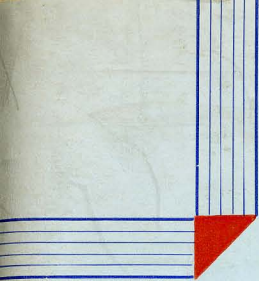


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*The*  
*Happiness of*  
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*LAITH*

by

DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.



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HAPPINESS  
OF FAITH

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THE QUEEN'S WORK

3742 West Pine Blvd.

St. Louis 8, Mo.

THE  
HAPPINESS  
OF FAITH

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John Francis Noll, D.D.

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## *Happiness for an Unhappy World*

THE greatest and most consuming hunger in the heart of man is of course the hunger for happiness.

Infinitely varied as are its manifestations, the hunger itself is man's most universal experience. The quiet student hidden away among his beloved books within a soundproof library, the triumphant hero riding down the Broadways of the world under a shower of flowers and ticker tape; the collector avariciously gloating over a bit of Ming pottery; the explorer stumbling fever-ridden and exhausted upon the banks of that unknown river rolling lazily through tropical jungles; the ambitious woman plotting to thrust her name onto the social register; the scientist suddenly seeing the success of an experiment that proves his theory; the businessman studying that balance sheet upon which is written the record of his first million; the disinterested lover of mankind tearing down the rotten tenements and replacing them with decent homes for decent families; the artist whose canvas begins to glow with a beauty he has sought to capture during long years; the general watching the lines of the enemy sway into disorder; the athlete straining every nerve in a last victorious burst of strength; the sinner hotly pursuing some new illusive lust; the saint feeling the nearness of the Eucharistic Christ — all, all mankind in its noblest and queerest moments, in its limitless activities and its most secret seclusions, its blackest vices and its richest heroisms are driven on by that relentless hunger for happiness.

There is not in the human heart a hunger that God did not mean to satisfy. The simple hunger for food He satisfies in uncounted ways. Orchards bending under their rich and fragrant fruits; the fields in green and golden harvest; herds wandering peacefully upon the hillsides; fish in endless variety in the sea; roots resting succulently within rich loam; man's astonishing resourcefulness to convert God's gracious larder into tempting combinations—these are the ways by

which God satisfies man's basic hunger of body. God gave to each beast one or two or a scant half-dozen objects for its appetite; He gave to His sons and daughters food in boundless varieties of form and color, fragrance and flavor.

In the heart of man is a hunger for the love and companionship of his fellows. God gave that hunger; God satisfies it in extraordinary and various ways. There is the passing moment of casual acquaintanceship as one catches in the person met but once and never seen again a flash of responsive wisdom or a quick glow of sympathetic understanding. There is the warm and reassuring friendship that binds man to man in comradeship of strength and the pooling of resources. Women frequently find in other women depths of understanding and tenderness that ease the loneliness of women's hearts. Children play together in easy friendship. Youth grows stronger in the company of youth. The deep love of a man and a woman for each other is not only the foundation of home and children but the inspiration for the world's fairest poetry and much of its noblest ambitioning. And the God who gave the appetite for human friendships and loves supplied the multiplied fulfillments.

The mind hungers for truth; and despite the Pilates of every age there is truth to satisfy that hunger. The eye seeks beauty, and beauty is everywhere. The throat grows parched and thirsting, and God pours out His inexhaustible waterfalls and springs and the red blood of His vineyards.

If then these appetites and hungers are so completely and adequately satisfied, need man despair of finding God's satisfaction for that greatest of human hungers, happiness? The means for that satisfaction must exist. The hunger must be satisfied by the objects that God has destined for that purpose. Naturally one does not quench a burning throat with dried grass. Hunger is not satisfied with wool or pebbles. The hunger of the mind is not content with lies. The questing eye is not satisfied with ugliness. Happiness cannot be found except where God has placed it. And for our great consolation God has placed that happiness within the reach of all of us.

Today more than ever before is it important that men and women persuade themselves of the possibility and divine

certainty of happiness. We need not be reminded that we are emerging less from the winter of the year into its brightly promising spring than from the shadows of one of the most despairful periods of experience into what we hope is the beginning of happier days.

For the whole idea of unhappiness is senseless. Man is no Tantalus tortured by a pagan god who gives water that constantly eludes the creature's parched lips. God gave us this appetite for happiness, and God means to satisfy it—perfectly in eternity, adequately even in this life.

The silly little heroine of your latest stupid novel, echoing without understanding the heroes and heroines of Ibsen and Shaw, when she cries her apparently rebel cry, "I must find happiness! I have a right to happiness!" is speaking only out of the great hunger of all mankind. Of course she has that right. But the stupid, shadowy, dangerous pathway down which she runs will not satisfy that hunger. She will find happiness only if she follows the path clearly marked by a God made man for love of man's happiness.

In the following chapters we shall be talking happiness, you and I. I shall be talking it as a member of that Church which not only recognizes the inherent human hunger for happiness but acknowledges that hunger and proclaims God's eagerness to satisfy it.

Among the many strange paradoxes of Christianity is the fact that the very Church which preaches penance sings the world's most joyous Alleluias. While it frankly calls the earth a "vale of tears," it offers to that vale of tears the only philosophy of living that is humanly satisfactory, divinely joyous. The very clearness with which it faces the facts of sin and disease, failure and death makes it see clearly the only solutions for those problems.

The Catholic Church offers the sinner the happiness of repentance. It brings to the side of the sick the comforting presence of the divine physician. It gives the failure the certainty of a success that depends upon none of those silly accidents of birth or opportunity that make for wealth, power, or artistic achievement, a success that depends on God's desire for man's eternal happiness and man's grace-strengthened will. To the dying the Church brings the ennobling certainty that the grave swallows only those

worthless trifles with which men clutter their lives; for those who have believed in God, the grave is the gateway swinging into God's divine presence.

The Catholic Church today is the most joyous, hopeful, optimistic organization in the world. It believes in man because it believes in the God who Fathered him. It gives to man that reassuring hope that was born strangely enough in a happiness that followed the world's greatest sorrow.

For the joy of the Catholic is founded on the sorrow of his God. The happiness of the Catholic came into the world in the lightning and thunder and earth-quaking that shook the cross of a dying Savior. At the moment of His death the incarnate God brought back for men their lost right to happiness. In the agony of God man was assured of joy. The blood shed by divinity won the forgiveness needed by crime-laden humanity. God died in torture that happiness might flood the earth.

Glancing swiftly from the cross, the Catholic sees all this verified. The lurid red of Good Friday is with hardly perceptible break transmuted into the glorious pinks and scarlets of Easter's dawn. The broken body of God made man rises in a triumph of happiness that shall know no end. The horror of death is swallowed up in victory. In the happiness of the risen Christ the Catholic reads the happiness that in measure will one day be his.

If the sadness and pain of Holy Week lasted scarcely three brief days, the happiness of Easter is forever. If for a moment those who hated goodness and happiness seemed to crush both under their blows, goodness and happiness came flooding back with the returning soul of the risen Savior.

And if the Church takes its members down into the forty days of penitential Lent, it lifts them to long months of happiness in the certain faith and convincing hope of a God triumphant over the very things that make for man's unhappiness—sin and death.

Ours is a happy faith. And in the following chapters we shall study the happiness, which is ours for the asking. We shall find it down pathways often marked with the bloody feet of a Savior, who tread the way of the cross in order that we might have the happy glow of Easter throughout our life here and for all eternity.

## II

### *Is Religion Gloomy?*

IS RELIGION correctly symbolized by that long-faced, joyless, grim-mannered creature of caricature in frayed black frock coat, tall unbrushed hat, hand raised in endless prohibitions and denials? Is religion something that stands between a man and the sweetness and joy of life?

So you might think if you believed its enemies. And its enemies have been as diversified as the decadent Nero of Roman days, the rebellious Voltaire of the eighteenth century, Swinburne palely sighing for the pleasures of the flesh, Nietzsche visioning happiness in that incredible monster superman trampling under the steel hoofs of his war charger the bodies of his prostrate foes.

By its very definition a caricature is not a picture; it is a deliberate distortion. And one does not go to enemies for a true and accurate likeness. Too many of those who call religion gloomy have learned that word, not from men who have found in religion the deepest peace and most lasting happiness, but from men like Nero, who saw rising Christianity coming between him and his bestial desires, or like Voltaire, who thought religion an infamous thing because it asked of him a little loyalty to God and country, to truth and the claims of friends.

It is true that there have been religions that seemed to hate the happiness of the human heart. Puritanism served a scowling God, branded laughter as sin and simple joys as evil, and pulled out with gauntleted fist even the innocent Maypole of Catholic days. Manichaeism insisted that all the beautiful things of the world were the handiwork of the evil spirit—even though the Manichees called themselves followers of the Christ who loved every flower upon the hillside and sought the love light in human eyes. When the Catholic Church saw that within its fold Jansenism was making a creed of despair and a cult of gentle melancholy, it branded

the Jansenists as heretics untrue to the loving and joy-bringing Savior.

No wonder that Puritanism died of sheer ugliness, as Jansenism died of lovelessness. No wonder too that the churches which in the sixteenth century began to affect an ugly ritual in plain, whitewashed meetinghouses (where dreary prohibitions were more important than hopeless creeds based on convictions of man's depraved and corrupt will and his powerlessness against evil and of souls predestined to eternal misery) have bit by bit readopted beautiful services and the divine optimism of the Church from which they separated.

When I answer the question, "*Is Religion Gloomy?*" I am answering for the Catholic Church, which serves a smiling God. I speak for a Church of deep happiness and spontaneous joy. It is filled, that Church, with the light of burning tapers and the voices of great choirs echoing in human fashion the endless music of heaven. Its sweet-smelling incense, beloved even by the non-Catholic novelist, rises in clouds throughout the most majestic buildings ever reared by man, clouds shot through with the glorious colors of stained glass and mellowing the too brilliant gold of Fra Angelico's pictured saints and the smiling faces of Raphael's Madonnas. Its flower-covered altars are more beautiful than the poetic shrines of pagan Greece. Its priests are clad in the world's most graceful garments, and they serve God in the stately dance that is the Catholic ritual, with song on their lips and joy in their hearts.

All this external joy which fills each service of the Church is merely symbol of the joy that is in the heart of every Catholic who understands his faith and has tasted its endlessly flowing springs of peace and happiness.

Fortunately for the world the Catholic religion has its stern prohibitions too. Its laws stand between men and a host of ugly things. I say fortunately for the world, for the things from which these laws hold mankind back are the very things that poison man's joy and rob him of his real happiness, things which Christ forbade, not because He was a stern, repellent lawgiver, but because He is the divine lover of mankind. Cruelty was all about Him; He forbade it



though the tyrannous and the powerful hated His getting between them and the oppressed. Lust had ruined homes, lowered the hearts of women to the casual passion of men, made marriage almost the chance mating of beasts, and deprived children of dignity and sweetness and innocence. He was stern in His denunciation of the impure, though the impure thought Him a fool—as Herod did, who scourged Him to ribbons; as the bestial soldiers did, who chafed resentfully under the restraints of His pure eyes.

When murder and theft, cruelty and selfishness, the monotonous rounds of passion, the oppression of the weak, and contempt for the helpless can be proved to have brought happiness to the human race, when it can be shown that there is joy in the following in the footsteps of the animal, then and only then dare it be said that the stern prohibitions of religion make men unhappy.

The Church has stood — as has Christ — unfalteringly between man and the things that would ruin his joy. It forbids him the unrestrained exercise of his passions, for which so much of stupid modern literature clamors. It does this, not because the passions may not be turned to highest purposes, even be consecrated in the joy of a sacrament, but because it knows that the unrestrained exercise of passion robs man of his dignity and flings him from his high estate to the jungle and the pigsty. The Church forbids the buccaneering swaggering of robber barons and the ruthlessness of many modern businessmen, as it forbids all injustice and exploitation of the weak; it forbids this, not to cramp the just ambitions of a noble soul, but to protect the helpless from cruelty and oppression.

Had the Church done for the happiness of the world no more than hold in check man's baser appetites, if it had merely outlawed the chains of slavery and the more confining chains of passion, held back the tyrant from his oppression and restrained the cruel and the selfish, its part would still have been a tremendous one. The very men who today clamor for freedom from the restraining influence of religion are part of a civilization that is safe and a little gentle and considerate and pure because—or rather if—some men are accepting that restraint.



Yet you or I would find the Church uninteresting if its sole contributions to happiness were *don't's* and *mustn't's*. More is needed for happiness than mere protection from evil. We need a philosophy of life to bring confidence to our minds and assurance to our hearts. Granted that philosophy, we need courage and strength to carry it into operation.

Both the philosophy and the courage come astonishingly complete to the Catholic who understands his faith.

Out of my recent reading rises one phrase that is like a slap in the face. "This muddle called life . . ." wrote the author. In a single ugly expression he crystalized all too much of our modern unreligious attitude. One need know little of modern literature to be aware of the grim fact that to hosts of the serious and millions of the frivolous, life is an exasperating muddle. The chorus of modern thinkers neither sing in tune nor keep to a semblance of melody. Thoughts clash hopelessly with thoughts. Philosophies give philosophies the lie. What life means, whence it comes, whither it goes, the simplest answers to the simplest questions—all these stump the thinker without religion and leave him in a state that is thick and dark with fog.

And even when, like some Greek dreamer out of the heroic past, a thinker hits upon a heroic course for life and maps it out for his followers, he knows that no power of his can give them the strength to walk his difficult way, can lift them to heights of heroism.

Life today is a muddle because thinking is muddled. Life today too often sinks into selfishness and cruelty because men lack the strength to accept the difficult things demanded of one who embraces a philosophy of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice.

How can a man be happy when his mind is muddled? How can he find joy when a sense of his own weakness turns his high resolutions to jelly and holds him back from the paths that his mind sees and approves? How could a captain on the bridge of his ship be at peace with the world if he knew little of the port from which he came and nothing of the port to which he must drive his ship and felt that neither the stars nor the sun could chart his course and no instruments could be relied on with certainty?

Today a man without religion stands like a puzzled child before a thousand merchants of truth each of whom clamors his wares with an emphasis that untrustworthy merchants reserve for articles of doubtful values. Worse: Like the captain of a drifting ship he cannot find anyone to tell him whence he came, whither he goes, or what sun or stars he can trust to guide him.

Against this muddle the Church offers a calm and satisfying explanation of all the essentials of life, a beautiful synthesis of truth that fills the mind with a deep content. No longer is the man of faith puzzled by a thousand vendors of truth each far surer that his rival's truth is worthless than he is that his own is good. As he stands on the bridge of the bark that is Peter's, he sees above him the magnificent fixed stars—the dogmas of faith—radiant, beautiful, provable, true, and by them he guides a sure course from harbor to final port. The man of faith is not a man of muddled and unhappy mind; he has seen truth as a gracious and comprehensive whole, and by it he has shaped the great essentials of his life.

Nothing so tears the soul of man as the conflict between his high aspirations and ideals and the downward dragging of his weaknesses and sins. Racked between a clear-seeing mind and a weak will, he suffers that awful agony of indecision and thwarting that is characteristic of our noblest heroes and heroines in modern unreligious drama and literature. His hands reach for the stars; the quicksands suck him down into ruin. He has a philosophy of life perhaps; but it fails to give him the strength he needs for its execution. So his heart is crushed and disillusioned.

Not so the heart of the Catholic who has found in his Church not merely the happiness of a truth that satisfies but the glorious strength he needs to carry that philosophy into life. From birth to death the strength of Christ, entrusted to the Church through the sacraments, flows about him in steady currents. He finds that he is actually the branch of that divine vine Jesus Christ and that the strength of the Savior flows through his soul in warm, rich, reassuring floods of sustaining grace. He is not a dislodged and isolated unit at the mercy of his own sweeping passions and the chance battering of forces of evil from without. He feels himself

united with the unconquerable Savior, strong with His strength, as were the martyrs who died bravely for the truth they held, or the confessors and virgins who lived yet more bravely in the face of traitorous temptation from within and the soft arms and inviting laughter or the frightening mockery from without.

He is happy because, as he moves along his course, he is sustained by the divine strength that is brought to him by that Church whose one concern is that he grow continually in union with Jesus Christ, the center and source of all strength and grace.

Is religion gloomy? To the man who clings passionately to some lust—yes. To the man who prefers his own all-too-often-tricked brain to the voice of divine authority—yes. To the rebel who kicks at any law, be it God's or man's—yes.

Religion is gloomy to one who persistently stands outside the Church and sees the rugged walls growing strong and impregnable out of the very rock of its foundation. It is gloomy to the man who, bogged and fogged in the uncertainties of his own mind, refuses to believe that there is certainty of mind or assurance of truth anywhere. Pilate may have thought the truth-bearing Christ gloomy as He stood before him and spoke of certainties. Religion may be gloomy to that man who has never felt the strength of its sacraments coursing through his soul, who has never known that of a sudden he need rely no longer on his own weak powers but on the sustaining strength that comes from a God made man.

Is religion gloomy to us who know it? To us it is an unending joy. It is bright with the glowing beauty of the ritual. It is peaceful with the strong, protecting walls of its laws and Christ-given commandments. It is joyous as strong certitudes and magnificent doctrines are joyous when together they form the stately arches of truth. It is happy with the strength that, supplementing our own, carries us to heights we dare not attempt unaided, heights that will, please God, eventually carry us to the only life that makes this life intelligible—the life of intimate and face-to-face union with Him with whom religion unites us first in life.

Far from being gloomy, religion is shot through with the smile of the lover of mankind and the sweet, provisioned happiness of God the rewarder.

### III

## *Pleasure or Happiness — Which?*

CHRIST promised His followers happiness heaped up, pressed down, flowing over. He guaranteed them a hundred-fold of happiness even in this life. He prayed a divine prayer that their joy might be filled.

Where the Old Law was shot through with the woe and pain that would fall heavily upon those who broke the commandments, Christ prefaced His new commandments with the glad word "blessed." "Blessed are they," He cried, joyously, "who hear the word of God, and keep it." Each of His great beatitudes is a guarantee of happiness for those who follow their difficult way.

When the battle of Calvary had been fought and won, Christ gave to those faithful who had tasted apparent defeat in that battle a new cry of victory. "Peace be to you," He said. And they smiled back in new joy. For peace is the lovely word that the mind of man has wedded in close bonds to the word happiness. Peace and happiness are a jointure of words most dear to man's hungry heart.

Christ promised His followers happiness.

He never promised them pleasures; neither He nor His Church could stoop to so unworthy a bribe. For pleasure is to happiness what gaudy paste diamonds are to a Kohinoor, what nerve-shattering jive is to Beethoven and Wagner, what the excitement of hoofbeats thundering down the track is to joy in great literature.

The promise of pleasure as a substitute for happiness is the bid made for the human heart by the world that hates Christ and distrusts faith. "We cannot, it is true, give you happiness," cries the frivolous world of easy living and quick profits, of flattering men and pliant women. "But we can give you better things. We can give you dancing feet and eyes that glitter, the feel of gold in your pocket and soft lips upon your cheek. We can give you pleasure."

Indeed this age of ours has made of pleasure a profession and a trade. It has enlisted much of wit and beauty and smartness, much of society and business in a great combine whose commodity is pleasure—within the reach of all and suited to the purse of the richest and the poorest.

Merchants peddle pleasure at so much the foot of celluloid film. They hawk it in the dark unhealthy atmosphere of night clubs. They sell their books by blazing across the jackets gay promises of two-hours' vicarious sinning: a criminal about the business of his crime; sweet adultery with all its fascinating glitter—and a careful glossing over of the furtive uneasiness and the sick awakening. Pleasure is for sale in the clicking ball whirling toward a winning number; in the rhythm of feet marking a time set by the beat of a primitive tomtom; in the laughter responding hysterically to an evil jest; in luxury that wraps the body in warm, soft comforts and feeds it exquisite foods—wraps the body in warmth and leaves the soul cold to chattering.

We are of a shrewd age. We disdain cheap substitutes and pound the counter as we demand the genuine. Yet we have been most shamelessly taken in by pleasure, the cheap counterfeit of happiness, the worthless substitute for Christ's own joy. We buy pleasure from merchants whose eyes have been burned out with the weariness of the pleasure they have been selling. We take pleasure from the twitchy hands of those whose lives cry out in newspaper headlines and divorce proceedings their failure to find other than disillusionment in the valueless things they offer us.

If it is pleasure you seek, the Church cannot give you it—nor can Christ, the author of the beatitudes. If your eyes are focused on that deception known as "a good time," religion is not your means. True the lover of simple things, Christ Jesus, blessed the simple, sweet pleasures of life. He loved the dear delights of home and the happy associations of friendship. He sat at table in the close intimacy of meals shared with happy companions. He stood under the open sky and felt His heart respond to the glory of a golden sunset's foretelling a clear day, or to the waving lilies of the fields that were like the trustful children of His heavenly Father.

But the giddy pleasures of His time and ours He could not and would not countenance or offer us.

Two young men stood before the fascinating Christ. To both He issued a soul-stirring and impelling invitation: "Come, follow me."

The first man was rich. He had tasted pleasure, and he had let it grip him as only pleasure can grip the human being. At Christ's invitation to come, he turned away sorrowing and moved back to the pleasures of his luxurious home, to the fair things of sense that made life so sweet and comfortable—and dreary. He left the side of the poor Christ to buy himself a life of comfort and pleasure, and he became for all time the symbol of the man who, because he clings to the pleasures that wealth can buy, throws away supreme happiness.

The other man, a poor fisherman, was young enough to feel his senses drawn to the beauty of fair women and the excitement of the open sea. Pleasure issued its piercing call to the young John. Yet he turned from it to the Christ who had not whereon to lay His head and who knew hunger, labor, discouragement, and apparent failure. He followed a rejected Savior through His career of mounting disappointments; he stood beneath a cross of defeat; he became an outcast of his people, a hunted fugitive from Roman swords, knowing none of the sweet comforts of life; and he ended in exile in Patmos.

Had he at any moment in his life seen heaped up before him all the pleasures with which luxurious Rome and comfort-loving Israel could have filled his days and cushioned his nights, he would have laughed and pushed them aside in disdain. He had found in the company of the poor Christ the happiness that flames out in the white heat of the fourth Gospel, that leaps in the soaring love of the epistles, that rises to ecstasy as heaven itself is opened in God's revelation to him.

One young man found pleasure—sickening oblivion. The other found happiness in a joy no man could take from him.

Sometimes we are puzzled that pleasures can ever trick us into seeing in them any semblance of happiness. For



despite their surface likeness pleasure and happiness are utterly unlike.

Pleasure is of the eye and ear, the quickly stirred and swiftly dying senses. It is the vibration of nerves to sudden stimulation. It is as superficial as the rippling of waves under a casual breeze.

Happiness is of the heart and in the heart. It is as deep as the soul, and as imperishable. It rests securely at the very core of a man's being and stirs to glad awakening, not the senses that he shares with the animals, but the spiritual soul, which is like a spark of divinity.

Pleasure depends upon the things that are outside a man: the treasures that can be fingered greedily; the beauty that can be eyed with restless craving; the power that can be built into monuments that do not endure; the lying love that withers in a night; a chance friend's laughter too easily changed to sneers. Because pleasure depends on things outside a man, a thousand accidents can sweep it away. A brief illness, and it is gone. A tricky turn of fortune's wheel, and the means to buy it have been swept away. It takes flight at the sign of old age. The mere repetition of it first dulls its charm, then wears it down to drab routine, and finally gives to it that bitterness that poisons almost beyond endurance the life of the pleasure seeker.

There is no more restless, dreary, unhappy man in the world than the man of pleasure. His eyes are sick. His mouth is hard and unsmiling. He is driven on restlessly less in the hope of any joy that may lie ahead than in dread of the boredom and weariness that lie behind. And where on this unhappy earth are there to be found such drab and ugly women as those who in terrible irony have been called women of pleasure or daughters of joy?

But happiness is the deep and true and reassuring gift of God. It is a quality that passes description but is recognized with a quick leap of the heart and a firm knowledge that is beyond the attack of any thief. We can give happiness away, but no man can take it from us. Sickness cannot touch it, nor the loss of wealth. Complete failure cannot strike the smile from the lips of the happy man.



I have seen happiness in the eyes of a paralytic motionless on a bed of pain. Happiness has greeted me in the smile of the poor. Happiness has crowned with deep content the silvered head of age. Since pleasure can be bought, any thief can steal it. Happiness cannot be bought; so it gaily defies all the thieves of the world, from the petty pickpocket who robs me of my purse to that thief of all thieves, death itself.

Happiness walks unexpected ways, the ways that Christ marked out in His beatitudes, when He promised joy in the very things that seem most remote from joy: poverty of heart, purity of soul, meekness, persecution. Happiness stands with the mother at the side of her baby's crib. With the priest it enters into the quiet of the sanctuary. It welcomes with open arms the martyr in the midst of the mounting flames. It writes its signature across the ledger of the businessman who has set honesty and honor before easy success. It wakes the laughter of the young novice who has gaily turned a deaf ear to the pleading voice of pleasure. It bubbles ceaselessly in the heart of the saint.

This distinction between happiness and pleasure is most important. Faith could not have built and has not built the Broadways of earth. Faith builds lovely homes and quiet churches. It establishes honest businesses and places of clean and sweet amusement. It is more interested in peace than in excitement. To faith the silent approval of God is far more precious than the rattling applause of men. Faith cannot give you pleasure, but it can give you happiness. And while with pleasure your heart grows weary to nausea, you can never drink deeply enough at the fountains of happiness.

Just how deep is the difference between happiness and pleasure?

There was once a brilliant, fascinating, charming man. He walked the easy ways of sin; pleasure was his for the taking. His charm and cleverness drew around him the witty and the sophisticated. Wine flowed freely and conversation sparkled. Arm in arm, he and his fellows walked first in the delights of high controversy and then into the theaters and taverns, where pleasure waited with vine leaves for hair and golden bracelets for fair white arms. . . . And in the purple

darkness of the night this man hurried back to the waiting arms of his mistress.

And Augustine, this brilliant, charming, fascinating wit and practiced lover, disgusted, disillusioned, sated, and finally revolted, turned to find in the truth that was Catholic and the morality that was Christ's a happiness of heart and a peace of soul he had not dreamed were possible. At last his hungry heart was at rest when it rested in the happiness of faith and purity.

There was in the days of Christ a woman charming beyond words. Men looked on her and loved her. They cast at her feet their wealth, their achievements, their hearts. And she wore their gifts as ornaments for her beauty. This was the glittering woman of pleasure, Mary of Magdala.

Then across her path came a new kind of man. He looked upon her and did not admire her or desire her. He pitied her. He pitied her for her easy loves and her beautiful jewels. He pitied her for the fair face that had been her ruin and the ruin of men. He pitied her most of all for her life of pleasure. Mary of Magdala, daughter of joy, threw away jewels and soft garments, the hearts and homage of men, the ceaseless rounds of pleasure. Mary of Magdala flung herself in tears at the feet of the pitying Savior. And in her floods of tears her hungry heart, which had been glutted with pleasure, for the first time found happiness.

To follow Christ's way of happiness, we must stand, not with Augustine the rake, but with Augustine the saint. We must see with the eyes of Magdalen that happiness lies, not in pleasure, but in the penitence that brings back the joyful love of Jesus Christ.

## IV

### *The Happiness of a Mind That Knows*

THE sanest and happiest minds in the world are the minds that have found faith.

Faith is not the blind acceptance of absurdities. It is not "rationalized superstition." Faith is not a stupid bending of the head to things one likes to think true. Faith is basically common sense, the realization that there are things that can be learned from others and that there are some things that can be learned in no other way. It is the honest facing of the unescapable fact that beyond the knowledge that a man can gain through the brief exploring of his limited mind there is a wider knowledge that explains the data he has assembled. It is the proud conviction that God could not turn and has not turned men adrift to struggle for truth. If when He made the world He gave to it a great purpose, He could not be cruel enough to hide that purpose from men, His supreme creatures. Faith is God's communicating to His beloved children the reason for their existence and the goal of their journeying. Through faith God divinely reenforces the feeble strugglings of man's groping mind.

Faith is man's confession that he needs a teacher to guide him through the labyrinthine ways of a visible world, a teacher who can speak with authority on the more important things that lie beyond the reach of sense—the whence and why and whither of life and just how far God guides our stumbling feet and upholds our vacillating wills.

Faith seats us at the feet of a divine teacher in whose mind is truth, in whose heart is love, in whose words is power.

Perhaps never before in all human history have men known so much and been sure of so little. They have combed the world for facts and then fought like children about the meanings of those facts. From earth's strata scientists have pulled astonishing revelations of the history of our globe.

They have pried into the atom, found there a universe in miniature, and flung their telescopes across the sky to see it beyond the reach of glass or imagination or mathematics. Facts that lay buried in tombs of ancient kings and in the scrawling tracery in caves and on prehistoric stones are now as familiar as the reportings in our newspapers. We have seen disease tracked to its secret lair and have followed the microbe in its grotesque wanderings. The beam of light has been split into its parts; the secrets of the frozen poles have been dragged into light; we know what lies in the unplumbed depths of the earth.

Facts have been piled on facts, data heaped on data. We have proved ourselves the greatest race of factfinders, wresting from nature her most closely guarded secrets.

Yet as science comes to know more about mice, it confesses that it knows less about men. The universe holds back no secrets from us—except those secrets that really trouble our minds. Science cannot tell us whether man is a child of God or the latest chain in an ironic linking of life with life; whether life itself is a glorious opportunity or an elaborate joke played by some cosmic jester; whether the universe is vacant of meaning or is the regal setting for a world drama of forces that transcend the stars. Science has not pierced the blackness from which man emerges in brief unfinished drama; nor has it flashed its lamps into the oblivion toward which man moves in reluctant but steadily forward march.

Man himself is however persuaded of his importance and dignity. The astronomer who counts the stars refuses to believe that he is less important than the things that he names and numbers. If man has slowly conquered the power of the waterfall and with his will bent to slavery the savage beast, the destructive germ, the rays of the sun, the unseen forces of the atom, the restless giant that is electricity, he cannot persuade himself that he, the apparent master, is really the slave of his slaves, more perishable than they. He cannot think that the winds and the tides, the lightning whipping across the sky and the swift corrupting powers of chemistry will one day sing a song of victory over his snuffed-out self.

Man studies life, and he cannot believe that so beautiful and elaborate a thing is no more than the flash of a light upon

the wall, a flash to be ended with, "Out, out, brief candle." Seeing all about him the incredible skill of Him who fashioned this universe—at which science pecks with feeble hammer and into which science probes with the surface-scrapings of microscope and telescope and mathematical formulas—he demands to know if he too is an essential part of this great plan. Since he sees the orderly courses of rising and setting sun and planetary systems and the lives of lesser creatures on earth, he demands the reassuring certainty that he too is the object of an all-knowing care.

Seeing plan everywhere, we demand to know whether our lives too are planned. Knowing the gracious watchfulness that guides the universe, we are certain that we cannot possibly be adrift, sole derelicts in a world that gives evidence of elaborate care and satisfied needs.

These demands the mere factfinders of today cannot answer. To explain their piled-up data, they give us philosophies black with despair. From their proved facts they draw conclusions so contradictory that in the light of their explanations the thinking world seems to shriek with furious denials and charges of lies and deception. Only those have an answer for life's important questions who turn their eyes welcomingly to the teacher who drew together into a beautiful and complete solution of life all the data that ever was or could be discovered, the teacher who told us whence we came, whither we go, and how very dear we are to our Father who is in heaven.

Thank God that the group of thinkers at the feet of the divine teacher grows with the years increasingly large and reassuring.

But today it is still the voices of the despairful that are most insistently clamorous. They shout, these men without faith, that ours is a purposeless world—or at least that man, though flung out into an orderly world, is himself without a reason for existence, without purpose for living, without objective except that oblivion into which he will one day be dumped together with all the best things of his own devising. Wherever thinkers and factfinders without faith are gathered together, whether in the grouping of a conference or between the covers of a book, they offer the hungry mind of man that

awful poison of despair: "You are a creature of mocking chance." . . . "Eat out your heart in the craving for happiness; there is no happiness." . . . "You are of the animals, with no more will than theirs and no more dignity or destiny than theirs." . . . "What a ghastly joke is this thing called life!"

God pity an unhappy generation of men who have fed their minds with a philosophy of despair.

A second group, characterized by contradiction and denial, leave us puzzled because they themselves are puzzled. The same set of facts leads each of them to a thousand contradictions: Man is an animal . . . man is the only god; there are no spiritual souls, nor is there a God . . . there is only God; we are slaves to the forces that begot us . . . our wills are the one supreme power in the universe. They protest, these thinkers, not only too much but too many things. Beyond all else however they protest the need of a teacher who can speak truth with an authority beyond human authority.

Certainly men never show the need of that divine teacher more clearly than when they go away from Him, scamper off in quest of truth like so many befuddled knights searching for a Grail they hardly believe exists.

But there is that third group, the thinkers with faith. The facts of science are as precious to them as to any other man that lives. But they know that the facts in themselves are not enough. The being who created this mighty jigsaw puzzle that is the universe had and has a plan that fits all the pieces into a single glorious picture. Though the creator could and did trace in the world clear indication of His power and beauty and of that love that broods tenderly over His creatures, only the creator Himself could tell us in full the secrets of His heart: Why He made man; what He destined for man's goal; what He was willing to do to aid man in his journeyings; the depth of the love that surrounds these rational creatures. Knowing that His children would fear the darkness from which life came and into which it would return, the creator opened both curtans and has allowed a little of that reassuring light to brighten our pathways and serve as our beacon in life. Faith knows that that heavenly



Father has placed a candle in the window of His eternal mansion, a candle to shine welcome to His wandering sons.

When a man has brought together in his mind the data of science and the integrating pattern that is faith, he finds himself possessed of a happy mind. All that he sees and learns falls into a glorious unity that explains man to himself, recreates the universe into a beautiful stage set for man's high adventuring, and makes it possible for each actor to write for his life a happy ending under the approving eye of God, man's applauding Father and unfailing ally.

The man with faith knows all this when he discovers Jesus Christ the divine teacher, who, since He was teacher par excellence, dared to call Himself "the way, the truth, and the life."

When He came, poor pagan mankind was floundering as pagans are floundering today. This divine teacher sketched for His followers a way that He Himself traveled first, a way from God to God, from life through life to unending life, a path that rose in the great fatherly heart of a God who made man because He loved him as a son, who shepherded mankind with all the love of a good shepherd for his flock, and who with wide-open arms welcomed man at journey's ending.

He was the truth. Then, as now, men had built their universities to teach truth and had used them to squabble over vague opinions and to cloak with eloquence their uneasy doubts. Christ gave a truth that made all lesser truths significant. Out of a divine vision He spoke of the Fatherhood of God and the consequent brotherhood of man. He spoke the truth that man was made for an eternal destiny compared with which all other gains were loss. By His truth He raised man from the level of animals and the abasement of slavery to the adopted sonship of God and the heritage of His unending joy.

He was the life. Then, as now, life was a cheap, contemptible thing in the eyes of the pagans. The life of the Savior made dignified the life of the weakest and the lowliest. To that merely natural life He added a share of the divine life, a close union of God with man that gave mankind new



strength and heroism and the certainty that someday he would know and love Divinity itself.

In these few paragraphs we can glimpse only feebly that magnificent synthesis of life whereby Christ clothed all men with dignity, gave to the least factors of the universe a significance and high purpose, and welded together in a single world creator and creatures.

There never has been another teacher like Christ Jesus. Those who today sit at His feet find their lives aglow with meaning and their minds flooded with His light.

Christ the teacher wanted to be sure that men would not flounder. Turning to His Church, He cried: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations. . . . He that heareth you, heareth me." With that command He made certain that men could find truth and the answer to those problems which unanswered drive men to despair or madness.

Without faith the mind is at sea in all that really concerns life. Happiness does not lie in hopeless struggle or purposeless drifting. Thinkers without faith have proved themselves to be like musicians playing a thousand discordant melodies on instruments that are out of tune.

For our happiness—since the happiness of the mind rests in truth and certainty—we needed a divine teacher. That teacher was given us in Jesus Christ.

Faith does not cramp the mind; it opens to the mind another world that is needed to explain this one. Faith does not limit thought; it cuts thought free from fogs and mists and the stifling bonds of uncertainty and insecurity, and sets it ranging among truths that could be only vaguely—if at all—known did God not reveal them. Faith does not take us from the company of the learned; it brings us into the society of Jesus Christ, to whom in time come all the learned of the world.

Faith explains the unexplained facts of science. Faith kills uncertainty about the issues that really disturb the mind of man. Faith lifts the mind to the happy state in which it shares knowledge with the omniscient God.

## *The Happiness of a Sinless Heart*

THE story of the prodigal son is, even more than the story of Cinderella, the most universal story in the world. In it is traced, as only a divine storyteller could trace it, the resentment against restraint and a dislike of all law that drew a young soul into rebellion and then toward the fascinating flame of sin. Finally after he had dragged himself through the mud of the pigsty, he staggered back to repentance, to his forgiving father, to happiness restored.

The story is the universal record of sinful mankind. But it is far more personal than that too. It is the individual record of every man or woman who has given up the happiness of a sinless heart for the exhausting, disillusioning slavery of sin and who has finally found the only satisfying happiness in the arms of God.

Whatever disagreements may exist between thinkers who have faith and thinkers without faith, they are surprisingly in accord on the story of the prodigal son. The one element which alone the man with faith can add is the joyful return to a forgiving Father. But you will notice that I say "thinkers." There have been a lot of smart-alecky sneers at sin and its consequences. Our modern writers who think with their nerve centers and have convictions rooted in their emotional complexes have followed Oscar Wilde into a panegyric of sin. Glitter fascinates them. Glamour they find irresistible. And they think that by tricking sin out in fair words and lovely garments, by parading it through penthouse romances of week ends on country estates, by presenting sin as brave or clever or beautiful or necessary they can make men forget how ugly sin is and how completely it slays human happiness.

But thinkers know. Writers — Christian and pagan — whose works are more enduring than banana flies are deeply conscious of the horrible misery that follows in the pathway of sin. The Greek dramatists wrote their greatest plays on

how the guilty conscience tortures the sinner and how in the end his sins tear him to pieces. Shakespeare gave us the tragedies of sin, as Ibsen showed us how the sins of forebears and the crimes of injustice, selfishness, lust, and egotism ruin lives. George Eliot did not keep herself unspotted from this world, and neither did George Sand; yet both wrote eloquently of the unhappiness of the sinner.

The story of the unhappiness brought to the world through sin is written into every popular detective story, the criminal writhing in a final chapter of justice vindicated. Sin strews the popular novels—quite as much as it does the newspapers—with stories of ruined lives and blasted careers, heroines fluttering in futile fashion from sin to sin, and heroes wrecking innocent lives. Sin writes its record in gangland headlines that scream less of single murders or deeds of corruption and violence than of sordidness, guilty consciences, shifting eyes, and back-street ugliness—the complete wretchedness of sin's fatherland, the underworld.

One need not prove the unhappiness caused by sin. One need only look into the history of every nation or of every family. Compared with sin, nothing else seems to bring mankind unhappiness. Sin is at the bottom of all human misery. Ask any historian who those are who have steeped the world in blood and tears; he will point out to you, even though he may not be able to define the word sin, those selfish men of power who have plunged nations into war, those hot-blooded beauties who have sacrificed country to caprice or wounded vanity, those villains of history—whether giants like Napoleon or monsters like Caligula or fair courtesans like DuBarry—whose sins wrote unspeakable pages into the record of our race.

Into the story of your own family have been written sorrows that I need not repeat for you: broken hearts and homes, rifts between relatives, the nagging of bitter tongues, squabbles over money or inheritances, women growing old before their time, men turning away in disillusionment from the trickery of trusted ones, old people and little children scourged by the selfishness of their own. If there is unhappiness within a nation or unhappiness within a family, blame that unhappiness on sin.

Modern literature is largely a conspiracy to defend and spread sin. Modern motion pictures and dramas present the sinner as gay and charming and fascinating. Much of modern philosophy calls sin necessary or brave, urging youth to sin (by talk of biological necessity) or befogging in the minds of the young the difference between good and evil (by praises for the rebel who defies the laws and sins bravely).

But the Catholic Church, lover of mankind, cries out, "Now, as in the past, men rush along the road of sin from unhappiness to misery. Only torn consciences and blasted lives lie along that pathway of vice. Not one sinner has escaped the shadow of his sin. Show me one man or woman of evil life whose days were not bitter with unshed tears or cynical laughter."

Even if Christ had not died under the blows of the sinner, His Church would still fight sin, because sin is a degradation of man's nature, an inhuman, antisocial thing. It would hate sin simply because, however much it may pander to man's pleasure, sin hates man's true happiness.

How can sin make a man other than unhappy when it twists his faculties from their highest purposes? The hands of a man, made to build and lift and construct, become through sin hands that soil and despoil and tear down. The tongue of a sinner, destined for truth and friendliness, for lullabies and hymns and serenades and songs of country, becomes a poignard with which to rip a reputation or stab to death an innocent soul. Wine, intended to warm the heart, becomes in the cup of the sinner a means to strip him of reason and self-control and power of will. The sinner takes his high creative power of love and uses it as the animals use their creative powers—in purposeless, ruthless, passionate selfishness.

Sin makes man unhappy because it is antisocial, as is selfishness, or greed, or tyranny, or cruelty, or lust. Sin is the very thing that makes a man less a man and a woman less a woman. Even if God had not by high command forbidden sin, the Church would of necessity stand between man and the things that beyond all else rob him of his joy.

Pity the sinner. Driven by his unresisted temptations, he finds each sin a little sourer, a little staler; each effort to fill

a gnawing hunger with husks that the swine disdain is a little more futile than the preceding effort. Pity still more those whose lives are spoiled and ruined by the relentless selfishness that makes a sinner madly eager to drag all others down to his own degraded level. Never more truly does misery love company than in the case of the sinner unsatisfied to sin alone, unhappy when he cannot draw another down to his own rotten standards of life.

But the man and the woman of sinless heart, how deep is their peace, how sure their happiness! "Blessed," cried the Savior, "are the clean of heart" . . . blessed in the knowledge that someday they shall see God . . . blessed because they walk earth's ways with sure step and high courage.

No restless torturing of conscience makes miserable the day of the man and the woman of sinless heart. Their nights are not filled with Banquos that will not down. No remorse of soul forces itself upon them to recall with resistless insistence innocence betrayed, youth misled, fortunes won at the price of God's poor, and partnerships in evil.

Or if the now sinless man and woman see evil in their past, it is evil that no longer taunts and tortures. They stand now with Mary Magdalen, who, though she had trailed red robes of passion, sees Christ smiling His forgiveness. Those men and women take their place with Peter: Having thrice denied his Lord by the blackest lie that struck the captured Christ, he was given a triple chance to swear his love for his Savior.

Sin lets loose, as all men have known, those elements in a man that tear him to pieces. His emotions slip from their restraining reins. His self-control is wrecked. The sinner finds himself no longer master of himself; he is blown to and fro by every slight puff of temptation, clutched at by the hot hands of sin, deflected from the paths of peace and decency by every glancing eye or gleam of easy gold.

The sinless man is master of his house, ruler of his soul. He has learned the brave lesson of self-control: He brushes aside the fever-breathed temptation and walks unharmed among God's and his own enemies. He is brave and certain of himself.

For sinlessness is not a negative thing; it is not a fear-some avoidance of something the seizing of which would spell courage. It is sinlessness that is brave, the bravest thing in the world. Through it a man stands firm beneath the standard of the cross when treason would be easy. He fights for principle and for right when to yield would be sweet. Sinlessness roots a man with that brave company on Calvary's embattled ridge, when Judas had sold out his master, and Peter and the disciples had cowardly turned and run, and the hot surges of lust and cynical unbelief of Herod and Pilate had risen in massed formation to overwhelm Christ and His followers. Sinlessness is as brave and positive and aggressive a thing as the yielding to temptation is weak and cowardly and easy and supine. And there is no happiness, believe me, in cowardice and the easy treason of a weakling.

What nonsense these moderns talk who scorn the sinless man and the pure woman as weak and contemptible. Sinlessness is to the soul what health is to the body, a product of exercise and nourishment, of vigilant care and sane living. Health and happiness belong together in soul and body. The sinful soul is the weak, unhealthy soul; happiness is for the strong.

How right the Savior was in His insistence that the clean of heart were blessed! While the sinner moves restlessly from lust to lust, his appetite for pleasure and wealth, for honor and distinction, for new excitements and bolder adventuring sending him careering unsteadily and discontentedly through life, the sinless lifts to God the happy face of a Francis of Assisi, sings to God the ceaseless songs of a Cecelia. While the notable sinners of the world have been the notably miserable, unhappy men and women—as was Nero when he screamed for the releasing sword of a slave, as were those later Louises of France when they were bored to suffocation in the midst of cultivated vice, as was Oscar Wilde, who rotted in prison as later he rotted to death, as was DuBarry, who shrieked at the foot of the guillotine—the sinless have walked smiling and unafraid through life and into death.

Great Brébuef, first of American martyrs in stature and heroism, sang in the joy of his heart as the Iroquois hacked



his body with whitehot tomahawks and festooned his neck with garlands of torches. Happy? He had lived with God; he had worked for souls; there were in him no remorse for the past, no fear for the future. That great voice of his that had wakened with song the echoes of our primitive forests sang amid the tortures of martyrdom in great joy of soul.

The sinful may find pleasure. But only the sinless can find happiness. And it is the Catholic Church that makes that happiness easy as it safeguards our souls from sin. The commands that Christ gave us and that His Church repeats are only stout ramparts against the sin that would steal away our joy. While modern ethicists dream high dreams of noble souls' attempts to scale the heights of goodness and see them dropping back hopeless before these unassailable heights, the Catholic Church lifts the soul to the heroism and happiness that belong to the saints.

Sinlessness would be too daring a thing to hope for if we walked alone, so the Church brings us into the companionship of Jesus Christ. Temptations would be too powerful if we fought them alone, so the God who dwells within our hearts fights with us for our virtue. We should be desperately lonely even in our happiness if we were an isolated unit struggling alone to fulfill our high ideals in a world insisently bent on sin; so the Catholic Church couples us with its martyrs and virgins, its confessors and saints in the gallant army of the Church Militant.

In their company we may aspire to sinlessness of heart, to happiness of soul.



## *The Happiness of a Father in Heaven*

IT IS hard to realize what the world was like before Christ, lifting His eyes in perfect trust, cried out and bade us cry, "Our Father, who art in heaven." It would be hard to realize if it were not for the fact that we live in a generation that has largely determined to dispense with that Father whom Christ asked us to know and love and trust.

Yet in spite of what the moderns may do against God the Father, when Christ invited the weary and disillusioned world of His day to lift eyes and hearts and trusting hands to a heavenly Father, He initiated a great new era in the happiness of mankind. The heavens were now the home of one who loved the sons and daughters of His creating with a tenderness that was infinite in mercy and generosity and watchful providence.

Obedient to Christ's command (or rather to His sweet invitation), the eyes of mankind swung upward from Olympus with its discredited gods, who were only men's own virtues and vices magnified to gigantic scale. The ugly gods of pagandom, Osiris and Moloch and the deified devils of Asia and Africa, grew uglier than ever before the picture of a benign Father who noted the fall of a sparrow and yearned over His children with an eternal love. Valhalla seemed a place of uncouth boisterousness and petty squabblings after the nations had heard of the many mansions in their Father's house.

Even the beautiful page that was the Jewish religion was definitely turned. God could never again be merely the judge, the avenger, the Jahveh of wrath and vengeance. The hand of Christ had drawn aside the curtains of heaven and showed us a God who preferred to welcome one prodigal rather than judge the nations, to have mercy upon the lost sheep rather than lift His rod to strike the guilty, a God who confessed in divine humility that His mercy was above all His works.

When Jesus Christ gave us God the Father, no other concept of God could ever again fully satisfy and make happy the human soul.

Man must have a god. History has proved that. The future will endlessly add to the chain of proofs. The world, filled as it is with wonders, is empty without God. More correctly, without Him the world becomes annoying and exasperating, futile and purposeless, as a painting without a painter, a house without builder or owner, a great organ without anyone to shape its pipes or touch its keys to harmony.

When man did not know the true God, he invented a thousand gods to fill this empty space that is the universe and comfort the loneliness that cried aloud for the solace of God's presence and power. He needed a thousand gods to do inadequately what our Father does perfectly.

Man was happiest when he was serving his god, even a false god. He danced gaily around the altar of Pan. He knelt in exultation before the beautiful statue of thundering Jove. His step was lighter when he walked behind the sacred bull that symbolized his deity. He received a deep satisfaction when he sacrificed to his god the best and the finest of his possessions.

Yet when Christ came, men were utterly weary of their gods. Moloch was too cruel. Jove was too cynical. Pan was a little silly. The grim and ugly gods and goddesses of the East were so terrifying and revolting that it was necessary to house them in caverns and hedge them round with mysteries.

Round and about all the gods, big or little, was a futility that made the worshipers turn away, for they did not know whether their gods could not help them or, able to help, did not care to help them. In all the gods that man had made to his own image and likeness he found that he had put too much of his own cynical selfishness. Even the Jews, faithful to Jehovah, worshiped in trembling, with much of lip and little of heart, much of dignified ceremonial and little of gladness. They were awed; they hardly dared to love.

Then the voice of Christ rang out, "Our Father!" And at these words God became infinitely loving and lovable.

A Father. How simple it seemed, and how simple it made the whole of life. God had made the world, not out of caprice or necessity, but because He wanted sons and daughters who would bear His image and likeness. All the beautiful things, all the limitless unselfishness that crammed earth and sun and stars, were the lavish provision that the Father had made for this His human family. All humanity stood revealed in a single brotherhood, to outward appearance severed perhaps by color or language or custom or land, but brothers nonetheless in the great generation of their Father.

In God our Father there was not only power but power actuated by love; not only might but might tempered with mercy; not only providence but providence that could and would respond to the appeal of prayer.

No wonder then that the first Christians sang loudly in their joy. They were happy with a joy that laughed at privations or martyrdom, at ostracism from family and class and country, at the stigma of cynical ridicule and the oppression of political spoliation. What did these trifles matter? The great God was their Father. They walked through life straight into His welcoming arms. As they moved through life's problems and difficulties, they were sure that He watched their every step. He was proud as a father always is of the courage and success of his children; He was quick as a father always is to understand and forgive his children's moments of weakness and their falling into sin.

With that one phrase, "Our Father," Christ bound heaven and earth into a common family. Earth was the happy road along which a man traveled to his Father's house. One had only to lift his voice, and his Father heard his request for bread or forgiveness, for protection or for strength.

Beside this God, who is first of all a Father, all other gods have seemed ugly distortions, blundering tyrants, futile gluttons. In the happy conviction that this Father in heaven had power to move His arm and love to sway His heart, the Christian world moved forward in supremest happiness . . .

. . . until our own strange age.

If ours is an unhappy generation, the reason is largely that we have forgotten our Father who is in heaven. Men cannot subsist without God. Alone they are too inadequate and lonely. They have however tried to subsist without God—to their own deep disillusionment.

We have seen atheism grow in most astounding denial of man's primary instincts. First it was an atheism that found God merely inconvenient and felt that it would be well rid of Him. It pushed Him aside because He came bearing His annoying Ten Commandments. It bade Him mind His own affairs and leave men to their pride of mind, their unjustly acquired riches, their despotism of state or factory, their lusts of flesh and longings of eye. They drove God from them because they preferred their sins, which were less crimes against individuals than gigantic violations of *noblesse oblige*: a blow at family honor and dignity, an affront to that Father whose kingdom was pushed aside by these sons of His own creation. In practice men denied God the Father for the same reason that rebellious sons have always struck at their sires when those sires stood between them and their evil ways.

Then because God irked them, these atheists took a second step: They cried aloud that God did not so much as exist. They banished the Father from His human family and left that family utterly orphaned. They slammed the door of His heavenly mansion, and suddenly they found themselves homeless. They jeered at God's watchful protection over His children and at His willing answer to the voice of prayer. They shouted the desolating doctrine that there was no one in all the world to hear or help or care or answer.

Stupid and blundering and fatuous, flying in the face of the endless longing and uninterrupted history of man's reaching for God, atheism plunged its followers into a world that had no maker, a family that had no father, a life that had no termination, a destiny in which men were, no longer sons or masters, but the slaves of relentless forces driving them on from nothingness to nothingness.

"The fool," said the wise man, "hath said in his heart: There is no God."

The miserable and purposeless, the forsaken and lonely have said that there is no heavenly Father.

But now, as always, men must have a god. Need we glance even quickly at men's fleeing from the cold, brutal misery of atheism? It blossomed and died within our one generation, this blatant attack upon a God who in contradiction it claimed did not exist. Men could not endure a world empty of God, a heaven holding only flaming suns and cold burnt-out moons and unpeopled planets. They could not bear to think of themselves as orphaned and alone.

We have seen our moderns swing back to a thousand gods—for gods they must have. But they are gods as ugly and colorless and unsatisfying and ruthless as those gods of the days before Christ pointed out a God who is our Father. And in none of their gods have they found the slightest joy or happiness.

With sweat and blood, with the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of men and women we have seen our fellow Americans serve the great god success. And we have seen that god fling its worshipers back into the depths of an as-yet-unfathomed despair. Men made the old pagan gods like unto themselves, fashioned Jove after their wisest, Apollo after their wittiest, Venus after their most beautiful. In our time men again set up self-idolatry. "Humanity is god," they cried. But what a silly god: waking in the follower a momentary enthusiasm and then leaving the worshiper disillusioned as he looks upon his own pettiness and realizes that all humanity is as he.

Grim-eyed philosophers have given us a world soul as a god, a vague abstraction as cold and impersonal as the ether that surrounds us—and as unbeautiful. Men have worshiped the gods heredity and environment, and they have known that this worship was slavery. They have fallen down in adoration before the turbine and the dynamo and the tractor and have been devoured or flung aside.

There is no other god of happiness save the God to whom Christ Jesus bade us lift our eyes when He cried, "Our Father." Our minds reject all other gods; our hearts regard them with loathing.

If God is my Father, then I am God's noblest work, His son. Confidently I lift my hands in appeal, sure that my prayer will call forth from His willing bounty the things I need for life's difficult way. If my first care is for my Father's business, I may go down into the apparent failure of Christ on Calvary, and my success is assured. If I see my fellow men as sons of that same Father, I cannot know bitterness or hatred or envy or greed; nor can I do other than crush from my heart the evils that would harm those brothers and sisters, who like myself are children of His dear tenderness.

With a great throb of happiness I remember that He is a Father *in heaven*. Each step that I take becomes a little lighter and a little gayer as I stride down the road of life toward that mansion in heaven where my Father waits for my glad home-coming.



## VII

### *The Happiness of Christ's Companionship*

THERE is courage in the heart of the man who hears a comrade's footsteps moving in rhythm with his own. There are confidence and reassurance in the hand that an unconquerable leader lifts in summons. There is a happiness beyond words in the knowledge that in the soul of a lover is an enfolding affection. There is joy in the realization that I need face neither the perils nor the joys of life alone and lonely.

Faith brings me all these things as it leads me into the blessed companionship of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Happiness in faith? Indeed yes. Faith brings with it the joy of certainty of mind and sinlessness of soul, of a Father in heaven and a destiny that lifts man above the dull, dread fate of the brute. But even all this seems to fade into secondary importance—or rather merge into one central core of happiness—as faith turns upon the glorious figure of the Savior its bright white light and we see Him moving toward us. He is the leader who inspires us to highest heroism and unflinching victory, the comrade who walks gladly at our side through every joy or sorrow that may touch us, the love whose patience is as tireless as it is boundless, the one friend who has within Him the power to banish the loneliness of the human heart.

How can there be expressed in a single short chapter even a little of the happiness that comes to the man or the woman who has placed a confident hand in the hand of the Savior? From that moment he knows with Saint Thérèse that nothing can affright him, nothing dismay him. He can never again feel forsaken and alone.

Even God the Father, closer to us than the air we breathe, seems remote when we look at the incarnate Son of God, who left the joys of heaven, emptied Himself and took the

form of a slave, and walked the earth as man's devoted friend and constant companion. Earth could never again be wholly dreary nor the human race even close to despair. The remotest quarters of the world were pierced by the glad certainty or the thrilling rumors that a God made man had come from heaven to become the companion and comrade of His creatures, the leader in the terrifying fight against man's ruthless enemies, the lover who clothed His love in the form of the fairest of the sons of men.

Loneliness had been, perhaps next to sin itself, the bitterest enemy of joy. From long and bitter experience man had come to know that no human companion could ever dispel completely that haunting loneliness. Between each man and his fellows there seemed to rise a high and insurmountable wall. And though he beat it until his hands were torn and bleeding, though he plotted and attempted to scale it by means of friendship or art or the self-revelation of poetry, that wall remained between him and his friends; he could not bring them into the secret garden where bloomed his realest hopes and ambitions and joys.

Loneliness comes to sour our best joys. Loneliness doubles the pain of our sorrows and the fear of perils. Through eyes that smart from unshed tears we look upon our closest associates and realize that they have not sensed our grief. We hurry to them with our successes—to find them a bit bored, halfheartedly pleased, vaguely misunderstanding, or viciously jealous. Relying upon our own weak strength, we grapple with temptation and know that it is a fight in which our nearest comrade is a spectator.

Because they found the earth a lonely place, the old pagans peopled it with superhuman beings: friendly little fairies and sympathetic sprites, "good people" who served men and guarded their interests, dryads who made the dark woods less terrifying, and spirits of earth and of air who brooded affectionately over men.

Poor, futile substitutes for the God made man, who walked into our lonely earth and made us know that it need be lonely no more.

PH We had found at last the invincible leader with whom we could unafraid face our enemies. He was with us in every good fight. His figure moved before us across life's battlefield, shining like a white flame. He smiled confidently and encouragingly at us over His shoulder, reassuring every man who plunged into the struggle for right and decency and honor, holding out a firm and encouraging hand to every woman who fought bravely for her purity or stood guard over the ideals and the goodness of those who clung to her.

Faith gloriously assured every good man and good woman that they fought life's battles, not alone, but always under the leadership of Jesus Christ, strong God and tender man, who guided to victory every noble cause, who led to triumph every noble life, who captained to certain glory every man and woman who before the eyes of the world or in the secret places of their own souls fought for justice's sake the good fight.

Afraid of life's pitiless struggle? Not those who remember that they fight under the glorious captaincy of the unconquerable Christ. Not they who have accepted the leadership of Him who in the overwhelming victory of Calvary flung back all the evil forces that ever surged up against humanity.

Once on a time men could with some show of justice taunt even a merciful Father in heaven with the bitter cry:

*"What do you know of our woes,  
You in your well-lighted sky?"*

But that was before the Son of God became the comrade of His beloved sons and daughters and in their company tasted every human experience that could come to His companions.

We watch with a surge of joy the historic Christ, truest friend that ever offered a hand in friendship, closest companion that ever shared a joy or a sorrow or laughed happily or wept in deep sympathy.

Though He bade His disciples follow Him, Christ saw to it that they did not follow but walked shoulder to shoulder with Him and He with them. Because they were His com-

rades, He gladly shared their poverty and their labor. He felt the fears that tempested their timid souls and experienced the disdain that surrounded the peasant fishermen of Galilee. He stood at the bedside of the sick, touched with merciful hands the foulest sores and ulcers, caressed to sight the eyes that had been closed in blindness and to hearing the ears that had been sealed to all sound, wept with those who wept over the dead, and paused in uncontrolled grief before the tomb of a dead friend. Because He had been hungry, He fed the multitudes by a miracle. Because He had been terrifyingly lonely, He staggered back across the dark garden of His agony—to find His best friends asleep.

Christ became the universal comrade of all mankind. He walked in the cool of the evening with the strong young John. He smiled gratefully for the tender gratitude in the eyes of women. The bitter lash of denial stung His face when a friend swore that he had never known Him. Gently He disengaged His mother's arms from about His neck and left to do His Father's business. He was the welcome guest at wedding feasts. He sat with His disciples while the fish was broiled and the wine heated upon the wood fire.

Not with the vision of God, but with the piercing experience of our brother and our comrade Christ tasted life's bitternesses and its joys, the awful stab of failure and the smashing blow of ingratitude, the cruel spite of the powerful, the howling of a mob that wanted His blood and His death.

It was Christ, not His faithful imitator St. Paul, who could say perfectly that He was all things to all men.

God had been creator and infinite ruler. Now He became in addition companion and comrade, walking the ordinary ways of man's experience and taking His followers with Him through all the great difficulties that they might ever meet. He had been remote, in the company of adoring angels. He became so close to men that a child could seize His hand in perfect confidence and a sinner could wipe His feet with her hair.

Faith has brought my God closer to me than my dearest friend on earth has even been. I find Him nearer to me than my own soul.

*Blessed Savior, I adore you as God. I honor and thank you as creator. I cling to you as my Savior. I clasp your hand in perfect confidence, knowing that in all my difficult or joyous ways you are my comrade and my friend.*

And Christ the lover? Who can begin to describe what the love of the Sacred Heart has done to dispel the loneliness that besieged the souls of men?

We see in Christ a love that was vast enough to embrace all men who ever lived or could live yet individual and personal enough to pour itself out on a single sinful woman of Samaria or on a thief who hung in just punishment upon a cross.

It was a strong, manly love, a love that bound rough fishermen to His service and held multitudes of peasants captive before His charm and transparent affection. It was a love that broke forth in tears over doomed Jerusalem, and over Lazarus, the friend who had died. It was a love that went out to all mankind, burning Him to death upon the altar of his cross yet tenderly stooping to the little children by the lakeside. It was a love that went out in gratitude to His mother, in protection to Magdalen, in tenderness toward all good women, in pity toward the woman who had fallen.

Christ was the perfect lover of whom poets had dreamed in vain, who united to the eternal love of God the strong throbbing love of a father for his children, a brother for his little brothers and sisters, a comrade for his dearest associates.

As Christ walks into the life of a man or a woman, the hideous, terrifying figure of loneliness leaves forever. It is no longer only by divine vision that He knows my needs and my ambitions, my fears and my trials. He knows what He Himself has tried and experienced.

He Himself had been hungry and poor and rejected. He had quested vainly for love and had found hatred. He had trembled to a blood sweat by the torture, the sin, and the death that were pressing in upon Him. He went down into the blackness of failure and death.

My God has become my fellow exile. He loves me to the point of sharing my life with me to its every least detail. He

knows me intimately, and He loves me because I so much need His love and pity and forgiveness.

The faith of the Catholic pushes on to new flights of happiness. Far from leaving me, the historic Christ is—as much today as He was in the days when He summoned His disciples—my leader, my companion, my lover, my friend.

The endless presence of God in the world, of Christ among His people, foreshadowed when God called Himself Emmanuel, God-With-Us, becomes a glorious reality in the sacrament of altar, tabernacle, and human heart. Christ is still with me, still walking my weary and difficult ways, still giving me the joyous knowledge that He has not left me orphaned, that He dwells with me until the end of time.

With Him I move through life in utter confidence. I have a friend to whom I can pour out my inmost heart. I have a lover who loves me because He knows how badly I need His love. I have a comrade who stands at my side, pours His courage into my soul, and places His reassuring hand under my elbow. I have a leader with whom I move forward to certain victory.

I am not alone. I am never lonely. I have the beautiful companionship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made man to be the comrade of me, a man.



## VIII

### *The Joy in a Heavenly Mother*

THE subject of this chapter is an easy one. For I am going to talk of the happiness that came to mankind when God gave His mother to be the mother of men.

No one needs to be told—save in briefest reminder—of the happiness that good mothers have brought to the world. We cannot find that lovely record completely even in the grateful poetry and music of every race, in the sweet faces that have been caught on canvas, in the eloquence that has leaped spontaneously from the lips of orators. The only perfect record of a mother's deep unselfishness and boundless love is to be found by each man in his own life. He remembers with reverent gratitude the happiness that came to him when his mother's love cradled his infancy, guarded his youthful ways, forgave his faults and his inadequacies, and in his manhood followed with approving eye his career.

No other page in human history is so beautifully written in unselfishness and service, in truest understanding and most patient forgiveness as is the page written by mothers.

So it is sad that a great section of even the believing world should know nothing of the happiness that was offered the world when the dying Savior turned to John, the representative of humanity, and cried, "Behold thy mother." The very men and women who have bowed reverent heads before the miracles of human mother love have refused to accept the happiness that comes when one knows that the mother of God is one's own mother too. Quick as they are to appreciate the vast tenderness and care of their own mothers, they shy away from the happiness which the mother who was chosen by God for His own beloved Son could and would bring to these adopted sons and daughters, the dear ransomed brothers and sisters of her divine Son.

We have not the time, nor is this the place to restate the irrefutable proofs that Mary is God's mother. To one who

thinks clearly, there is only one Person in Jesus Christ, the Person of God incarnate. Mary is the mother of that Person, who was born of her in time, and that Person is divine. Jesus cannot be split into two people; He is the single Person with two natures, human and divine; and Mary, the mother of the human nature, is the mother of the one Person, who is divine.

Nor shall we, who are thinking now of the happiness that Mary brings to our lives, take the time and space to authenticate the lovely gift by which Christ gave His mother to us in the person of John, our representative. All we need to remember is the quick eagerness with which primitive Christianity and all Christian religions until the days of Protestantism clasped this lovely mother to grateful hearts. Mary Queen of the Apostles became Mary mother of the infant Church.

They lived, those first Christians, surrounded by the evil and stupid and arrogant women who by poetic imaginations had been lifted to the rank of goddesses. They knew the unhappiness that flowed from the shrines and temples of these unwholesome, sinful goddesses, who stimulated their worshipers to new lusts, to a universal contempt for woman-kind, to a sort of cynical pity for the sex whose very goddesses were as passionate as Venus or as cruel as Minerva.

With special gratitude they caught and kissed the hand of Mary. All the pale and seductive influences of the pagan goddesses faded before the sweetness and the power of the woman that God had chosen to be His mother.

Nor need we stress what Mary's motherhood has meant to the happiness of humanity as a whole. That glorious contribution is brilliantly clear to anyone who sees the burden of pagan motherhood made the glory of Christian motherhood as women proudly bore their children in imitation of Nazareth's mother, who had borne God made man. The new love of purity that fired young men and women found much of its inspiration in the fair woman who became the immaculate mother, who was elected to shelter the untouched purity of the Most High only because she had first been a stainless Virgin. Hats were lifted and knees were bent to women because they were the daughters of a heavenly queen. Women felt for themselves a new reverence. How could

they do otherwise? Had not the eternal God chosen one of their number to be the first tabernacle of His incarnate Son?

The love for Mary and men's reverence for the Madonna and her Child found expression in new pity and tenderness toward children and a willingness to forgive and help even those sad daughters of Eve who had lost the exquisite virtues that made Mary fair before men and full of grace in the sight of God.

All this the Catholic knows in the endlessly repeated experience of the Church. The world could never again frankly worship sinful women, nor could it be completely merciless to little children. It could not sneer at good women or thrust deeper into her muddied despair the sinful woman—not after a woman had carried in her body and rocked in her arms the God of heaven and earth.

Yet deep in his soul the Catholic knows that the happiness that comes through Mary is even fuller. Again answering a fundamental human craving, God has given to him personally a mother to watch over him as not even the most loving earthly mother can, a mother who with sweet and insistent power pleads his cause with his elder brother, her grateful Son.

Like all the gifts of God, Mary belongs to the individual soul. She is my mother. She is interested in me because I am her adopted son, who, though I slew her Son and Savior, was entrusted to her in Christ's dying testament.

Faith and human experience join hands where Mary is concerned. No one else in all the world feels toward a child the interest that a mother feels. The interest with which she regards his first stumbling steps rises in unending crescendo as she watches him stride in triumph through his career or come staggering back in devastating failure. Then since faith assures me that God's mother is my mother too, I realize with intensest joy that Mary holds me deep in the concern of her heart.

Mary regards me with a double interest. My career is of intimate concern to her Son. My successes serve to advance His kingdom. My sins strike at His crucified body.

My failures set back His cause. My brief heroisms delight His Sacred Heart. Mary watches my life with an interest that is part of her motherly interest in all that promotes or impedes the cause for which her Son lived and died.

But her interest goes far beyond that. When during her own agony beneath her Son's cross she mystically accepted the motherhood of humanity, I became of deep concern to her because I was and am her child. Motherlike her heart beats high when I triumph. Yearningly she leans above me when I fall. With gladness she applauds my little victories. I may hide in her forgiving, maternal embrace my bleeding, battered head, and with it my failure and sins.

The only limit to a mother's goodness is the limit of her power. What she can do for her children, she does most eagerly. She stands baffled and distressed before the things that are beyond her power. Human mothers are thwarted again and again by the realization that they lack the power to do what love demands and unselfishness desires.

Not so my mother who is God's mother. Human like myself, through her divine maternity she nevertheless attained to power that is measured, not by her own personal greatness, but by the infinite gratitude of her divine Son.

A cup of cold water given in His name, Christ assured His followers, would win for the giver eternal life. The jar of ointment broken over His feet by the sinner of Magdala won her a place in the Passion of Good Friday, the Resurrection of Easter, the endless story of His Gospel. A dying thief on a cross makes a broken prayer of faith and is given the promise of companionship with Christ in paradise.

What then must be the grateful heart of Christ toward Mary? She gave, not a cup of water, but the milk of her breast; not the momentary washing of His feet, but the servantlike care of His Infancy and Boyhood; not a passing act of faith, but a lifetime of devotion. These she gave from the moment that she called herself His little handmaid till the dark afternoon when she followed His way of the cross and shared His agony and death.

Mary was His nurse and only human teacher, His companion and gracious housekeeper. She made the infant garments that swaddled Him and the seamless robe He wore during His public life. She prepared His food and watched while He slept. Her love was often the only human affection to gladden His days among His own, to whom He came and who received Him not.

Could such a mother ask anything of such a Son and be refused, especially when she asks for those younger brothers and sisters whom He, dying, committed to her care?

Confidently then the sons and daughters of that mother, whose power is limited only by the gratitude of God, lift their hands in petition. She has a mother's heart for love. She has a mother's power to intercede. We know with certain faith that she will talk for us to her divine Son. We know that that divine Son will out of gratitude to His mother answer her requests.

Christ was good when He gave us a mother for our happiness. He knew that we would often stand abashed and ashamed even before Him. It is sometimes difficult to realize that a crucified Christ will hear us when we beg Him to forgive the sins that hold Him nailed to the cross. But we did not crucify Mary; we did not slay our mother. Tearfully we turn to her, begging her to ask for us the pardon that we do not deserve.

Someday Christ will judge us, justly and with inexorable regard for right and wrong. How sweetly it accords with God's mercy that we may bind to us through pity and love and maternal sympathy the mother of our judge.

Since she shared with her divine Son all the experiences of human life, she regards with an understanding born of a common experience the problems we lay at her feet. Our poverty and weakness, our failures and exiles, the loss of friends and position, the thousand great and small trials that crowd our life—these she knows through that life which won for her the title Mother of Sorrows. Knowing sorrow, she touches our sorrows and turns them into joy.

God Himself knew the importance of good women to the world when He gave Mary, the Virgin mother, to all mankind. He knew the longing of our hearts for a mother's understanding. So He decreed that when death took from us the mother who bore us upon earth a heavenly mother would safeguard us with a love and a power beyond those of the mother we had lost.

In happiness the Catholic world turns to Mary and through her to Christ. The mother lifts her infant to the Madonna and feels new joy in her motherhood. The young woman struggling against a sweet temptation looks up into the clear eyes of this pure Virgin and sets her ideals a little higher and makes her courage a little firmer. The young man looks upon the girl he may someday marry and reverences her because of the mother in whose footsteps she will walk. From the little child who is learning his sweet "Hail, Mary," to the old man who remembers that Joseph died in the arms of his spotless bride, the whole Catholic world in temptation and trial, in joy and success, in sorrow and failure moves happily and securely under the outstretched blue of Mary's mantle, which some men call the sky.

Unhappy that world that has turned from Mary to the stupid, lustful, destructive women who fill earth with tears and disillusionment. Happy the world and happy the souls that have taken Mary as their mother and model.



## *The Happiness That Death Cannot Destroy*

IN THE center of their banquet tables the old Egyptians placed as the chief ornament a grinning human skull.

Looking at its empty sockets, its fleshless jaws, and its endlessly sneering mouth, they cried, "Someday we shall look like that. So let us seize whatever the moment offers us. Death will tear from us our loves, our gold, our homes, the abundance supplied by the Nile and by the richest wheat fields. Let us be merry while we may, for life runs on swift feet toward a lifeless skull."

They sought oblivion in drink and lust and uncontrolled merriment, trying to forget the horror of the grave.

Centuries later into that same Egypt came the first Christian monks. They built rude cells where they might love God in peace. Before them on their rough tables they placed an ugly skull. Looking upon it, they cried, "Someday our bodies shall be like that skull. But when the day comes, and our skulls are stripped of their fair flesh, our souls will stand triumphant in the presence of God. Nothing will be lost of the things we love. In God's eternal mansions we shall find our friends and our loved ones. Our minds shall go endlessly questing into infinite truth. Our hearts shall throb with the revelation of eternal beauty. Even that grinning skull will be re clothed with immortal flesh and reunited in endless happiness with its soul."

In the midst of their voluntary penances and renunciations they smiled gaily into the face of God. They even dug their own graves, which were to be the gateway to their immortal happiness and joy.

There is no questioning the fact that for the man without faith death ruins everything. Despite the whistling-in-the-dark attitude of modern pagans, death has never lost its terror for them. Always—in Christ's words—it is death the

thief. Death tramples under its feet the roses of love. It stills laughter and song. It takes from the hand of the artist his brush and chisel, from the scientist his unfinished experiment, from the scholar his precious books and manuscripts, from the genius his uncompleted achievement—as it takes from the arms of the mother her child, from the husband his wife, from the lover his fair young sweetheart. Friends scuttle away, and the house grows terrifyingly silent as death enters. And man, poised before death pushes him into the cold arms of the grave, peers with frightened eyes first at the life he is leaving unfinished, uncompleted, and then into the dismal ugliness that rises black and foreboding before him.

No man has willingly believed that the grave is the end, that the beauty and wisdom, the goodness and genius of all times is really rotting in decaying monuments. Mankind has always been convinced that beyond the grave is life. But what kind of life? How fair an exchange for this precious life that is now slipping off like a cape, this life old but familiarly dear? When the modern pagan dares face the inescapable fact of death at all, he asks the same pathetic questions.

“If only,” cries the pagan, “one of our fellows would come back from the dead. If only he could tell us what lies beyond the tomb.”

So history shows us men dabbling in necromancy, the dread science of communication with the dead. Within our own times the hysteria of spiritualism was just another futile effort to reach the dead and learn from them the secrets of life after death. Men cannot endure the thought that death ends an existence that has hardly begun. With so much of love still in our hearts, must we so soon stop loving? With so little of wisdom and knowledge in our minds, must we so soon stop learning? With our achievements just the silly surface-scrapings permitted in our brief span of years, must our activity stop so soon? Cannot someone reassure us now about the hereafter? Must we go on living in the unhappiness of uncertainty? If we are not reassured, our very happiness makes us miserable as in the midst of our joys we suspect that death means the loss of all those precious things

that make us happy. Give us a man who from experience can tell us of life beyond death.

And such a man was given us.

Jesus Christ died. He was put to death competently and effectively; at the end His heart was pierced in order that the last drops of blood and water might flow away from Him. They buried Him—and with Him the world's happiness—in a sealed tomb.

But He broke the inescapable chains of death, smashed the prison of the grave. And in the same body and with the same sweet tenderness toward His friends and forgiveness toward His betrayers that had marked Him in life, He walked the earth, radiant and glorious. In His own person He proved to us that all that He had preached of immortality and priceless destiny was divinely true.

Then at last faith knew that man was immortal and that it lay within his power to pattern that immortality on the glorious, triumphant, endlessly happy immortality of Jesus Christ Himself.

Man would continue to live with the personality that made him an individual—but with his imperfections burned away. At death man would begin to live the new life for which all other living was preparation, a life of love and knowledge and power and endless achievement under the smiling approval of a heavenly Father.

At once the life that men led on earth became reasonable and purposeful. All the best instincts of the human mind that insisted that beyond this life was another life—lived perhaps in the Elysian Fields, in Valhalla, in the Islands of the Blessed, in the happy hunting ground, in Abraham's bosom. Having given these instincts, God had a full determination to satisfy them. For those who lived as men should live, for those who walked in the companionship of Christ, there was the City of God, heaven, that eternal kingdom compared with which all kingdoms of earth were ephemeral and valueless.

Life had become reasonable. Men now knew that this earth was a proving ground; the brief business of living was

man's opportunity to prove to his Father that he deserved at least a little the eternal joy prepared for him.

If there was another life, then the unpaid debts, the unsolved problems, the unfinished business, the untasted joys, the inadequacies could all be balanced. Life's most difficult problems would be clarified in the light of divine wisdom. Life's most arduous road led upward toward a Father's mansion. Life's joys were a faint glimmer of the endless happiness prepared for those loyal sons and daughters who to the best of their powers did their Father's business.

Life was not snuffed out in death. Rather, in St. Paul's magnificent figure of speech, life was like a grain of wheat planted in the earth to rise in the full fruition of completeness and perfection.

Friends and lovers were not snatched away from us and swallowed up in black, intolerable oblivion. They slipped through the gateway across which was deepest happiness; they knew us, and loved us, and waited for us to join them in the perfect bliss of God's presence.

Modern pagans have sneered at what they like to picture as the Christian heaven. They have laughed at its "palms and harps, golden streets and ivory gates, wings and angel choruses, and the hosannas of the saints." It is as silly to sneer at that picture as it is to sneer at the lovely figures of speech by which a lover describes the swanlike neck, the raven hair, the lily hands, the rosebud lips of his beloved. Pity the poor pagans who cannot understand the joys of heaven because they boggle at a simile.

The Catholic knows that heaven means the eternal possession of God Himself. Our restless quest for truth and beauty, the great longing by which we want to know and love and be loved will at last be satisfied with that possession of God. In the infinite God are all truth, all beauty. Every detail of earth's perfection is a small copy of God. Every truth that the mind discovers with laborious searching is founded on the divine essence. Heaven brings us face to face with this exhaustless beauty and truth.

If the explorer or the scientist, the writer or the historian attains to heights of happiness when he discovers a fragment of truth, who can imagine or describe the happiness of the human being who suddenly discovers the source of all that truth as he looks upon its author, God?

There is no other human joy like the joy of loving and being loved. Yet on earth the purest love is limited and sometimes even wearisome, ending in boredom or in death. In spite of repeated failures of love the heart continues to crave a love that would be endlessly, completely satisfying.

In heaven the heart finds that love. God is infinitely beautiful; He is the great exemplar to which all human beauty bears some faint resemblance. He loves us with an everlasting love that incredibly enough craves our love in return. The soul standing before God's infinite beauty reaches out with a glad cry, knowing that throughout eternity love will rise in a glorious tidal wave as new beauties and perfections are endlessly revealed.

Heaven a place of boredom or weariness or inactivity? Why at the last we shall be released for the supreme activities of our soul: the endless exploring of the infinite truth that is God, the endless loving and being loved by the God whose beauty is faintly suggested in the glory of sunsets, the calm face of a woman, the warm comradeship of men, the unselfish love of mothers, the exquisite contours of flowers and precious stones, the inexhaustible glory of the earth and sky He fashioned.

Eternity will be all too short for our rising to a fuller and ever developing knowledge of God's limitless truth, for our sinking ourselves ever deeper in the boundless love of an infinite lover.

Life for the man with faith? The life of the believer is the happiest life in the world.

For the man without faith life is lived under the unbroken darkness of night or the misty, disturbing clouds that cannot be pierced. The man without faith finds the world without meaning and the future without real hope.

The man with faith looks upon life and knows that, whatever the problems, the difficulties, the soiling effects of sin, life is a beautiful and glorious adventure. Rising from its source in God, life is awakened through the great love of a divine Father, who prepared this earth for His beloved sons and daughters. Life moves, not through uncertainties and doubts, but through the white, piercing light of faith.

There is happiness to be found by the man who beats back the wolves of sin and keeps himself young and strong and decent through integrity of character and a deep regard for virtue and the heroism of sanctity. Over all of life broods the tender love of an infinite Father.

At our side as we walk through life is a divine comrade, a leader, a lover. We can take our bruises and joys to the understanding heart of a heavenly mother. We move in the company of the world's noblest men and women.

And finally there awaits us the endless happiness of seeing God and knowing and loving and possessing Him together with all the dear things of experience that we have ever known and loved. Christ the divine teacher has guaranteed this to us and provided it by His own Resurrection from the dead.

This is the destiny of the man who believes.

All this is bound together in the glorious synthesis of the life that God has given to the man who prays on bended knees for the happiness of faith.









