

His discretion in action was outshone only by his discretion in words. He has left behind him a series of volumes in which no useless word or phrase is employed in carrying his meaning to his readers. No secret—and how many there must have been locked away in that venerable heart—ever escaped his lips. No uncharitable word was ever uttered in his conversations or in the interviews he granted. He was by nature and training a naturally good and upright man. From his parents and teachers he inherited a simple piety and a profound faith in God and in His Holy Church. His wisdom was full grown early in his career, for, even as a young Bishop, it was evident that the queenly virtue affected his whole character and ordered all things sweetly in his life.

Wisdom he loved from his youth; her he sought and took for his spouse and became a lover of her beauty, for "it is she that teacheth the knowledge of the world, of men and of God, and is the chooser of all His works." Wisdom taught him temperance, and prudence, and justice, and fortitude. And in the words of Holy Writ, it was for Wisdom's sake that he had glory among the multitude, and honor among the ancients, even though in years he was ever younger than his contemporaries. "By the means of her," he might have said, "I shall have immortality, and shall leave behind me an everlasting memory to them that come after me." There is much that is reminiscent of St. Francis de Sales in his life; and it was precisely in his imitation of the saintly Bishop of Geneva—and who shall say that it was not a conscious following?—that James Gibbons came nearest to his fellow-countrymen. He realised and he preached, as St. Francis de Sales did, that the greatest evil in any nation is discouragement. He was an incorrigible optimist, both secular and religious, and his messages were always couched in living words of hope and courage. He never failed to say the consoling thing to a friend in trouble or in bereavement, or to the nation in time of crisis. Great nations have always lived on the verge of war, and his quieting influence with the highest and the lowliest at doubtful moments during the past 50 years is now the best recognised of all his civic virtues. As the years pass, his spiritual lineaments will become even more distinct and impressive. When the call came that separated him from the world of men and affairs and bade him enter his Father's house for eternal reward, a voice was heard saying: "Write—Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them—*opera enim illorum sequuntur illos*." He was the last of the 767 bishops who attended the Vatican Council in 1870, and of the 75 American bishops who sat in the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884.

There is much of value in the original meaning of the old Roman word Pontiff, bridge-builder, when applied to James Gibbons and his works. Born 18 years after Archbishop John Carroll's death, and two years after that of Charles Carroll, he was the bridge between colonial and modern America. As a boy, both in Baltimore and in Ireland, he must have conversed with those who had known the protobishop of the Catholic Church in the United States, and with those also who had been familiar with the teachings of the early patriots—Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, and Charles Carroll. The very monuments and scenes of his native city were particularly eloquent of the purest American patriotism. He imbibed from Archbishop Carroll his sturdy allegiance to Rome as the spiritual head of the Church, also his determination that Catholic life in the new state should be kept free from foreign interference or dominance. He bridged over the century between the idealism of Washington and the idealism of the present, for he had lived in those robust times when the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were more than merely historic documents in the nation's life, and he had imbibed the spirit of their creators and their first prophets. The Americanism of James Gibbons came from the purest sources, and he was ever the vindicator of the principles contained in those two immortal papers. The last pages from his pen were devoted to the defence of the Constitution. It is this early American spirit which speaks to us in his fine sermon *Will the American Republic Endure?* He never held with the pessimistic prophets who predicted that our Government would

soon come to an end and that it was already in the throes of dissolution. He had heard too often to be troubled by it the cry of those who said that disaster was coming unless their favorite candidate were elected. He had been listening to these dire prognostications for over half a century. Whenever occasion called for it, he stated strongly his belief in the stability and endurance of the Republic, basing it chiefly on our unique and original doctrine of religious liberty. In his last public utterance (February 19, 1921) he said:

"As the years go by I am more than ever convinced that the Constitution of the United States is the greatest instrument of government that ever issued from the hand of man. . . . For the first time in the history of mankind religious liberty was here secured to all men as a right. . . . No one knows better than myself what a line of demarcation and separation religion can cut in this country from ocean to ocean, and no one has been more eager and earnest in his effort to keep down and repress religious distinction. I fear no enemy from without. The enemy I fear is he who, forgetting human nature and the history of Europe, would raise the question of another's religious belief, and introduce strife and discord into the life of our country. . . . Fortunately our common law protects every American in his religious belief, as it protects him in his civil rights, so that whatever offences may be occasionally committed here in this respect are local and temporary, and are universally regarded as un-American and are for this reason short-lived. The great wrongs which men have suffered elsewhere in respect of religion are here unthinkable. . . ."

He often repeated in his public utterances the phrase: "A land where we have authority without despotism and liberty without license." His pure and original Americanism was above party and above partisanship. Born in an era which saw the full-flowering of Washington's ideal of our foreign relations—friendship with all; alliance with none—he died at the outset of a threatened lapse from this saving conviction. I would not say that he regretted the change he saw in a certain recent trend of American political thought, but he belonged to an older school of statesmen, and he died in the persuasion that so far the traditional policy of his country had been its strongest asset.

His later years saw the passing of the great leaders of American Catholicism. Archbishop Carroll was a memory though a potent one, when James Gibbons saw the light in Baltimore, on July 23, 1834. Archbishop Hughes and the two Kendricks, Martin John Spalding and Patrick John Ryan, John Joseph Williams and Patrick Riordan, John Ireland, John Lancaster Spalding, and John Joseph Keane—all these he watched pass into the shadows, while his own life went on, seemingly secure against every attack of the grim reaper. He witnessed a Catholic growth within the nation's borders, seldom granted to a patriarch of his people, except to great figures like Patrick of Ireland, Boniface of Germany, or Cyril and Methodius of the Slavs. And though his heart beat constantly with rejoicing for that growth, it was with no narrow or selfish satisfaction. "Our joy," he wrote in 1889, "rests on broader grounds. We rejoice for our country's sake, firmly believing that the progress of Christian faith will contribute to the stability and perpetuity of the government . . . to proclaim loyalty an a government like ours is, as it ought to be, a spontaneous act of love, as well as a duty to all who preach the Gospel." He saw the rise and explosion of domestic controversies, was meek and pacific amid the contestants, and lived to see such contentions forgotten and forgiven. His was the last voice of the older American Hierarchy, and he held aloft, fair and unblemished, in spite of all turmoils, the traditional light which guided the great prelates of the past in their relations with one another, with the national government, and with the Holy See. It was in no small measure his charity and gentleness, his firmness and foresight, which precluded disunion at every stage of our progress; and no one who knows the past 50 years will deny that there were serious dangers abroad in the land during that period. His reconstruction work after the Civil War is the least known of all his achievements, but it stands out as part of his best efforts toward the assimilation of Catholic doctrine to modern American conditions. Through him, during all these years, our Hierarchy spoke habitually and unanimously to the