunning to entrap Him into saying something that would offend the prejudices of the people. "Master, which is the first or chief commandment of the Law?" They did not care for the law; but they knew the people did. It was [the] same to them which was the chief and which the secondary precept as they obeyed none, but they thought by affecting a zeal for religious knowledge, they might entrap Him into saying something that might be construed into opposition to the received notions of the multitude.

The Redeemer by the directness of his answer approved the spirit they simulated, though abhorring the hypocrisy. The desire to know the law is holy and commendable. The first natural impulse of the rational soul, feeling at the same time its immortality, its dependence and its loneliness, is to prostrate itself before its Author, and to ask, "To what end have I been brought into existence on this earth? Why have I the power to see, hear, speak, walk, understand, reason, remember, love, hate? Master - - Eternal All-ruling uncreated incomprehensible God -- Which is the first commandment of the law? What must I do with the being thou hast given me?"

No one can help feeling this impulse though any one can easily stifle it, or direct his thoughts from it. Every soul feels the passing away that is written upon all its material surroundings; sees it in the fleeting seasons, in the death of loved ones, in the severing of old ties, the growth of new ones, the decay of all. How then can it help, as it

5 - Knowledge for Eternal Life

feels itself hurrying on, arrow-like, through the shadowy region of the visible and changeable, asking anxiously "Whither am I going? When changes shall have ceased and rest sets in where shall I be found?" Again every soul feels within itself the power to guide itself, to control its own acts, and that in this consists its nobility, on this hangs its destiny. It feels that though God may not, nay cannot, be a hard master, yet He is a master. How then can it keep from asking Him, "Master what wouldst thou have me to do, what choose, what flee from? Which is the first commandment of the law?"

Again: Every soul has a desire, vehement beyond the power of words to express, for happiness. All its being is centered in this desire. As the essence of matter is to gravitate towards what attracts it, and the nature of the eye is to seek the light, of the lungs to seize upon the vital air, of the stomach to crave food, so the human soul longs for, pants after, happiness. See in the world how men run to and fro, because their foolish hearts mock them with the cry, lo it is here! and lo it is there! How they toil, struggle, rush into the teeth of danger, the jaws of death, because the heart is so eager to be happy! How they weep, writhe, gnash their teeth because happiness is denied them! But what will make them happy? What will fill up this void in the heart? The question must be answered at the outset of any rational career. Which is the first commandment of the law?

One may shut his eyes to the necessity of answering this question, he may live on as his senses lead him, or the fashion drives, but he will do so at the expense of his rational nature. Every one of us is mad at some time of life, says the Latin proverb. But the madness that refuses to seek guidance in life is one that underlies and enfolds the whole moral being, and makes the whole life a frenzy, and death and persecution at the judgment seat the return to reason. So that he who neglects instruction is not once insane, but never sane.

Characteristic of the unbelief of this age is a denial not merely of some particular dogma of revealed religion, or of revealed religion itself, but of all even natural religion, of the reality of the whole universe of the unseen. It denies lazily and carelessly, but still denies, God, Eternity, Truth, the immortality and nobility of the soul and its accountability for its deeds, all in short that cannot be seen with the eyes, touched with the hands or tasted with the palate. It has not taste for reasoning and argument; no inclination to grapple with any question honestly and solve it. It casts aside investigation into its own nature and end as subtleties of the schoolmen. In fact to neglect the knowledge of religion has become the fashion. Schools are founded and supported at vast expense, with only this their recommendation, that the pupils in them are taught nothing of God or of the Redeemer. Intelligent men make a boast of their ignorance of what they must do to be saved; and even Catholics declare with self complacency that they never read pious books or religious newspapers, as if it were a

5 - Knowledge for Eternal Life

proof of wisdom to be in honor and not understand it, to have an intellect and yet become as the horse and the mule that have none!

If religious knowledge is not of the first importance then the soul [is] worth less than the body; then we have nothing to look forward to but the grave and annihilation. The flesh is all man. But if such be the case, away with all worship, with all society, with all art, all government, all notions of justice and honor and friendship and mercy and brotherhood. These are of no use to the body. They cannot feed any of its appetites. You have left a world of unclean beasts, in which the work of blood done by the French Atheists is only the beginning of the evil, and the end the annihilation of the human race, which let it come ever so quickly cannot come too soon.

There is logically no middle ground. Salvation is either of the first importance or else of no importance at all. You cannot deny that one should seek first the Kingdom of Heaven without denying that there is any Kingdom of Heaven at all.

But there are many who will not deny the Kingdom of Heaven, the immortality of the soul, who care so little for their souls as not yet to know in what that care consists, who have yet to learn how to begin to work out their salvation, who have never yet taken one step towards having an answer prepared in the day of account. "I will not be anxious about any religion," they say, "so long as I do well." Yes, but how will you do well, without knowing how to do it, without first learning from God what it is to do well.

Knowledge must proceed on a line, and knowledge must precede goodness in loving act. If one does not know how, he will strive in vain, unless by learning, to do right. Without faith, says the Apostle, it is impossible to please God. And let no Catholic flatter himself that what he learned of his faith in order to make his First Communion, and be confirmed, is sufficient to carry him through life. The Creed and the Ten Commandments are general, and easily learned; but like all general principles their development and application as a test to countless theories and lines of conduct make a vast and complicated science that few can master. If one would know what he ought to know he should be able to say with the Psalmist, "My meditation is ever on thy law." What you learned yesterday may have been enough for yesterday, but it is certainly not enough for today. So what you know today will not answer for tomorrow.

Every free act, whether of the soul the tongue or the hand, has its ethical bearing that changes, moment by moment, with the changes of circumstances affecting it, and to determine this requires perpetual clearness of judgment and perpetual attention and study. It is easy to live carelessly and without regard to conscience but it is very hard, even by the aid of grace, to square one's whole life strictly to the law of God. You must not suppose that to be even a practical Catholic insures one against the danger of blundering and error. It would do so were the heart entirely disentangled from passion

5 - Knowledge for Eternal Life

and worldly affection. But no heart is disentangled or remains so, long. One may be a Catholic and become so blinded as to prefer his own prejudices of race or party to the teachings of the Church, and aim at his own priorities at the expense of truth, justice and charity. One may be a Catholic and know so little of spiritual things as to call it wisdom to court and imitate the world; and folly to renounce kindred and goods and give all to God; as to look upon Holy Mass and the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, not as gifts the heart pants for, but as burthens one must bear to escape damnation.

One may be a Catholic, and live on with his longings always turned to the world, always studying to belong to it up to the very threshold of Hell, envying even those who, knowing no law, put no restraint on the indulgence of their passions. One may be a Catholic without ever having his religion penetrate his being, or sway in their depths the motions of his heart, and may find himself, in his hour as much astounded and unprepared as he to whom "they said thou fool, this night shall they require they soul of thee, and the things thou had laid up whose shall they be?"

One may live all his life a Catholic without ever knowing the untold treasures of his faith, a mere sensualist, a common miser, a despicable politician, simply by undervaluing religious instruction.

Are we sure, my friends, that we are up to the standard of what we ought to be, in our appreciation of religious knowledge?

Who of us comprehends, and accepts as his own what St. Paul meant when he said, I glory in nothing but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who of us does not glory, somewhat at least, in his blood, his race, his talents, his learning, his riches, his friends? or more piously in the triumphs of the Redeemer rather than in his Cross. Who of us loves Jesus Christ so much better than himself, as to glory in his own weaknesses, his failures, his humiliations, because they manifest the might of the Redeemer's power, and the depth of his mercy?

Who of us can enter into the feeling of St. Bernard, when he said he had no taste for any reading, any study, any discourse, any conversation, unless in so far as he found it to be of Jesus? or of St. Theresa when she knelt before the altar with streaming eyes, crying out, "Give me sufferings O Lord or let me die?" If not it is because we have not studied this matter enough to know what it means to have a Redeemer.

We can easily repeat the words of the creed--He was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried--but we cannot easily understand what it means for the spotless one to come down from Heaven, to be clothed with the shame of our guilt, to be scoffed before the judges with the mockings we deserved, to hear the sentence that of right is ours, to be scourged at the pillar with the lashes that should have torn our flesh and to die the death which was the penalty of our crimes. We do

5 - Knowledge for Eternal Life

not know a tittle of what it means for Christ to have become the price of our redemption, our teacher, our elder brother, our food in the Eucharist, our reward in Heaven. We do not know, I will not say how beautiful, how pure, how generous, how tender, and all desirable He is; but how good and how sweet it is for us to love Him.

Would that the Holy Ghost would come and fill our hearts and kindle in them the fire of His divine love. For love would excite thought and thought would quicken love. Herein lies the difference between the bodily and the spiritual appetites, that food blunts the one, and sharpens the other. The more one meditates on the things of God, the deeper in intensity [is] the desire to meditate yet more. It is not because you have prayed much that you are tired of prayer, but because you have not yet prayed enough to find what it means to pray. He whom the charity of God has touched needs no argument to prove to him that the universe contains naught besides Him worth knowing. My beloved to me and I to Him. Where the treasure is, there the heart is. If God were our rest and our portion forever, all our thoughts of the future, our cares for the present, our memories of the past would reflect His image. Our fancies by day and our dreams by night would be of Him. We would feel His presence in the solitude and see Him in every one bearing his image in the crowd. The sunshine would remind us of His sweetness and the storm of His power. We would hear His voice in the carol of the spring bird and the roar of the cataracts. In very delight we would feel the touch of His hand thrilling the cords of our heart, and in every grief hear the whisper of His lips, closer, yet closer, under the shadow of the cross.

Oh ineffable sweetness of a life so hidden with Christ in God! in which while the shadow of the cloister, of poverty, or of grief may rest upon the body, a light almost of glory streams upon the soul, in which the chambers of the heart are closed to all but the Father Son and Holy Ghost, and life is there begun which shall know increase but no end forever. Calm, sweet, holy life that knows no vicissitude of crime and repentance, no tyranny of blinding passion, no torture of envy or human respect, no wasting fever of unclean desire enslaving the will, no humiliating delusion of self love, but steady brightness, joyous light.

This, beloved friends, did we but know it, is the true life of the soul. The exterior life of action, of struggling, scheming, overcoming opposition, that the world calls life is but by play at best, but oftner the aimless tossing about of the soul in frenzy.

This is eternal life, that they know Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

6 - A Good Thought

006.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, June 2*, 1854 (2)

A Good Thought.

How full of expression is that scriptural comparison of this life to the "dream of one rising!" When one rises from uneasy sleep and sees in the morning light the familiar objects of his bed chamber, he is astonished to find that the seas he has traversed, the friends he has met, the perils encountered, the triumphs achieved, the years of vicissitude and excitement he has lived through, were all a dream--that he was not out of his own room all the time! So to him who casts off as the "drapery of a couch," this fleshly habitation, the cold light of eternity's morning will show the goods he has struggled after, the evils he has feared, to have been the goods and evils of a dream, borrowing, the one their sweetness, the other their terror, from the dreamer's fancy. Let any person, be he ever so old, call to his mind, one by one, the years of his past life--the joys that have thrilled his heart, the pangs that have wrung it, the enterprises that engaged him, whether accomplished or thwarted, his triumphs and his humiliations--and tell, if he can, the difference between *them*, and the goods and evils he has dreamed. There is none. Both are as if they had never been. Who, for the sake of *having dreamed* a pleasant dream, would trifle away his time, or exert a tittle of his energies? No one. Who then, to gain the goods or to avoid the evils of this life, would swerve one hair's breadth to the right hand or to the left, from the path that leads to the certain enjoyment of enduring, unchangeable good?

**The issue of Saturday, June 3, is incorrectly labeled June 2.*

007.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, March 3, 1855

What Shadows we Pursue!

The world is always busy. If one were to sail, as Bryant fancied, on a summer cloud around the globe, he would see beneath him, amid all the varieties of nation, government, religious creed, color, and local customs, a common turmoil, an universal agitation. The great ocean of human life, like the great ocean of salt water, is ever heaving, and undulating, and plashing so that existence is almost synonymous with activity. Yet this activity, so varied in its objects and its manifestations, is, in the enterprises it has for its scope, the same in nearly all. Only to those engaged in its pursuits and attached to its projects, does the world present any variety; to the uninterested spectator there appears a dull sameness in all the exhibitions of human

7 - What Shadows we Pursue!

activity. Commerce, filling the mart with din and brightening the wide desert of the ocean with white sails--politics, with its ceaseless debating, scheming, diplomatizing--science, employing thousands in travelling, investigating, writing, reading, literature, art, trades, professions, in the actual world, have one and the same scope--are but a multitude of paths converging in a single point. That scope is not the one prescribed by reason as the one fit for the aim of a rational being, but a low and grovelling one, the gratification of passion. "All that is in the world,"--its energy, its enterprises, its systems, its poetry, its art, its enthusiasm,--"is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

Look through the entire world, and see whether "there is any one wise, any one seeking God." You will find that all have gone astray. God is above enthroned in His immensity, rolling the stars on their vast orbits, and guiding them through space by His almighty will with unflinching precision, overshadowing with His presence all His creatures and preserving them in being, and these pursuits of the world ignore His existence. There is nothing in politics, in human science, in commerce, in arts, in literature, in trade, that would not be there, were there no God in the universe. Outside of the Catholic Church, and of those circles in which traditions of its faith and spirit are still preserved, there is nothing thought about, or aimed at, or struggled after, that would not be thought about, and aimed at, and struggled after the same, were creation the effect, and life the sport, of chance. "There is none that understands, none that seeks God." What shadows we pursue! In a few years we shall be dead, and another generation shall take our place on the earth. That generation will die, and another succeed: then another, and another, until one day the earth will be suddenly blotted out and "the heavens rolled up as a scroll." And we shall be *living* all the time--we shall come from that other world of delight or of despair, to look upon the wreck of our commerce, arts, manufactures, sciences, systems, empires, republics, and to reflect that, now the world is burned up, we begin to live our unchanging life. There will be bitterness then in the manner in which, surveying the ashes of the earth that once so occupied us, we will exclaim, what shadows we pursue!

What shadows we pursue! Wealth that can never enrich us, pleasure that wrings the heart with sorrow, power that but enslaves us, dignity that cannot ennoble us, glory that covers us with ignominy,--these, in the darkness of our hearts, we seek and gain, and loathe and seek once more!

Even with the light of Catholic faith beaming on us, with the strength of the sacraments invigorating us, we often lose sight of our true end, and err in our judgments of the goods and evils of life; and often with us, as with the world, true philosophy and sober wisdom are scouted as fanaticism!

What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!

008.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, March 24, 1855

The River of Life.

However trite, the common metaphor, by which life is called a river, is very appropriate and beautiful.

The life of worldly men, politicians, commercial men, pleasure-hunters, and the like, is a shallow river, that runs babbling noisily along in its rough bed, now riding on some elevation of momentary good fortune, and plunging straight-way down the other side, now recoiling foamily from some rock of disappointment, now whirling in some eddy of hope and fear, now standing lazily still to gather the scum and filth of sensuality,--a succession of elations and depressions of hopes and fears of activity and *ennui*, alike shallow and uncalled for.

The life of the Christian is a deep river of sweet and limpid water that glides noiselessly along in its smooth channel, ever placid and uniform. A sunlight not of earth plays ever on its surface and lights up its transparent depths, as it journeys on amid trees of celestial growth, and flowers of brighter hue, than the lost Eden's. The winds of temporal adversity may ruffle, sometimes, that tranquil surface, but they never can disturb those quiet depths. The sunshine of temporal prosperity playing on it, is paled and lost in that brighter sunshine that beams there even through the clouds of woe and trial.

The worldling's stream of life dashes and foams on, until it reaches the plunge into the deep of eternity; the good man's glides noiselessly on, and at last mingles its waters without a ruffle into the ocean of divine life, towards which it ever flowed.

009.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, February 16, 1861

Flippancy in Religion.

Upon a man's religion hangs his eternal destiny. His religious belief lays down for him truly or falsely what is his end, and how he is to attain it. Now, "eternal destiny," is a very serious phrase to every man. It expresses more than liberty, honor, wealth, health or life. For if he is enslaved, death will unfetter him; if dishonored, self-respect may sustain him, or time vindicate him; if poor, fortune may change, and competence return; if sick, he may be healed, if dead he, may have peace. But if he blunders in the business of his eternal destiny, there is no remedy for the mistake--no alleviation for the evil, which comes upon him crushing, overwhelming, enduring, unchangeable.

In this business, no caution can be too timid, no industry too untiring, no amount

9 - Flippancy in Religion

of study and consultation excessive. Yet the enlightened public of the self-governing, all-reforming nineteenth century insist upon less attention being paid to this than to any other affair. What is wise in other enterprises, is folly in the greatest of all. No man buys a railroad ticket without knowing where the train goes; but in the journey of life, one pays any conductor who will let him sit still. No one starts on a journey through a wilderness, without inquiring the road: yet each one assumes the office of guiding himself through the wilderness of this world. When a man has the cholic, he sends for a doctor; but when his soul is sick with guilt, he says every man should be his own physician. Where the stake is the price of a pair of boots, he consults a lawyer; but he risks his soul without asking advice from any one.

Nay not only is he able to guide himself, but he is also ready to guide others. You may meet with thousands among us who will frankly confess that they do not know how to make a pair of shoes, or cut out a vest, to write a deed, or compound a purge, to mix pie-crust or carve a goose; but you will meet no one who is not ready to give you his views on the Trinity, original sin, the Sacraments, eternal punishments. Not that his knowledge of these things exceeds his familiarity with cookery, and tailoring; but simply that, in these you have no means of convicting him of ignorance, and he considers himself as nearly right as any body. In the time of Horace every body wrote--learned or unlearned; in our times every body dogmatizes with all the earnestness of a prophet, the self confidence of an Apostle. The amount of absurdities, contradictions, crudities, puerilities, blasphemies, printed in this country is frightful. Yet people who would hang a quack for jeopardizing human life, and tar and feather a pettifogger for risking liberty or property, see nothing reprehensible, in the presumptuous dogmatism.

Is not this a free country? Yea verily the freest in the world. But no man has a right to do, or talk or write or publish wrong: to pretend to know what he does not know, to teach what he has not studied, or to be an imposter in any manner whatsoever. No man has a right to do all that he may do without danger of fine and imprisonment. There is a tribunal before which we must render an account for every word we speak; and we fear that before this tribunal our enlightened age will have to lose its self conceit. Religion is worth all our study or none; it must be the sole guide of life or it is no guide at all. It is not a trinket to be dickered for with any vagabond peddler of pinchbeck jewelry--but a pearl of great price which a man must purchase at the cost of all he owns. Were the enlightenment of the age true wisdom, there would be no need of argument to set forth this point. The eternal interests of men would be confessedly paramount, and flippancy in religious matters would be unknown.

010.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, October 19, 1861

The Sense of Dependence.

It is very hard for the human heart to attain to an habitual appreciation of its dependence on God. We call Him our master, our sovereign; and profess to adore Him. We give him the homage of our being and life, and protest that we have no other end on earth but to do His will. Yet too often our words are empty sound and our protestations of devotion far beyond even our dreams of practice. No one can easily understand that he is not his own, that the clay of which he is compounded is no whit better than that he treads upon, except for the purposes of the Potter who shaped *his* into the human, rather than into some other form. Every one has a natural inclination not to regard himself as belonging to another, but rather to look upon all other things as belonging to him. High or low, each man is to himself the pivot round which the universe revolves, without whom night and day, spring and summer, would be incomplete and meaningless. Hence those who make God their portion, and in all their actions, look upon themselves as stewards, and not masters, are few--and without companionship in the world.

We *are* stewards whatever we may think ourselves. We are dependent on God and accountable to Him for every act and possession. He is the giver of our being, our talents, our powers, our circumstances; and to Him we must account for them rigidly, and exactly. We should renew the thought of this every day and every hour. It would teach us humility, patience, perseverance, hopefulness. It would take the sting from calumny, and blunt the arrows of misfortune. It would make us Christians.

011.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 19, 1857 (2)

"Attende Tibi."

Men are, without doubt, selfish and mercenary; yet they are intellectually as imbecile as they are morally evil-minded. What can be more to any man's interest than to "attend to himself," to mind his own business? Yet there is nothing to which they attend so little. They may seek to gratify their thousand and one caprices and passions. But, selfish as they are, their own are not the interests for which they labor.

Look at the man of business. He toils, and watches, and meditates, and denies himself, to accumulate. His house is grand and richly furnished; his children live in ease and luxury. Is it for his own interest he toils? Look at his wrinkled brow, his attenuated frame, his feeble step. He is on the verge of the grave, and the wealth of

12 - The Christian not Insensible

Cræsus could not buy for him the bodily vigor and the mental freshness of youth. His interests are already in eternity. He works for others, not for lack of self-love, but for want of understanding and self-control.

Or, again, take even the professed pleasure-seeker. He pursues self-gratification, to the loss of property, reputation, health, and peace of mind. Does he benefit himself? No. His body is not himself. *It* shall rot in the grave, but *he* shall live on, naked and miserable, for ever. He attends not to himself. He sows in the tempest of his own passions; and when the grave chills the passions, he reaps in the whirlwind of the wrath of God.

The aspirant after honor, too, seems to seek himself. He truckles, and fawns, and schemes; he throws fortune and friends, affections and tastes, to the hazard of the die. He wears out his life in turmoil, and when he is highest finds that he is but the stepping-stone to power of some one more adroit or more fortunate than himself. He is thrown aside, is forgotten, dies, is judged--and for whom has he labored?

"Attende tibi!" Your soul is your own--your destiny, your choice. Let others tread their own paths, carrying their own burthens. Do you turn away from ambition, from avarice, from sensuality, and seek by prayer and watchfulness your own interests, in the fear and love of God.

012.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, June 14, 1856

The Christian not Insensible.

To the mind of the sincere Christian, raised aloft by the habitual contemplation of his immortal destiny, of how little moment seem the excitements that are ever convulsing worldly society! He who aspires after the eternal despises all that passes with time. All we see or do, and all that others do, passes with time, except sin and virtue. Science, literature, arts, civilization, politics, commerce, are but appendages to the earth and the human race, and will perish when the earth is burned up, and the human race, classed into good and bad, shall enter into the house of its eternity. What to us now are the revolutions of the buried dynasties of Assyria, Egypt, Alexander, Rome? What do we care for the lost Etruscan arts, the broken statuary of Grecian genius, or the vanished commerce of Tyre and Sidon, Venice and Genoa? Yet these are worth as much to us as though they were present. The excitements of the present to us will soon be past, and we shall live on, eager after happiness, still.

No wonder with thoughts like these the Christian can view with indifference the battling of human passions, the clashing of human interests, adjusted by Providence into order, which morally constitutes human society.

13 - Can We Do Better?

The soul is not wild with enthusiasm, but only on the natural level of its destiny, when it looks upon all material events with as much indifference as though they were dreams.

And yet the Christian, however true to his vocation, is not insensible to human emotion. Like other men, he has his times of sadness and of delight. The events of life, while they are passing, can draw tears to his eyes and bring smiles to his lips. But he learns to disregard his own emotions, to be practically untouched by his own joys and sorrows. As the mountain lifts up its huge crest to heaven,--all the same whether the storm lowers or the sun shine plays above it,--so the Christian soul, rooted in faith, dwells as serenely on high in the darkness of tears as in the light of smiles. The Christian feels, but lays no stress upon his feelings--knowing that whatever is transitory does not cease to be valueless because it belongs to him. He feels--but he looks upon his joys and sorrows as the amusements and annoyances of his rapid journey to that "abiding habitation" where joy shall be consummated and grief forgotten.

013.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, October 26, 1861

Can We Do Better?

The doctrine of self-denial seems harsh to the untamed, inexperienced heart. Many "go away sorrowing" when they find that "to be perfect" they must "go, sell all they have, and come and follow" the crucified. How is it possible to live such a life of restraint and watchfulness? How can one always be standing in fear of sin, always waiting from one Communion to another, never giving free rein to the spirits, never loosing the soul from shackles?

We admit that a sober, chaste, regulated life has hardship in it--that it is labor to bear constantly any cross however light--that to war incessantly against sloth, anger, pride, ambition, and other vicious inclinations, is an irksome lot. But can we do better? If we give way to our passions will we escape what is hard, laborious, irksome? The world is an open book before you, reader. Look on it, and see whether those who yield to passion live in joy.

The vast majority of men are disappointed ever in their earthly hopes. They aim high and fall low. They hope much, realize little. They swarm in your alleys, in your station-houses, jails, penitentiaries--the great army of those to whom life has been a failure even in a worldly sense. And the successful themselves are not more to be envied. The ambitious man has reached the position he coveted. Is he happy? Can he give free rein to his humors, and please himself? "Uneasy is the head that wears a crown." In the glitter of his state, and the excitement of his toils, with hollow friends

14 - Ripples to the Day of Judgment

and restless enemies about, what is there that he would not exchange for the love of one honest heart, nay for a night's unbroken sleep? The avaricious man has been successful and is a millionaire. Is he free from constraint and the hard necessity of toil? Not he. If he relaxes he will lose all he has accumulated. He must watch every rise and fall of stocks, know every blight of crops, every drought, flood, fire, ship wreck, railway accident, every war and rumor of war, because he has property involved in all. How can he recreate himself when he has so much at stake? If he could forget his greed, and consult his comfort he would give it all for the light heart he had up to the time when he put money in bank.

Leave out the death-bed, and the eternity--the life of him who abandons himself to passion, is a thousand times harder than of him who abandons himself to Christ. The tumult of desire, the toil of seeking[,] the anguish of disappointment[,] the remorse of guilty success, the *ennui* if satiety, are pains compared to which the yoke of Christ is easy and His burthen light. We must suffer to get to heaven--but we must suffer more in going to hell. Fear not the way of the cross, my brother. From a distance it seems chill and forbidding, but near at hand it is sunny and full of peace. And even if it be at times hard and thorny remember that by bearing it you can do no better.

014.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, July 3, 1875

[Ripples to the Day of Judgment.]

One of the reasons commonly given by theologians for the second or General Judgment is that the effect of sin and virtue on our fellow-men may be brought to light and properly rewarded.

When a wicked man dies his sin has not done its worst. His impure example, his blasphemous and lying words, and his unjust works have set a wave of corruption in motion over the minds and hearts of his fellow-men which will cease to stir only at the last day. Therefore the last day is the one on which to make up and settle his account. In like manner a good and holy life gives a motion towards the ocean of human desires which will go on and on through the generations until the last one shall be gathered in. Therefore only in the end can a good man's work be measured.

The great heresiarchs Arius, Eutyches, Nestorius, Luther and the like are still keeping souls away from Jesus Christ. Only in the valley of Jehosaphat will the ranks of their followers be filled up and marshaled together to curse them.

So, too, the words of the Apostles have yet to go to the uttermost bounds of the habitations of men; the influence of St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Ignatius and the rest is still leavening society. They are in Heaven, but it is due to them

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

to be confronted with the millions who will have felt their power, and to receive the expression of their thanks and gratitude.

015.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 17

Similar themes are presented in Book 2 Sermon1 (item 183).

Charity and the Last Judgment

The coming of the last day, although known only to God, will be preceded by many signs in the material world. First there will be terrible earthquakes, wars, famines and pestilences, such as were never witnessed before, which shall fill society with fright and confusion. Next signs shall appear in the Heavens, the stars disappearing from their places in space and making the nights strangely and unnaturally dark. After that the sun shall be suddenly darkened and the moon will cease to give her light, leaving the nations with failing hearts, and wild foreboding, shrouded in rayless gloom. Then a fire shall break forth on the earth and, directed by God's almighty power, will run all over the earth and consume all its cities and fields, its houses and ships, its forests, its money, its merchandize, dry up its lakes and rivers, and reduce it to a heap of cinders and ashes. Then, at last, the trumpet of the Archangel shall sound, that is, the command of God will be given in the twinkling of an eye, the dead will rise each in his own body and appear in the valley. The world has been compared to a great field of death, a vast cemetery holding in its bosom the dead of a thousand generations, for every single man that walks living on its surface. This vast cemetery shall suddenly swarm with life. The ashes that were scattered ages ago shall be gathered together; bone shall be fitted to bone joint to joint, and all the generations shall live again. They shall come from the four winds of Heaven, from the sea whose angry waves buried them in storms, from the bowels of the earth in which they were swallowed by earthquakes, from the grave in the quiet churchyard in which they were laid by mourning friend, from the pit into which they were thrust on the battlefield. They of old times and they of modern times shall meet together. The king shall stand cowering by the peasant; the master will be of the same rank with the servant; the philosopher and the fool shall await their turn side by side; all the children of Adam of all colors, ranks, ages, sexes, qualities, mingled in one undistinguishable shuddering mass, shall stand together in the valley looking out with sadness on the ashes of the desolated earth, and with trembling on the shining countenance of their Judge.

Brethren, you and I will be there together in that crowd. You and I will be there

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

to witness the desolation of the world, there to see the vindication of God's Justice, the triumphant assertion of his supreme dominion over all creatures, to have recounted to our shame our evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Our eyes shall see that great multitude of men and Angels; our hearts shall sink in the presence of that awful majesty; in our flesh we shall see God. There we shall stand, how long hence I know not, but one day, together, on the verge of two lives, the one finished, the other commencing, stripped of our wealth, learning, dignity, reputation, leveled with the poorest, having brought with us through the wrecks of the burnt up world only the burthen of the deeds we have done in the body, awaiting the decision that will settle, without appeal, whether we shall go to the left hand into an eternity of pain or the right into an eternity of rest. There we shall stand, in the valley, Hell open beneath us, Heaven glowing with light above us, on either side of us the unnumerable multitude of men and angels, before us in midair the Cross planted, the Throne set, the Book open, and the great God in the garments of his awful glory seated to judge.

In that day of wrath, of calamity, of confusion and terror, what, beloved friends, shall we have to console us a little in our unutterable agony, to prevent us from crying out in our shame and remorse, to the mountains to fall upon us and to the hills to cover us and hide us from the awful presence of the majesty our sins have outraged? I fear we shall find no consolation in the memory of our lives on earth. From the first dawning of the light of reason in our souls, to the end of our lives, we ought to have spent all our time and talents, our influence, every thought, word, action in giving glory to God. The knowledge of this standard of our duties will be written on our souls then in characters of light. And as we remember all the days of our life on earth, days in which we forgot God, to think only of money and pleasure and reputation, our time lost in vanity, our actions vicious, our words profane, obscene and idle, our thoughts selfish, vain, ambitious, impure, and contrast what we have done with what we should have done, remorse will seize upon us and terror will overwhelm us. Alas, who, in the confidence of innocence, shall face the living God, in whose eyes even the angels are not pure? In what then may we hope? Only in the cross, only in the mercy of Jesus Christ. How shall we cling to the Cross, how shall we hope in the mercy? How can we effect, that from his awful eye will descend on us the beam of pity and not the lightning flash of wrath? Ah! if that eye in singling us out in the midst of the multitude can recognize in us one who in the days of his sorrow on earth comforted, who in the person of his poor fed him, clothed him, visited him, one who used the perished treasures of earth for his on honor and according to his will, its sternness will relax and a smile of benignity like a gleam of sunshine darting athwart an angry winter sky will illuminate his divine countenance.

He has declared long ago that Charity to the poor was the test virtue by which

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

He was going to judge all men. He has told us that those who are kind to the poor, who feed them when they are hungry, clothe them when they are naked, visit them when they are sick and in prison, shall be taken by him into a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and that on the contrary, those who have been hard hearted to the poor shall be driven from his presence, accursed, into everlasting fire.

Beloved friends, we have lost our baptismal innocence and our only chance of salvation is in sincere repentance. But sincere penance [repentance] cannot exist where there is no charity. We cannot be forgiven much unless we love much. Our salvation therefore depends upon our right performance of the duty of Charity.

Let not any of you be startled at hearing charity called a duty. Let no one wonder that I assert that in contributing today, bountifully, for the relief of the poor of your city, he is not doing an unnecessary act of generosity but one of strict obligation, and that if he refused to give out of his abundance, he would violate the law of God.

Duty is, unfortunately, a cold, harsh word and I fear that in appealing to your charity on the ground of obligation I do no service to the poor who are waiting for the returns of your generosity. I fear that many cares for the future, many pretexts of worldly prudence may arise in your mind to withhold the gift, which cares and pretexts would have been forgotten, in the glow of awakened tenderness, and excited compassion. Still, sorry as I am that the poor should suffer through my want of prudence and tact, I should be sorrier still to have you give anything under the false impression that you were doing thereby a work of supererogation, an action with you discretionary, and even profusion. Sorry as I should be if the widow and the orphan must sigh unrelieved, the sick still pine for want of nourishment, attendance, or medicine, I would regret much more if through any neglect or human respect of mine you should go to the Judgment Seat to learn that alms-giving is a duty.

There, according to the testimony of our Lord in His Gospel, some shall be told to go away into everlasting fire, for not having given help and consolation to the distressed and miserable. Now the most merciful and just Lord cannot be capable of punishing with eternal fire, any one for not having done that which he was not bound to do. It is certain therefore that to give alms is a duty, and to refuse them to the needy is a crime.

If it were not, how could the Providence of God be vindicated, how could the equality of men be established, the hopeless misery in which some by birth, sickness, misfortune, circumstances beyond their control, be reconciled with the equal love God bears to all? We are told by our religion that we are all children of the same Father, bought by the blood of the same Redeemer, stewards of the same Master as we shall be culprits before the same Judge. From the fact, therefore, that some are born poor and needy and others are given much worldly goods, it follows necessarily that the rich

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

must practice liberality towards the poor, must relieve out of their abundance the wants of the indigent. In the world no family is called poor, until all the members of it are reduced to distress. So the great human family is never poor so long as there are rich people, who might relieve the wants of the poor out of their superabundance. The bond of brotherhood has to be cemented by the spontaneous care which the strong and the wealthy exercise over the feeble and poverty-stricken.

I do not advocate agrarian laws and a leveling of the rich in order to establish fraternity among men. That fraternity must begin in the heart, and not on the statute book. It must be the fruit of faith, and not the effect of robbery and disorder. The world has mistaken its character and is searching for it now in reforms and benevolent projects for people away off, instead of looking for it in the hearts of men for miseries at home.

Our age is emphatically an age of inconsistency and hypocrisy, of magnificent theories and revolting practice. The world has borrowed the doctrines of the Church, and taking away from them the spirit of Charity, has made them its own, retaining at the same [time] in practice all its native selfishness and meanness. Hence in theory the world proclaims the equality of men, in practice it crouches to and fawns upon the rich and powerful, and avoiding the poor, tells them roughly to remain within their own sphere.

In theory, the world [has] not only Charity but affection and veneration for the laboring classes; in practice it forces those laboring classes to toil on from year's end to year's end, from daylight till long after dark, in damp mines, in suffocating furnace rooms, and pest laden factories, for a pittance that scarcely supports life.

In theory the world weeps over and appoints committees to investigate into the grievances of the needy and distressed, in practice it treats the pauper as a criminal and considers itself over-bountiful in providing him prison room in a poor house. In theory the world denounces every species of servitude as injustice and sin, and is affected to tears in thinking of the romantic sufferings of the Negro race; in practice, the great ones of the world exact a servitude from their dependents, as abject as the wildest freak of tyranny could invent. In theory, the world advocates fraternity and favors socialism; in practice it pays no alms but in the shape of taxes, it sends Jesus Christ cold and hungry and naked from the door, and afterward gives him a forced relief through the hands of the tax collector. Yet even the world was not always thus mean and vile and hypocritical. There have been times in which the Catholic Church was the guardian of the poor and the dispenser of every nation's charity. In the times called the Dark Ages, public opinion on this subject was but the expression of religion. Then by the side of the noble cathedral in which the thoughts of men were raised up to Heaven by the grandeur of the edifice, the vast hospital was seen and it was loved because its inmates

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

were the poor, and there was no contumely, no rich man's mockery to pain the hearts of its beneficiaries, because he who entered saw in the object which moved his pity another Christ and all who ministered thought they were sympathizing with the Redeemer. And though these holy ages have gone by, for a time to teach us the folly and tyranny of human wisdom, we have yet surviving in us the spark of faith, to light in us the flame of charity. We ought to feel a sympathy uniting us to the older time and as we pass through the ruins of other ages, where we can still trace amongst them memorials which enable us to conjecture, though fancy cannot equal the reality, the grandeur of the structure ere the Spoiler in his vain attempts to exterminate the builders, expended his rage on the consecrated places which virtue has hallowed as her own and to which religion still points with sorrowing but proud affection; we can see that enough survives to animate us to the duty of Catholic charity, to call upon us to forget the world and to imitate the zeal of our ancestors; and to you my friends, a voice comes forth from the buried past, a voice that pierces through the silence of centuries, a voice which is heard in every Catholic heart today, calling upon you to give glorious testimony to the Charity which wrought such miracles of old, which hung such garlands on the shrines of faith, which covered with perennial flowers the institutions of religion, flowers whose fragrance is not yet extinct and whose beauty casts a glow of brightness over the dark pages of European history. You are here, from many climes; remember now, what the land of your forefathers did for the poor. Call to mind the monastery, the hospital though now decayed at which the traveler was refreshed, the sick restored to health; wander in spirit by the fountains where the poor were healed by the saints whose memory has consecrated their waters, and to which the pious pilgrim yet resorts, and ask yourselves if with all these endearing recollections thronging upon you, you would not incur a fearful guilt, by an uncatholic heartlessness, if you did not exclaim, by the memory of those times of faith, by the tie of brotherhood that associates me with the men whose Charity originated those might institutions, gorgeous in their very ruins, I will forget my selfishness, my cares for the future today, and when I give with joy my offering to the poor I will think that faith has conquered, that the monastery is restored, that the poor are again welcomed to the gates of the Abbey, that all live again in beauty as in the middle ages, that the vision of sorrow is passed away forever, that the ruins are replaced by a thousand altars sparkling in peace and clouded with incense; and I will exult in the thought that the glory, of which my Charity makes me a participant, is a glory that shall not pale even in the presence of the Sun of Justice, but like the light of morning shall go on from brightness to brightness unfading forever!

Those were times in which, whatever be said of their political institutions, the doctrine of the equality of men, of the fraternity of our race was not expressed in cold soulless words, written in pamphlets and newspapers, but in the hearts of men; the

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

sentiment of respect for and sympathy with the poor was not the hollow catchword of the demagogue, the sounding brass on which the sanguinary Revolutionist beats the shrill tocsin of civil war, and robbery and arson, but the deep, sincere, heart-felt feeling of faith that made the rich sacrifice their possessions to relieve the poor, that caused kings and popes to doff their purple and wash the feet of the penniless travelers and to minister to the wants of the children of poverty as they would have ministered to the wants of Christ.

In those days men showed their affection for the poor not by getting them to subscribe revolutionary and Reformation funds, but by giving them money and service that cost sacrifice and did not win popularity.

Those were times when Charity was Charity, when it came pure from selfish taint gushing from the depths of the faithful self-sacrificing heart that made the relief of the poor not a measure of political economy, not a suggestion of public decency, but a sacred duty, enjoined by Christ, fraught with the promise of eternal rewards.

Those times, beloved friends, will rise in judgment against us, if recreant to the spirit we acquiesce in the world's doctrine, that not God but fortune has given us an abundance of worldly goods, that we can therefore spend what we possess in our pleasures, our luxuries, the gratification of our caprices, that what we bestow on the poor is a gratuitous bounty to be rid of disagreeable importunities, or to be in fashion with our charitable neighbors.

If, forgetful of the teachings of faith, we spend our superabundance in building elegant houses, in purchasing costly furniture, in dressing richly and faring sumptuously, leaving meanwhile the poor to pine in hunger and want, we shall be confronted face to face with thousands of those who have given not only their superfluity but their all to the poor, and be covered with shame in their presence.

If, imbued with the maxims of a shallow conventionalism, we imagine that it does not become us to be seen in the dwelling of the poor, or that our nerves will not bear the shock of contact with the diseased and suffering in filthy garrets and dark cellars, we shall be undeceived with remorse, in the day of Judgment, by a host of men and women, more highly born and more delicately nurtured than we, who will step forth from the crowd and point to the steps they have taken, the sacrifices they have made, the disgusts endured, the wounds they have dressed, the sicknesses they have nursed, now shining like gems in the crown that shall bind their brows forever, to demonstrate to us that the pretext on which we indulged our self-love and sloth was vain and frivolous.

If we take up with the common idea of the day and consider the demands of charity satisfied by poor-houses and city hospitals, where the needy are imprisoned and made to feel at every step that they are a burthen on the public; if we persuade

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

ourselves that this cold ministration to material want, accompanied as it is with the crushing of self respect and the annihilation of every delicate sensibility, is all that is required of us, the founders of abbey, the humble laborers in the hospitals and monasteries, the pious confraternities, the popes and cardinals and kings, who have washed the feet of the poor and served the table at which beggars were eating, the noble men and women who like St. Elizabeth of Hungary and St. Camillus of Lellis, who spent their lives in working among the sick and destitute, will rise up in long array against us and exclaim, "So the heartless philanthropy that gives prison hospitality to the penniless traveler, sending him up as a vagrant, that from the luxurious parlor pays a pittance for a hireling to nurse the sick, that deals grudgingly out the contumelious bread bought by taxation, is not enough to satisfy the heart that burns with the Charity of Jesus Christ and that Charity pants to be among the poor, to nurse them console them, feel for them, bear with them, give them, nay sacrifice all for them for the sake of their Redeemer and lover Jesus Christ," and as they so speak, how will the memory of sensual, selfish, useless, frivolous lives, which despite of the teaching of your faith we led, fill us with sorrow and remorse!

Regard therefore almsgiving as a duty and whatever you give, give it not with the thought that you are performing an unnecessary work that shows your generosity to men and ensures you acceptance with God, but in the full firm Catholic belief that in giving to the poor you are but rendering to Jesus Christ what is His own, that even after you have given, you are still but unprofitable servants, having done that which it was your duty to do, that you are still far from perfection, not having as yet gone and sold all you had and given it to the poor, to follow Jesus.

But while you give in a spirit of humility, as the fulfillment of your duty in imitation of your glorious Catholic ancestors, I would not have you, beloved friends, ignorant or forgetful of the great reward that awaits your alms. It is precisely the fulfillment of duties that our Lord delights to reward. I would have you remember with consolation the kingdom prepared from the foundations of the world, for those who practice the corporal works of mercy, and be animated by the thought of the last day to fulfill this duty with joy.

Every good work we perform has annexed to it the promise of eternal life. Every prayer we breathe, every step we take for the love of God, every word we utter that suggests good thoughts in others is set down by the record and in the Judgment day will appear before us in sweet consoling array; but foremost in the ranks of these will appear our works of mercy to the poor. They shall sparkle before us like gems about to be set by our Divine Judge in the crown of glory that shall bind our brows forever, its bright and most splendid ornaments, both because Charity is the virtue dearest to the heart of God and because Charity, like light, piercing and pervading all, makes ours the

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

merits of others.

Who that has reflected but for a moment on the ways of God as revealed by religion does not know that the virtue he most prizes is Charity? "I came to put fire on the earth," said Jesus Christ; and the fire He came on the earth to enkindle was the fire of Charity. He was putting fire on the earth, when He was born in stable for love of us, when He lived a life of mortification and poverty among the poor, teaching them, healing their sick, raising their dead to life, whispering hope of a better life, guiding them to obtain it. He was kindling fire on the earth when, stripped of this world's goods, of His honor among men, in the midst of the buffets and mocking of savage enemies, He was nailed to the cross and lifted up to die for love of us.

The fire was kindled there on Calvary and it burned in the hearts of his Apostles and Martyrs, when they braved the wit of philosophers, the satire of poets, the cruelty of emperors, the fury of mobs, to die for His name; it burned in the hearts of his Saints and confessors ever since, and its holy flame, flashing and gleaming through the thick darkness of the world's impurities, from a few holy hearts, is all that the earth now contains to delight the eye of God, is all that stays the outstretched arm of his Justice, and prevents him from permitting the awful Judgment to begin today.

Charity therefore being the virtue dearest to the heart of God, with what joy will he welcome to his bosom those who upon earth have practiced it with zeal.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father," He will say to those who according to their mercy have always honored the unfortunate. "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. It was not in vain that I taught you the precept of charity by word and by example; it was not in vain that I told you to consider the poor as our brethren, entitled to your respect and veneration on the very grounds for which the world avoids them. It was not in vain that my ministers repeated to you to look upon the goods of this world as given to you to buy the treasures in heaven, through the hands of the poor. It was not in vain that I purchased for you, at the price of my Blood, the grace to be lifted up far above all, all worldly considerations and to love your neighbor as yourself with a supernatural love. You have done well. Fear not. There is no judgment for you but only heaven. Put off your anxiety, raise up your eyes, and see beyond those ranks upon ranks of holy angels, shining in the light of Heaven. Those heavenly palaces, those houses not made with hands, in those fields of brightness afar, there amid those floods of glory will dazzle your eyes, where there is no poverty, nor wrong, nor suffering, nor temptation, nor want, nor sadness, nor weeping, there in peace, in tranquility, in security, inebriated with torrents of delight, every desire content, every craving satisfied in the midst of the citizens of Heaven, you shall reign forever. Come ye blessed of my Father etc. etc."

Oh my brethren, shall we not do today what is necessary in order that these

15 - Charity and the Last Judgment

consoling words be addressed to us, in that awful day? Jesus Christ is cold and hungry and sick and in prison in our midst today. He is cold and hungry in the person of the poor mendicant just from the old country, whose ragged and filthy [clothes] scarcely cover, much less protect his shivering limbs and who cannot stop long enough to warm himself in any respectable shop lest customers should be driven away by disgust at this appearance. He is hungry in the person of the poor widow with her little ones who, wan with fasting and haggard with vigils, after having sold the last trinket that reminded her of happier days to buy food for her orphans, is at last reduced to the necessity of applying for relief to the priests, or to the sisters. He is sick in the person of those who are lying parched with fever in garrets and cellars, more consumed by neglect and bad air, than by disease, [who] are waiting to see if after today the Bishop will not be able to help to buy medicine and restore them to health.

Jesus Christ is in our midst in the person of the abandoned, desolate poor, cold, hungry, sick. Shall we clothe him, feed him, nurse him into health?

Beloved friends it is for you to answer by the generosity with which you contribute to the collection for their support, this day.

Nor is the reward which Jesus Christ holds out to those who are kind to His poor, in direct recompense, the only fruit of generosity to the distressed. Charity stands not like other good works alone, upon its own merits.

It is a queen among virtues; and like a queen must always have its train. Charity diffused through the heart and poured out upon our neighbors returns to us freighted with all the holiness of other [?]. Like the bee among the opening flowers of spring, it contrives to gather sweet from every rose and make honey in every bower, though hedged with thorns. Whatever there is good in the heart is evoked by gratitude. And when we give, there is a God bless you that wells up from the heart, so fervent that even though it be the first prayer for years, it is of priceless value. We are saved by prayer; and as our prayers are short and imperfect and full of distractions, oh how much of our salvation may depend upon the prayers of others.

Our charity for the poor will go to purchase for us petitions more fervent, more earnest, than any we can offer.