

Faith of Our Fathers

[A WEEKLY INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG AND OLD.]

OF THE INEFFABLE GOODNESS AND LOVE OF GOD
TOWARDS MAN AND OUR DUTY IN GRATITUDE
TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

The first is, that in bestowing this favor upon us, Almighty God, out of His pure goodness and predilection for us, gave us the preference to an infinite number of others, whom He could have produced to being instead of us, but who never were, and never will be, brought to light. The infinite wisdom of the Creator saw from all eternity in the most distinct order, all that innumerable multitude of human creatures, which it was possible for His Almighty power to create, and being resolved according to the views of His incomprehensible providence, to give existence only to a determinate number, He was pleased to make choice of us to be of that happy number, leaving all the rest in an eternal nothing! How highly favored are we by this election! What singular privilege is here shown to us! The question was the bestowing of one of the greatest of favors: the number of those who were capable of receiving it was infinite; none of them had the smallest merit which could entitle them to a preference; all were upon a perfect equality; all were equally nothing. Why then exclude such infinite numbers, and favor us? why give us the preference to them, who were all equally deserving? No other answer can be given to this question, but because it was the goodwill and pleasure of God to do so: it was the sole effect of His love for us, to prefer us to so many thousands. But how greatly does this predilection on the part of God increase our obligation to Him? What an immense favor was done to Noah and his family when they were saved from the common destruction in which all the rest of mankind was involved? How great was the predilection shown to Lot, in delivering him alone from the dreadful perdition to which all his fellow-citizens in Sodom were condemned? How great then the love shown to us by Almighty God, in bringing us to *being*, preferably to so many others, and extricating us from that eternal nothing in which millions of possible creatures must remain for ever? Especially when we reflect that Noah and Lot were good men, friends and servants of God, unstained by the crimes, which brought such a judgment on the others; but we had no kind of merit, no claim, no title on our part, which could in the smallest degree move God to give us the preference.

The second consideration on this matter is this: that instead of having any merit on our part to move God to prefer us to others, and bring us into *being*, there were the strongest reasons against it: to wit, the numberless crimes and injuries which we have committed against Him since we had our *being*; the abuse of that free will with which He has adorned us, and which is the highest ornament of our nature; and our unparalleled ingratitude in making use of our very numbers, powers, and faculties, and of the numberless benefits He has bestowed upon us, as so many arms by which to affront and offend Him. All this He foresaw distinctly before He created us, yea, He saw it from all eternity, for the works of all flesh are before Him, and there is nothing hid from His eyes; He seeth from eternity to eternity, and there is nothing wonderful before Him" (Eccles. xxix. 24). Yet nothing of all this was able to hinder the effects of His predilection for us. "I see," says He, "the injuries such an one will do if I create him. I see the abuse he will make of all his faculties both of soul and body, to My dishonor; nevertheless let My goodness triumph over his ingratitude. I will create him preferably to others, though I know that many of these others would be more faithful and grateful to Me." Here we see a prodigy of love indeed beyond all example, and which, if we have any feeling in our heart at all, cannot fail to melt it down in affections of the most sensible gratitude towards so merciful and bounteous a Father. Add to all this, in the third place, that He not only gave us our *being*, for once when He first made us, but He continues to renew the same gift every moment of our existence by His continual conservation, without which we should, if left to ourselves, in an instant return to our original nothing; and though our daily sins against Him justly deserve that He should abandon us and reduce us again to non-existence, yet His infinite goodness still bears with our infidelity, and keeps us in being, to give us time and place for repentance.

Lastly, He not only preserves us in *being*, but He continues also to preserve all our senses, powers, and faculties, and to co-operate with us in every, even the smallest

use, we make of any of them; for as without His conservation we could not subsist one moment in being; so without His continual co-operation we could not move hand nor foot nor tongue, nor use any one of those faculties He has given us; for "It is He who giveth to all, life and breath and all things," and it is "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 25, 28); and therefore the prophet Isaiah says to Him, "Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works for us" (Is. xxvi. 12). What stupendous goodness is here again displayed! What a total dependence have we upon our God! What a faithful and assiduous assistance does He give us. But what return of gratitude do we owe to Him for it!

If now, in the *second place*, we leave this little world of our own *being* and take a view of the great world around us, what amazing effects of the infinite goodness of God towards us, do everywhere present themselves before us! wherever we turn our eyes we find the footsteps of His love, every creature we perceive about us is a proof of His goodwill to us; every creature co-operates to our service, to supply our wants; to relieve our necessity, or to afford us some convenience or comfort: and every one of course displays the beneficent hand of God in having created us for that purpose. The heavenly bodies, in their unwearied circuit, enlighten our daily habitation, and were created to shine in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night; for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years" (Gen. i. 14). Who can enumerate the numberless benefits we reap from the fire, the water, and the air? What innumerable services do we receive from the earth, both in the vast variety of plants, and herbs, and fruits, and trees which it produces on its surface, and the manifold treasures of useful minerals it contains in its bowels? What shall we say of the living creatures about us, which yield us food and raiment in such variety and abundance, and labor and toil in any way we please both for our service and pleasure? All these things the goodness of God created for the use and service of man; whom "He set over the works of His hands; He subjected all things under His feet, all sheep and oxen; moreover the beasts also of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, that pass through the paths of the sea" (Ps. viii. 6); that all might contribute to his happiness, and convince him of the unbounded extent of the Divine goodness towards him. Let us open our eyes and look around us, and see if there be any one thing we have occasion for, but He has provided for us. What delicacy of love has not our good God shown us even in the minutest things? What gratitude and love ought we not then to return to Him for such unmerited goodness.

Wedding Bells

WALSH—COONEY.

The wedding was solemnised on the 27th ult. at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Gore, by the Very Rev. Father O'Donnell (who also celebrated a Nuptial Mass), of John Joseph, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. P. Walsh, of Menzies' Ferry, and Annie Marea, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Cooney, of Brydone. The church was appropriately decorated by friends of the bride. The bride entered the church on the arm of her father, and was becomingly attired in a beautiful cream coat frock daintily tucked and hand-embroidered. She also wore a white satin hat with white ostrich feathers, and a white fox necklet, and carried a bouquet of white chrysanthemums and winter roses, relieved with similarly-colored streamers. Miss Kathleen Cooney (sister of the bride) as bridesmaid, was dressed in a cream frock and black picture hat. She carried a bouquet of heliotrope chrysanthemums and white streamers. The bridegroom's brother (Mr. J. R. Walsh) was best man. Mr. P. Brennan played the "Wedding March" as the bridal party left the church. The bridegroom's gift to the bride was a brown fur coat, and to the bridesmaid a "Nellie Stewart" bangle. The bride's gift to the bridegroom was a travelling rug, and the best man received a dressing case. After the ceremony, a company numbering well over 70 partook of an excellent breakfast at the Cosy Tea Rooms, where the usual toasts were duly honored. The newly-wedded couple, who were the recipients of many useful and valuable presents, including cheques, left by the afternoon's express for the north, the bride travelling in a nigger brown gabardine costume, trimmed with fur and embroidery to match. A smart toque and footwear of a similar color were also worn. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. P. Walsh entertained a large number of friends at a social at their home at Menzies' Ferry.