

**LETTERS FROM
A YOUNG
TRAPPIST MONK
TO HIS MOTHER**

By Rev. Charles N. Raley

LETTERS FROM A
YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK
TO HIS MOTHER
and
THE THREE PRISONERS

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By

The Reverend Charles N. Raley
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By C. N. Raley

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR

from

President George Hermann Derry, S. T. B., Ph. D.,
LL. D., K. C. S. G.

of

Marygrove College,
Detroit.

The Reverend Charles N. Raley,
New Melleray Abbey
Peosta, Iowa.

My dear Father Charles:

With eyes filmed over with an unwonted mist, while all the soul within me rebounds to the inspiration you have literally conjured from on high, I am sending you a whole heartfelt of thanks; these simple and unpretentious letters of yours lift a veil, and to the attentive eye reveal a vista,—startling at first but growing on us progressively as we read—of a phase of our Catholic heritage all too unfamiliar in this hurried and harried but highly self-satisfied land of ours.

An American boy becomes a Trappist monk: here the heart of that boy—just an ordinary boy, lively, impetuous, “red-blooded”, even pious if you will, but no mollycoddled sissy or goody-goody prig,—tosses off, in unstudied terms of joyous affection for the folks at home, a human document overflowing with unconscious “data” on the psychology of youth.

Even with half a chance, out of the resources of our Catholic culture and the Faith, what creature

of God exhibits traits so attractive or,—if mistaken notions of the word do not affright,—what person could be expected to possess in such abundance the raw material of sanctity itself, as the average happy, healthy, wholesome-hearted American boy?

Hence, for thoughtful parents, teachers, pastors and college instructors, lay or religious, who feel some concern for the souls of that Catholic Young America now growing up amid our pagan civilization, I can conceive of few intellectual tonics more bracing than a little reflection on the hitherto unsuspected opportunities, for the rising generation, that quite cheerfully come to mind on the perusal of these first impressions of an American boy who has embraced the monastic life.

American boy, Trappist monk; at first blush, however, what ideas would seem more disparate, more difficult to conjoin, less likely to merge into a career, into a prospect that our young hopefuls would pause even for a moment to ponder as a practicable suggestion? Keen observers, not in America only but the world over, do lament the conditions that seem to soften and irreparably to sap the fibre of the souls of modern youth: the comforts so common at home, the example of pleasure-loving parents, self-sacrifice forgotten or derided or devoted exclusively to the pursuit of self and power, authority everywhere relaxing, uncongenial effort eliminated from the fashionable pedagogy of the schools, sports, and spirit of precocious dissipation, the perils of the automobile, unsupervised social distraction, the heroes of the comic strips and the heroines of soul-murdering movies all setting up, in terms of Hollywood, the standards of early thought and aspiration:—facing such paganized corruption,

how many youths today, even before the age of adolescence or at the latest during high-school years, resist the lure to vow away their lives irrevocably to careers that identify success with the fascination of a "good time"?

Yet there still abides the Fascination of Christ: And did not Christ assure us that, once lifted up from earth, the Son of Man would draw all hearts unto Himself? Only lift up Christ once more for the yearning eyes of Catholic Young America to see: After half a century of close contact with our American Catholic education, I proclaim my deliberate conviction that, if only some St. Bernard might arise and fare through our higher institutes of Catholic learning today and, with the eloquence of burning love, lift up Christ to the still unspoiled hearts of our American Catholic Youth,—the Lips of Truth would stand discredited if we failed to see again arising, near every great metropolitan centre, Cistercian cloisters that, in number, in personnel, in dedication to the divinum opus of penance and prayer and praise, would far transcend those historic sanctuaries that everywhere sprang up in the footsteps of Bernard throughout the France of an elder and much less propitious day.

Or will such hopes prove fondly illusive? After the grace of God, in the loving kindness of His Providential design for the America of to-morrow, it will probably all depend on whether our higher education can still emulate and reproduce that ideal figure we see depicted, indirectly but unmistakably, in shaded, unintended tones but in all the more clear and sharp relief, between the lines of all these letters,—that unobtrusive figure with the heart of gold, the valiant Catholic woman who, by the fervor of

her faith and her self-forgetting, sacrificial love, can somehow merit the high and holy distinction of becoming the happy Mother of an even happier young Monk.

Again assuring you of my gratitude for the edification I have enjoyed from the spirit of faith, and of cloistral peace and joy, that breathes so beautifully through all these pages from your pen, and commending myself, as ever and as of old, to Your Reverence's Holy Sacrifices and prayers, I remain, my dear Father Charles, cordially and sincerely,

Your friend from the long ago,

George Hermann Derry

President

February 2, 1935

FIRST LETTER FROM A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey
Peosta, Iowa.

Dearest Mother:

Your sweet letter reached me a few days ago, but this is the first opportunity I have had to answer. Your letter was so full of peace and happiness, that I almost believe you are a monk (I don't know the feminine of monk, and I am afraid to fool with the word, lest my sister accuse me of making you out a monk-ey, ha! ha!) Excuse this little excursion. Yes, your beautiful and pious life rivals that of a good monk.

Do you remember the kind of letters I wrote you bi-monthly when I was in college? Sometimes they dealt with roads, dirt, macadam, concrete, etc., and how New York retained the board-road, possibly as a souvenir. Then I wrote you of hogs, and told you that I had visited a slaughter house in Jersey and saw them drive the hogs into the stalls, and described the various changes the hogs underwent till they came out sausages, ready to eat. Well, when I recall all those foolish letters, and how you would answer saying, "Why don't you tell me something of yourself, what in the world do I want to hear of roads and hogs?" then I would chuckle to myself, till my sides ached, while I pictured my brother and sister reading these letters over and over to you, as you thought there might be something in them which you did not wish to miss.

I could picture sister and brother laughing too, and you would tell them, "Go on, I can't make any sense out of Charles' writing."

But now, I am a monk, and hence, can't wander around to get any new ideas. I know, dearest Mother, I am just exhausting your patience, for I know you wish to hear of my present life and its surroundings. It would take me too far afield, to tell you of everything that goes on in a monk's life from the time he rises at 2 A. M. until he retires at 7 P. M. So, I will pick out a few incidents which may interest you.

You know that in every religious order there are grades. In this Monastery there are forty-two monks. Some of them enter with the desire of becoming priests, while others, either from humility or age, or a lack of desire to study, or fear of the responsibility of the priesthood, enter to do the work of the house or farm. They realize that they participate in all the merits, as they belong to the community. Here, at New Melleray, we have eight priests, sixteen choir brothers and eighteen lay brothers. Two or three times a week, we gather in the Chapter Room and the Father Superior gives us a little exhortation. On feast days, one of the other fathers gives a little sermon; in fact, all of us have to take turns preaching. Of course, sister and brother may probably smile when they think of me preaching. Some of my friends may imagine that I have lost my voice, (knowing our rule calls for perpetual silence,) but my voice is vigorous yet. You know, the ground that lies long fallow often produces the biggest crops.

Sometimes, the Father Superior will tell us of happenings in the outer world. The other day, he made us laugh. Indeed, that night during the great silence, I could not refrain from chuckling as I went to my cell. He said that there were some visitors to

the Monastery a few days previous, among whom was a man who had never been into a Catholic church, much less into a Monastery. When this man left, he remarked to his companions, "That place is the most loyal, the most patriotic place I have ever entered. I have visited homes, where the history or the constitution of the U. S. could be found on the shelves, where a flag pole was in the yard; I have seen flags displayed on Decoration Day on automobiles and in the cemeteries; I have observed people stand at the singing of 'America', but I saw in that Monastery an exhibition of loyalty and patriotism I never saw elsewhere. As I entered the Chapel I noticed two altars, one on either side of the Chapel, and on those altars were coverlets of purple hanging a little over the front, with gold letters hemmed in them. One Read, "Have Mercy on U. S." and the other "Pray for U. S."

Mother, you should see my robe. It is all white or cream colored and over it is the scapular, or black piece of cloth, about eighteen inches wide, with an opening for the head to go through, falling down the front and back. When I go to chant, I wear over this a beautiful white cloak. I am sure you would be proud of me and even call me handsome.

Of course, there is labor for all. In the morning and the afternoon, we have a little manual exercise, such as driving a team of horses, hauling wood, etc. I'll bet you could not guess the names of the two horses I drive. Well, one was born on the 14th. of June and the other one in a stream or run of water. So—their names are "Flag" and "Brook." We have a colt whose mother is named "Minnie" and we call it "Ha! Ha!"

Each of us has an assigned duty. One looks after the bees and is called "Brother Hive;" another leads the chanting—"Brother Do-Fa;" another the organ—"Brother Fingers;" another the candles—"Brother Wax." These names are not real, only little gestures to make my letter more spicy. I am the Sacristan—I also mend watches and do a little electrical work. It is my duty to see that everything is prepared for Mass, marking the missal etc., and to have a general care of the Chapel, such as closing the windows in case of storms. In the summer, we are allowed an hour's rest at noon. It seems to be a peculiarity of the heavens to send storms just at this period, and often I have to jump from my bed and run without my shoes to close the windows. My duty at times calls for me to climb up on the roof to straighten out the ropes on the bells or to replace the slate. Then I am permitted to don overalls, lest my habit trip me and bring to a sudden end my Trappist life. There is no chance to get blue here, for every minute of the day is occupied, and you are so tired at night that you are dreaming of angels by the time you hit the hay—that is not a figure of speech, as our beds are of straw, covered with canvass.

Do you remember how I liked juicy steaks, broiled mackerel, poached eggs and how often I had to take a dose of castor oil—well, there is no need of castor oil here, as meat, fish or eggs are not on the menu. The bell is ringing for vespers—I shall supplement this letter with other doings of the Monastery in my next. With love to all, from your monkish son.

Charles.

THE SECOND LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey,
Peosta, Iowa.

Dearest Mother:—

It was very consoling to me when I read your sweet answer to my letter—my first as a monk to you. You are a darling and a real Mother, so solicitous about me and the step I have taken. It was most motherly of you to impress upon me that your arms are ever open to receive your boy, if fatigue or weariness or dissatisfaction or unhappiness comes upon him. You say the neighbors are likewise anxious about me, telling you all the queer and hard trials connected with this life, and wondering if I would persevere.

These neighbors remind me of the young men who went to the old man Scipio to question him about his state of mind. They too, wondered how the old man could be so cheerful and happy in his old age. Now, Scipio told the young men to sit down and he would give them five reasons for peace and happiness in old age. You can tell the good neighbors that they can find these reasons in Cicero's "De Senectute". I shall not recall them here, but I shall follow Scipio's lead and give the five reasons for my choice of a Trappist life, and you may read them to your neighbors.

Let me begin with a quotation. . . "Suae quisque vitae pictor est, artifex hujus operis est voluntas." It says, that each one must design his own life, and his will must be the determining factor in this work.

The first reason is Vocation. I felt I had a calling to the Trappist life. When one is trying to find the state of life best adapted to his peculiar make-up, there are many angles to be considered. Imagine yourself standing on a high mountain, overlooking the forests, vales and cities scattered here and there in the valleys below, and the great ocean beyond. In those cities you see houses of all makes—mansions, mediocre homes and huts. You see the variety of people inhabiting these houses; some in silks, some in rags; some swollen with greed, some languishing from need; and putting before your mind's eye a powerful magnifying glass, you can almost read the hearts of these people and see the joy, happiness, sorrow and misery in the different homes, and you ask yourself, "why this great difference? Why this conglomeration of joy and sorrow; of happiness and misery?" And your answer is, 'that this is not an easy problem to solve.'

Maybe some were thoughtful, some were hasty; some leaped without looking, jumped without measuring; some rushed in where angels would fear to tread; they did not weigh the future, they were engulfed in the present. The conclusion is, that before one chooses a state of life, he should consider carefully the consequences.

I am reminded of a certain young lady who desired to become a nun, but did not know which order of nuns appealed to her; so she went first to one convent and then to the other, visiting for a week at a time to acquaint herself with the mode of life peculiar to each. She was dissatisfied with them all until she came at last to the Carmelites and immediately, felt herself drawn thereto. She joined their

order and was very happy, later becoming the Mistress of Novices. Had she, without mature consideration, entered one of the other convents, she might have lost heart and gone back into the world, and perhaps lost her soul.

So, the first step to consider is, in what state of life can I most surely save my soul. In other words, we should strive to find what is God's will in our regard, where He wishes us to serve Him. It is in that life the graces are awaiting us to help us to our final destiny. There may be many disagreeable and unpleasant occupations or circumstances in this chosen life, but there are also many consolations, and especially the necessary graces to pursue and gain the all important goal. Do not think, dearest Mother, that I am writing a treatise on Vocation, but only jotting down a few thoughts with which you may entertain those inquiring and oversolicitous neighbors.

My second reason for becoming a Trappist may be classed under the head of "Example". We have heard that if one saves a soul, he will shine for all eternity, as a star in the firmament. Now, when we think of the influence of example in every line of life, we are perforce obliged to admit that it is a potent factor. Has not Governor Al Smith's life been a great help to the young aspiring politician? By his life, the young man realizes that one may become a politician and yet follow a straight, respectable, honorable and upright career. Let us go back farther and look into Lincoln's life, or, more cogent yet, that of Sir Thomas More. Those who read history will find that such men are beacons and guideposts in a life threatened by many unmanly temp-

tations. Had these men placed as their goal, wealth, power or honor, regardless of the means thereto, we would cover them with the shroud of disgrace and brand them with the mark of blind worldly selfishness. We all know the effect of a Mother's example upon her children.

What did our Lord think of example? We have only to recall that He gave thirty years to the hidden life in Nazareth, where His only sermon was—example of retirement and prayer, and He gave but three years to the apostolic life. Surely, no one would accuse Our Lord of choosing a selfish life. There is no doubt but that He thought more good would result from His example in the hidden life, than His preaching in the public life. So the life of a Trappist is not a selfish life. He realizes the many people who either read of, or hear of his life of prayer, and penance, and mortification, and may enter into themselves before it is too late. Many likewise, visit the monastery and are elevated in mind and heart by watching the monks performing their daily duties of chant, and prayer, and work. They learn of his fasting, his silence, his mortifications, all for the purpose of conquering self; of his thoughts and aspirations of eternal life. So, the example of the Trappist is often more potent and effective than sermons from the pulpit.

Summing up the effects wrought on many by example, I am justified in concluding that my life as a Trappist is not a selfish one, but a very useful and salutary one to all who come in contact with me, perhaps more so, than if I had entered the Secular Priesthood. It is selfish in one respect—the Trappist Monk is surrounded with many more helps and

guards against temptation, than one thrown into the whirl of the world. Have you ever read the poem—"Listen! Christ may be calling you?"

"Many are called, but few are chosen,
Is Christ calling you?

"The harvest is great, but labourers few,
Is Christ calling you?

"Sell what you have, and give to the poor, and
Come follow Me.

"To sin and sorrow, say adieu, and
Come follow me.

"Listen! Is Christ calling you?
Go to the Tabernacle

"Follow Him there, Talk it over, He
and you, and

"If He says, 'Come follow Me.'
Remember—He means you.

Dearest Mother, the bell is ringing, so I must defer the remaining reasons till my next letter.

With deepest affection, your son,

Charles.

THIRD LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey
Peosta, Iowa.

Dearest Mother:

Your letter was so cheerful and happy that it made me feel you are now resigned to the step I have taken. But the neighbors! You say their countenances were like a picture show—now gasping, now laughing, now serious. I trust they will be able to digest the matter of this letter and gather some profitable fruit therefrom.

Will it smack too much of a sermon, if I begin with a text from the Scriptures? In the eighty-third Chapter of the Psalms, David cries out, "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord, far better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the House of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners." Life deals the cards for us to play and we hold in our hand the winner, if we only play cautiously. Who will suggest or point to the right card? Shall we go to the book of nature written by God, in which is clearly described the birth, the life and the death of all human things? Shall we go to the cemetery, where we can get the real slant on life? Consult nature and the cemetery and our findings will take us back to the thoughts of David.

In the Trappist life, we find opportunities to strengthen our wills, to chasten and build up our characters, thereby becoming officers in God's army. Even the Poet sings, "Be not like dumb-driven cattle, but be heroes in the strife." Another poet has these memorable lines, "Os Homini sublime dedit." All

other animals look to the earth for their sustenance, but God has given to man a countenance to look above.

Many, indeed, may ride on the crest of the wave, or float with the tide, but it requires character to dwell in the courts of the Lord. Even in society, in the various avocations of life, we admire the man of strong will. Hour after hour, in the Trappist life, whether it be in the fields loading oats on the wagon: or in the study room poring over the intricacies of philosophy: or in the refectory nourishing the body: or in the dormitory refreshing it with salutary sleep: or in the chapel chanting the praises of God, every hour gives us occasions to strengthen our wills, to elevate our characters. And when old age comes upon us, what a consolation it will be to have spent youth well, to have lived up to our ideals, to have no pining, no remorse!

So, my third reason for becoming a Trappist is that in the house of God we round out the real man by strengthening our wills, by building up our characters.

My fourth object in living this life is to acquire merit. To appreciate this reason one must have the right slant on life. If we look into the hearts of worldly men, we shall discover the aspect they take of life. Some spend themselves, weary out their bodies, almost sell their souls to acquire some worldly object, some worldly distinction. Their goal is either pleasure, ease, power or honor, and to this end they bend all their energy. That is their concept of life. But to one who believes in the simplicity, the immortality of the soul; who believes that God has put us in this life for a trial, a novitiate, thereby giving us a chance to garner fruits for

life everlasting, the concept of life is quite different. To this second class belonged St. Benedict, the Master of the spiritual life; St. Bernard, ever laboring to imitate Christ more closely; St. Francis Xavier, with his tremendous energy; St. Francis de Sales, with his gentleness; St. Ignatius, with his intense will power; St. Anthony, with his child-like sweetness; St. Therese, with her girlish fervor; St. Charles Borromeo, with his easy confidence; St. Gertrude, with her ardent love; St. Thomas More, with his absolute resignation; St. Joseph, with his clear sense of justice.

These are men and women no one would accuse of being weaklings, but who demand our highest respect. The motive of their lives—was it not to merit life—everlasting? Here in our Monastery every opportunity is given to gain merit. The Holy Mass, the office, the Way of the Cross, the Rosary, the silence, the work, the chanting, the obedience to rule, the submission of our will, the many opportunities to gain indulgence, in a word, every act of the day is filled with merit. We know that our degree of Glory in Heaven will be commensurate with the degree of sanctification of our souls at the moment of death. Hence we try to live in the presence of God during our various occupations throughout the day, by ruminating on some thought suggested either from a text of scripture we may read in our office or from our spiritual reading. Let me tell you, dearest Mother, my thought for today: *Beatus homo, qui sperat in Domino.*” Blessed is the man who hopes in God, and yesterday’s *“Per Mariam ad Jesum.”* Through Mary to Jesus.

My fifth reason for living the life of a Trappist is that this life, well lived, is a pass to Heaven, a

ticket to life Eternal. You remember the time I joined a company of boys to learn the art of target shooting! Well, I'll never forget the instructor's words, "Aim high, boys, for the atmosphere, the wind, the distance will pull your bullet down." This thought has stayed with me, "Aim high." If in the natural order of things this is true, how much more so in the spiritual?

Before I came here I heard of two nuns, one a Sister of Mercy, one a Visitation Sister, who had taken a vow to think the more perfect thought; to say the more perfect word; to do the more perfect deed. These two good Sisters surely aimed high. One might say they held in their hands their pass, their ticket to Heaven, while yet on earth. Not everyone can rise to this perfection. I hardly feel capable of sailing on those wings. Yet, I feel that I am aiming high by living the life of a Trappist, a life of faith, of mortification, of prayer, my offering of gold and myrrh, and frankincense, by which I hope to receive my pass to Heaven, my ticket to Eternal Life, when the last bell is tolled.

"One soul, one chance
I heard and looked askance,
Then I thought, and thus reflection born,
Came fear, resolve, a plea
To realize these three
One soul, one chance
Eternity."

Your loving Son,

Charles.

FOURTH LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey
Peosta, Iowa.

Dearest Mother:—

I am so glad that you were not bored while reading my five reasons for becoming a Trappist monk. You say they were really interesting, and will give you definite points to answer those who may complain that I have shut myself up in a Monastery and “wasted my sweetness on the desert air.”

My object in penning them was twofold; that you might be at ease regarding the step I have taken and, consequently, satisfy those neighbors. I hope they will not annoy you with any more phantoms of their imagination or by raising before you constant distress signals.

That you may be in closer touch with your boy as the hours roll by, I shall give you a picture of our daily occupations.

We arise at 2 a. m., and after paying our respects and thanks to Our Lord in the tabernacle for preserving us another day to serve Him, we hail our Blessed Lady with an “Ave” and recite her little office. Then we meditate; then the Matins of the Divine Office, and the Masses begin at 4 a. m. It is an inspiring sight to watch the priests at the five altars saying Holy Mass. Just think of five priests, almost at the same moment, talking to Christ as He lies there before them on the Altars. I ask our Lord every morning to let me hear Mass with the fervor I would have, if an angel whispered to me that this would be my last Mass. This thought enables me to focus my whole attention on the Mass. I often recall

these verses: "Love, there are three of great sublimity, Love of the Eucharist, Love of the Cross, Love of Souls."

About 6 a. m. we go to breakfast. At the entrance of the refectory stands a receptacle of water, and a towel hangs near. It is an old custom in the Trappist Order to wash the fingers before each meal. At the end of High Mass on Sundays, the reader of the week goes to the front of the chapel and begs the blessing of the Celebrant. We go to the chapel at specified hours during the day to chant the different parts of the office. We have manual labor twice a day—two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon—after which the showers refresh our tired bodies. There are two bells on the top of the monastery, large and small, which summon us to our varied duties. Every month the good Brother clips our hair, leaving a little crown about our heads. This crown is to remind us of the crown of thorns our dear Lord wore.

On Saturday evening, we have the custom of washing one another's feet in imitation of our Lord washing the apostles' feet. We are all on equal footing here. Whether you be a King or Potentate, when you enter the Trappist Monastery, you become a monk like the lowest or humblest novice. There is no distinction given to worldly titles. We have a guest house, where priests or laymen may come to make retreats, or visit over night. One of the monks is appointed as guest master, and, of course, may talk to the guests when necessary. The chapel is so arranged that outsiders may listen to the chanting.

I might say that the dominant characteristic, or maybe, motto of our life is, "Prayer." Whether we

are laboring in the fields or chanting in the chapel, we are working body and soul for our own perfection and the spiritual benefit of others. The day soon passes and the night comes when man can work no more. So we make use of every moment to sanctify our lives before the night of death covers us with its mantle. We try to remember God's love for us from all we see and hear, whether it be the quail in the grain, or the ripening barley, or the whippoorwill in the trees, or the bleating of the sheep, or the humming bees, or the rippling brook. Everything tends to elevate our minds to Him, because we see in all nature the handiwork of God, and we know that He has given all these wonderful things to us to help us rise to Him.

Dearest Mother, I would like you to see our garden, where we may stroll during free time. It is very pleasant and shady, with its winding paths, bordered by ferns and flowers. The foliage of the trees offers inviting homes for the little birds to nest. As we wander along we may see the rippling stream, playing with the pebbles, and in the distance hear the lowing cows and the bleating sheep. I am informed that a Jesuit while strolling through the gardens wrote the following verses:

"The silent monks prayed in their oaken stalls.

"In the tangled grass, by the abbey walls,

"Bloomed the roses red, with their dropping leaves,

"And roses pink, as the dreams youth weaves,

"And roses white, as when love deceives;

"How they bloomed and swayed in the garden there

"While the bell tolled out in the warm still air,

—"Eternity"—

“Eternity, the great bell rang,
“Leave life and love and youth, it sang,
“And the red rose scattered its petals wide,
“And the pink rose dreamed in the sun and sighed,
“And the white rose pined on its stem and died:
“O life, love, youth! Ye are sweet, ye are strong,
“But barren lives shall bloom in a long
—“Eternity”—

Dearest Mother, before closing this letter I must tell you of an incident which gave me great joy. A few days ago, a priest came for a few days' recollection. This priest was born in the same town as St. Therese, the Little Flower. He was one year younger than she and, as children, they went to the same school. It gave me a great thrill to be under the same roof with one who knew the Little Flower so well. To think, that he lived to see her canonized! He has some locks of her hair, which are treasured dearly. I thought of the Little Flower's mother—what a joy it would have been to her to have lived to see her daughter canonized. Her sisters, however, did live to hear of this great honor and I think four of them are yet living. I have a relic of the Little Flower which I shall cherish now more than ever before. With this relic go these words, “To make Love loved.”

In conclusion, dearest Mother, I want you to picture to yourself, our chapel and your boy clothed in white, kneeling before the statue of Our Lady draped in blue, surrounded by varied colored lights. Picture him kneeling there, singing her Litany and while I chant the last “Salve”, my heart rises in humble supplication to her for you and my dear ones at home.

24 Letters From A Young Trappist Monk To His Mother

May my prayers and sacrifices win for me and you, my dear ones, a cheerful greeting by our Lord, as He opens the Eternal Gates.

Your loving boy,

Charles.

FIFTH LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey,
Peosta, Iowa.

A Sunday in the Trappist Monastery

Dearest Mother:

What a source of comfort letter-writing affords! Though miles of desert and forests and even cities separate us, yet we can enjoy each other's thoughts, alleviate each other's sorrows, enter into each other's joys. Your letters—how they buoy me up and inspire me with the desire to come closer and closer to our Lord day by day. You are so thoughtful to abstain from all worldly subjects, realizing they are foreign to the Trappist life.

I love you to inquire into the various incidents of my life in the Monastery, as it manifests your deep interest and concern in me. Now you would like me to pen a picture of our Sunday in the Monastery! Oh, Mother! that is rather a difficult task and I hardly feel capable of doing it justice. But since you wish it, I shall make the attempt.

The five great devotions of a Trappist life are, the Holy Mass, Holy Communion, the Divine Office, the Blessed Virgin and Labor.

As the soul of the Trappist's devotion is the Blessed Sacrament, upon which his whole attention is focused, I shall explain in detail all that pertains to our Sunday High Mass. This is called the Conventual Mass, possibly derived from the two Latin words "Con" and "Venio" a coming together, as all the monks must be present at this Mass, and before which Tierce of the "Little Hours" is chanted.

In the choir there are three large books about

three feet in length, eighteen inches wide and four inches thick, and quit heavy. They are called the Psalter, the Antiphonary and the Gradual. The Psalter is used at every office and is so named, because it contains the one hundred and fifty psalms of David. The different hymns sung throughout the year, numbering one hundred and twenty, are found in it. The Antiphonary is not as frequently used as the Psalter. It contains the musical notations of the Psalms and all the antiphons chanted by the choir. Sometimes these are recited from the Breviary when the Office is not sung. This book, the Cistercian Antiphonary, dates back to the year 1115. It was first introduced in that year after a thorough revision and comparison with most of the well known antiphonaries of Europe. One of the members of the Order, St. Stephen Harding, accomplished this gigantic task. The Gradual is opened only at Tierce and daily High Mass. It contains the different parts to be sung at a Solemn High Mass. The old Cistercian rite for celebrating Holy Mass was much the same as that followed nowadays by the Dominicans. It was replaced by the Roman rite in the early part of the 17th Century. The Church recognized various rites: the Carthusian, the Cistercian, the Dominican, and the Roman, and several others, whose names I cannot recall. A rite is a certain, or peculiar, or distinctive method of saying Mass: of administering the sacraments and of compiling the Ordo allowed these different religious orders. Pope St. Pius the V manifested some thought of reducing all rites to the Roman rite, but did not put his thoughts into action. Hence the Carthusians and the Dominicans and the others, to this day follow their peculiar rite, but the Cis-

tercians have abandoned their privilege and now follow the Roman rite, except in the Ordo and in administering some of the sacraments.

Dearest Mother, I have written at length about these big books, so that when you visit me and are present at the office and Mass, you may appreciate our movements in arranging them. These books are often a mystery to most visitors and very few grasp their use or significance from the brief explanation given by the Guest-Master. With this explanation of these three books, let us begin the Mass with the Celebrant.

After Tierce, the blessing of the holy water takes place and all the monks leave their stalls and proceed two-by-two towards the altar, and bending their heads are sprinkled with holy water by the Celebrant; then they walk in procession down the main aisle, chanting all the while, till they return to their stalls, the Celebrant then retires to the sacristy to put on the vestments proper to the Mass of the day.

As the priest approaches the foot of the altar, the organist softly strikes the first two notes of the Introit to give the Cantor the pitch to be adopted. The Cantor then intones the Introit which the choir continues. The Gloria and the Credo are likewise intoned by the Cantor.

After the Consecration the "O Salutaris" is chanted in the same manner, except on feasts of our Lady, when the "Ave Verum" is sung. Mother, I think of you when the "Ave Verum" is being chanted—because I place you, my earthly mother, next to my heavenly Mother and I ask Our Lady to let me give a wee bit of this praise and honor I am offering to her by singing "Ave Verum", to you; for

I appreciate that it was through you my vocation came and but for you, I would not be here singing her praises.

Dearest Mother, I am looking forward to the day you will be in our chapel listening to the "Ave Verum", for I feel it will have the same effect of joy and exultation upon you as it has on me. It raises me above earth and I become enchanted and lost in heavenly thoughts. Soon the Agnus Dei begins, and I am like one awakened from a beautiful dream, only to lapse again into another. The *Ita Missa Est* comes all too soon, for now I must return to earth and to my daily occupations.

Before Holy Communion, it is my duty to see if any one wishes to receive. As I cannot talk, I present a little card, in a glass frame, on which is written, "Do you wish to receive Holy Communion?" Well, the other day I received quite a shock. When I presented this card to a lady visitor, she blushing said, "I am very sorry, Brother, but I left my purse at home." Dearest Mother, we can never sufficiently appreciate the Mass. It is our refuge, our consolation and our inspiration.

St. Paul tells us that the greatest proof of our Lord's love for us is exhibited in the sacrifice of the Mass. St. Francis de Sales says, "The Holy Sacrifice of the Altar is among the exercises of religion, what the Sun is, among the stars." St. John Chrysostom, also, Pope St. Gregory, speaks of the angels, assisting at the Mass. Just think, the sacrifice of the Mass is going on continually from the rising to the setting of the sun, as the Prophet tells us.

On Sundays we have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 4 P. M. Three lay brothers in grace-

ful surplices, lace trimmed, holding long lighted candles precede the sub-Deacon, Deacon and Celebrant as they approach the altar. The candles are all ablaze, vieing with one another to reach the heavens with their tokens of honor to the Blessed Sacrament. The choir is softly and sweetly chanting the appropriate hymns; the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and the incense is floating over the scented air. The world knows not of the peace and quiet of soul we are happily experiencing, as we kneel there in the presence of our dear Lord. If the world only knew where to find real peace and comfort and joy! At Benediction, I often recall the picture of our Lord weeping, over Jerusalem.

Dearest Mother, as I kneel in the presence of our Lord, I think of His words to St. Margaret Mary, "Sinners will find in My Heart, the source and infinite ocean of Mercy," and St. John Chrysostom's beautiful words on the value of a soul; "There is nothing in the world so precious as a soul, and how dear to our Lord is he who has converted a single soul to God". At every Benediction, at every Mass, I implore the Sacred Heart to bring back some wayward soul.

Our Mass, our silence, our meditation, our spiritual reading and our Benediction, make Sunday very dear to us. We leave the chapel after these sweet and inspiring devotions with "pax et gaudium",—peace in our hearts, joy on our countenances and we wander through the gardens with our minds and hearts filled with the sweetness and love of our Lord, awaiting the "Salve" to close our meritorious Sunday.

Your devoted boy,
Charles.

SIXTH LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey,
Peosta, Iowa.

Peace in the Monastery

Dearest Mother:—

I am so glad you enjoyed reading about those big books we use in our chanting. When you come to visit me and watch the Monks turning the pages and listen to them chanting, you will be able to follow with more interest. So your neighbors were at a loss to grasp their meaning and gave up in despair, when they heard all those funny and unpronounceable words! I would like to get a picture of their minds when you read my letters to them. Of course, they say nice things, lest they hurt your feelings, but I fear they think me crazy, and a fit subject for some lunatic asylum, writing and acting as though any one could find contentment behind these walls. It is difficult to realize how one can turn his heart away from earth to heaven, bravely bearing crosses and trials, and joyfully making sacrifices. Without doubt, it is bitterly hard. It would help one marveously to have something to attract and uplift him by its strength and sweetness. This gladness might compensate for all the troubles one encounters in this hidden and mortified life. Strange as it may seem to your neighbors, we have that something, and we call it peace, peace of the soul.

Of this peace St. Paul speaks in his epistle to the Galatians. "One of the fruits of the Spirit is peace." In Eccle. we read, "The joyfulness of the heart is the life of a man." On St. Teresas' bookmark were

these words, "Let nothing disturb you." St. Augustine and so many of the saints speak of peace. Cardinal Gibbons writes, "One of the effects of peace is to cause the flowers of joy and gladness to bloom in the soul, a deed approaching the creative act of God." St. Paul speaks of the "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding." When the angels announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds, they spoke of peace; "And on earth peace to men of good will." It is worthy of note how often peace is mentioned in the Mass. In the very first prayer the Priest prays for peace in the Church. Then as he puts his hands over the chalice he asks for peace in our days. At the end of the Agnus Dei, the Priest asks for peace. In the first of the three prayers which follow the Agnus Dei, the Priest reminds our Lord of His own words—"Lord, Jesus Christ, who didst say to Thy apostles, My peace I leave you, My peace I give you." Then the Priest begs Him not to regard his own sins, but to give peace to the Church. The dominant note of the Canon of the Mass is peace. Not only during His life was peace manifested by our Lord in word and action, but His first greeting to His apostles after His resurrection was one of peace—"Pax Vobis". "Peace be to you."

Dearest Mother, it is true that the peace of God may be found in many souls, though living amidst the distractions of the world; sometimes indeed, laboring under dire suffering. I remember visiting a good woman once who was bed-ridden for some years. Her face and whole body were paralyzed. They fed her by means of a spoon. She could utter only broken sentences and that, with great difficulty. She lay on her back and could see just a little light as she peered at the ceiling. I expressed

great sympathy for her and she answered brokenly, "I am not suffering as much as our Lord on the Cross, and with this picture in my mind, I am at peace."

Where then, dearest Mother, would your good neighbors send me in quest of peace? Each of us is weaving a garment, or painting a picture. We may not see the finished product until death tolls its call. Then this work of our lives is shown to us. What will be the Master's sentence on this great work? Will our due be peace or sorrow? Ah! dearest Mother, if we can pass judgment on our lives as Christ hanging on the Cross passed judgment on His when He said, "It is consummated" our reward will be peace.

Here in the Monastery, I know that I am carrying out God's will, and I know that my soul will be flooded with peace when the end comes. He, who enters here foregoes all longings of the human heart for the world. Aye, he relinquishes his will entirely to the will of his superiors. It is little, perhaps, to relinquish our possessions; but it is a great and a big thing to leave ourselves. This is what we do here: We leave ourselves and our reward even in this life is peace, and we feel sure of possessing charity hereafter, as charity in heaven is the result of peace on earth.

Idleness cannot produce peace. The one who seeks peace in idleness is like the bird enchanted by the snake. His imagination may picture idleness as a peaceful rest, but when that state is reached it soon becomes unbearable.

Dearest Mother, when we look out over these hills and watch the setting sun turning the western sky into a thousand exquisitely blended tints, we

reflect on the joys the world paints; for just as the tints in the sky gradually fade away, so do the joys and pleasures this world offers, sink into oblivion. Death's sting is terrible to those who put their peace in material things. In the Monastery we try to carry out the injunction of St. Augustine; "I ask you only one thing, which is to love, as long as charity has possession of your hearts, you will never sin." And, dearest Mother, the effect of this charity and love in our hearts is peace. Everything here in the Monastery tends to produce this charity and love in our hearts; our prayers and chanting God's praises; our meditation on His attributes, our silence, our work, our submission of our wills to the will of Him who stands in God's place to us, and the result is that peace which the world cannot give.

Dearest Mother, you know my life in detail from my former letters, and you can readily judge how every action of this life brings in its wake, peace. When we offer ourselves each morning to our Lord in the Tabernacle, we feel we hear from Him the words addressed to Tobias by the Angel Raphael—"Gaudium sit tibi semper." "Let peace be with you forever; Let it reign in your hearts this day and ever after." What greater happiness could one desire in this life? We know we are following the ideal Leader, Christ the King. With His sweetness and kindness, with His power to reward; with His exalted purpose of conquering men's souls; and His only demand of us is, "Da mihi cor tuum." "My child give me thy heart." This peace which floods and encompasses our souls and hearts, the result of our sacrifice, is a sure harbinger of that charity and love, which we may rightly expect on the day of judgment; for we have observed the commandments,

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and the counsels and we have left all to follow Christ the King of Peace. We know that if we watch and pray, we will one day experience how sweet it is to die in the Monastery with our hearts filled with peace.

Your loving son,

Charles.

SEVENTH LETTER OF A YOUNG TRAPPIST MONK TO HIS MOTHER

New Melleray Abbey,
Peosta, Iowa.

Christmas in the Monastery

Dearest Mother:—

As the years are passing only too rapidly, I feel that at times you look back over your life and recall and review the pleasant and unpleasant happenings which have dotted your life, as they must the lives of all people. One of the great solitudes in a mother's life is the hope of the future character of the child of her longings. In her imaginings and contemplations she sees her offspring rise to some post of honor and in this she takes just complacency. Now as your hair is showing grey locks and your shoulders are somewhat bending and the shadows are lengthening as the sun is sinking towards the western horizon and you are enjoying a good measure of leisure, the meed of a laborious and active faithful life, you have much time for reflection and naturally cast a retrospective glance on the departing years. In your reveries, your solace is in the memory of the good deeds of your children. I realize that you take a justified pride in me, for you feel that my sacrifice was born of a Mother's training and a Mother's example, so I can readily imagine how my letters are a source of cheer to you in your declining years. I am sure you treasure them as none but a Mother's love could.

Happy in the thought that the various incidents of my life bring you peace and comfort, I must not omit to tell you of the joy I experienced at Christmas tide. From my earliest years, it has been my

fond desire to see the landscape dressed in white and the heavens raining down abundant flakes of snow to usner in the joyfulness of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, my wish was realized, for the fields, as far as the eye could see, were white with the driven snow. The Monastery, the barns, the hills were arrayed in a lovely panorama, mantled in their wintry coverlet, while the trees were bowing to Mother Earth with their burden of snow and icicles held captive on their limbs and branches. To see the sleighs and the prancing horses, to hear the jingle of the bells, would warm the coldest heart.

The bells of the Monastery were ringing out their welcome to the many visitors and the chapel was all too small for the incoming crowd. The Monks, clad in their white robes, were already in their stalls, sending up their chant of praise to the new-born King, as the Celebrant and sacred ministers approached the altar. The "Gloria in Excelsis" intoned by the Celebrant and the response "et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis" by the white clad monks seemed never so grand and inspiring as on that Christmas night. There is something about the mid-night Mass at Christmas which awakens all of our spiritual impulses and seems to transport and elevate our minds and hearts and make us forget all human concerns and become absorbed in things divine.

A glance at the faces of my brother Monks plainly told me that their minds were in Bethlehem and their eyes were focused on the Babe and their thoughts were intent on the doings in the cave. They and I watched in thought, the shepherds hastening over the hills to bow in faith and supplication before the crib on which lay the Infant clothed in swaddling

clothes. There we saw the Kings, white, brown, and black, in their odd dress, offering their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Though we had not these material gifts to offer, we gave what they symbolized, our love, our prayer, our sacrifice, hoping the Babe would acknowledge our offerings by sending down His graces into the hearts of our dear ones at home and upon all those who had braved the stormy weather and had come to tender their gifts of faith and adoration.

Oh, dearest Mother, how I prayed for you; how I thanked the Babe for giving me such a mother and I could almost imagine we were about to enter the portals of heaven and receive a glorious greeting from our dear ones awaiting our arrival. As we left the chapel, we entered a corridor back of the Sacristy where some of the young Monks had built a cave. Above the cave a star was shining to welcome us. Some bowed to the Infant lying on the straw; some stopped for a few moments in humble attitude; some of us dropped on our knees to say a little prayer while thoughts of the Infant Saviour coursed through our minds. I thought I was in Bethlehem, kneeling side by side with the shepherds, with the Infant's little hand in mine; those little hands which were stretched out toward the Virgin Mother in infantine helplessness and I realized they were the hands of God; the hands which would later touch the blind and give them sight, and at their touch, tied tongues would unloose, and diseases of all kinds would take wing and fly away. Those tender feet, unable to sustain the Infant frame, are the feet of God, which would later tread upon the roughened waters of a stormy lake as men tread the solid earth; that soft weak voice I heard in the manger,

was the voice of God, which called creation into being; which would speak to the winds and waves and they would obey; which would call the dead from the sepulchers and they would come forth. And I reflected, that this Babe could have come amongst His creatures with the insignia of royalty, even surpassing that of Solomon. He might have chosen a palace as His birth-place and the great ones of earth might have come to pay Him homage. This Babe alone of all born into this life could choose the condition of His birth and He chose this helpless condition, to give us a right appreciation of riches, reputation, ease, and the comforts and honors of life. Such was our model, our leader in our fight for eternal life, now lying there in apparent helplessness.

Dearest Mother, as I knelt there before the crib, a picture presented itself to my mind. It was like the flash of a kodak shutter, yet, as vivid as a picture which comes before the mind of a drowning man. Once a Priest told me, that while swimming, he got a cramp and sank twice and in a moment a panorama of his whole life shot across his mind. I remember once, seeing a young man dressed for swimming, standing at the stern of a row boat, on the Hudson. He made a dive against the tide and when he came to the surface, the boat was far away. It had gone too far with the tide for him to reach it again. The next day, it was difficult to recognize him. His hair had turned completely white. What fear he must have experienced during that struggle for life! We shall never know the picture which rose up before him in those few struggling moments. In a few moments he must give an account of his whole life to Christ.

But my picture! As I knelt there, I imagined I saw two armies—one Christ's, one Satan's. I saw their strongholds flying their respective standards. On one of those flags was emblazoned "Hell Fire"—the other "Eternal Life". I heard Satan tell his followers,—“Lead men to desire wealth, power, honor, and influence, and then their souls will fall easy victims to pride, arrogance, self-will. Christ's instructions were,—“Teach men a sense of real values; show them the vanity and futility of human things.” There was confusion and turmoil about Satan's camp. There was light and peace around Christ's camp. How I thanked the Babe that I belonged to Christ's camp, with the weapons of poverty, chastity, and obedience to battle for and gain eternal life. And I arose from my dream, fired with the determination to bow and adore with the shepherds the Babe in the cave, rather than join the dancers and merrymakers in the palace of Herod.

On my way to my cell, my mind was immersed in the thought that the honor and credit of my choice of life, of my following the standards of Christ, were due to you, dearest Mother, so, my first Christmas in the Monastery was one of joy, of thankfulness, of peace, and I feel yours was the same. May the Christmases to you come ever fill our hearts with the Babe's love and may our tongues ever sing the hymn of the Angels' "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will."

"Jacet in praecepio, et in caelis regnat."

"He lies in the manger, and in the heavens rules."

Your happy boy,

Charles.

THE THREE PRISONERS

In Palo Alto I have a friend whose palatial home stands in the midst of green lawns, stately trees and beautiful gardens. Here and there are pansies with their little faces lifted towards the sun and poppies with their silken petals ruffled by the breezes. Tall larkspurs towered above the tiny plants as if in disdain of their smallness. In the far background the hollyhocks climbed toward the sky giving the scene the atmosphere of an old fashioned garden. A hedge of blue dahlias edged the walk and a stone bench nearby invited one to linger and watch the shadows move across the face of the sun dial. The loveliness of it all entranced me. The inscription on the dial caught my attention and gave me food for further thought. It ran thus: "The moving finger writes and having writ moves on; nor all your piety nor wit shall bring it back to cancel half a line; nor all your tears wash out a word of it." Quietly the rays of the sun moved around that dial telling each hour of the day as they passed on and on over the dial. No human power could call them back or force them to retrace their steps. Day after day those rays repeated their task and gradually, though slowly, the hours, days and years were going their way never to return.

I looked up at the sun and marveled that it was a prisoner held captive in its orb by the heavens. The more I gazed upon it the more my wonder grew for I noticed that its rays were falling upon the blades of grass, the trees, the flowers and the birds as they twittered and hopped from branch to branch. Held captive though it was by the heavens above, and far away, yet it exercised a freedom and gave strength

and health to all nature below. By its warmth the little seeds of oats and corn gathered life and put forth their blades through the hard crust of the earth, and constantly assisted by that same warmth began to blossom and flower in their maturity. By the piercing strength of its rays all nature awakens from its wintry sleep and gives food to the beasts of the forest, the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the air. Man, too, becomes a recipient of its favor and oftentimes his blood long stagnant and deceased begins to flow again in health and vigor.

Truly, O Sun, though captive, thou breakest the bonds of thy imprisonment and wanderest far and wide o'er the entire earth. Material though thou be, thou art a symbol of the immaterial soul, held prisoner in the walls of the body, but like thyself breaks free from those fetters and wanders at liberty. Into the past it goes with the speed of lightning and brings back long forgotten thoughts and scenes. Though it may be encompassed for years by a now broken and frail body it retains the vigor of youth and flies from year to year reviving the dead past. Nor is this its sole work for it can break through the bonds of the present life and pass on to those unexplored regions of the future. Aye, it can conjure up the beauties of life eternal, it can picture to us the joys the eye has never seen, nor the ear heard. It can raise us out of this life to the sweetness and the blessedness of the attributes of God.

We oftentimes see the peace and resignation it can bring to those whose bodies are harassed by the tortures inflicted upon them in this life. We have but to read of those who cheerfully underwent the sufferings of martyrdom to realize the freedom of the soul captive though it be, in such environment;

surrounded by such untoward circumstances, embraced though it be by the claws and talons of the persecutor. How encouraging and inspiring to witness the soul's magnanimity in such a body as that of Sir Thomas Moore, who went to his doom smiling and laughing, or of (Father) John De Brebeuf, who kissed the very wood which was prepared to hold him a victim of its excruciating flames. History is ever presenting to us men and women who would be incapable of enduring the pangs of their bodies, but for the soul, which though prisoner, no walls can imprison. By it they are encouraged, they are strengthened for its visits to, as it were, fields far away and returns with suitable food to mitigate the sufferings of their present state. It may be to the babe in the womb, tired by its long months of incarceration, the hope of seeing the light of day and hearing its mother's voice and reveling in its mother's caresses. Surely John the Baptist, yet unborn, heard the sweet salutations of Mary's voice, for it made his body jump with exultation.

It may be the prostrate form on the hospital cot to which sickness and weakness has reduced it that this prisoner, the soul, brings tidings of a happier morrow. It may be to the wounded soldier in the enemies camp to whom the soul holds out hopes of release; it may be to the monk weighted down by much fasting and prayer, the soul whispers of the enhancing delights after this short life. It is the soul that gently bids the hermit in his cave to raise his eyes aloft and gaze through the little aperture beyond the blue heavens where his Master resides with manifold blessings, ready to bestow, when he is tried and found fit. It was this unhampered prisoner that upheld Joseph in his many unmerited sor-

rows and bade him wait in patience for the day of deliverance. How beautiful to contemplate Joseph in his marvelous resignation and his joyful expectation. It was the soul that pointed out to him the way to walk when freed from incarceration and placed in high position. It was the soul that kept before him that this change of freedom was only a sign, a guiding post to that change which was ahead, and which would soon grasp him up in its embrace and hold him evermore.

We do not know enough of the Sun to enter its domain, and investigate the beauties, the strength and the force it contains within itself. We only see some of its effects and from this we argue back to its nature and its hidden resources. We experience the effect of heat on all creation, but we do not know the nature of this heat. We realize to some extent the effect of light on all creation, but again we fail to understand the nature of this light. Both are the offsprings of the sun. Both are essential to the existence of plant, of animal, and of man. Were they withdrawn what chaos would result!

We have discovered some of the remote forces of the moon from its influence on the tides of vegetation; of the stars as they lead the mariner by night to his safe destination. We often hear that the moon's force and light are borrowed from the sun. If it were given us to visit the sun, to investigate and to analyze its hidden qualities no doubt we might arrive at something more tangible and get a closer insight into its now unknown powers.

If the forces of the stars and the moon are as it were, farmed out to them by the sun, we can conceive in some measure the wonders of the sun, now a closed book to us. This much we do know: that the

sun is a material substance and can not enjoy its own reflection on the ear of corn it ripens or the flower it brings into blossom. True this prisoner of the heavens extends its blessings and benefits over land and water, over cloud and air. The warmth of its rays brings joy to many a heart, though prisoner it be. But the soul from its prison rises higher, extends its blessing farther, penetrates deeper, lasts longer, ascends above the sun and all the recipients of the sun's benefits, for they are of the material kingdom. Moreover the soul deals with God's highest form of creation.

From the effects and results of this creation, we perceive the actions and dealings of the soul more closely and intimately than those of the sun's. We can hold the soul up before us as a mirror and investigate its past and in so doing we examine those marvelous faculties of the soul we term the imagination, the memory, the intellect, the will, thus dividing its component parts, so to speak, for we know in reality that a spirit cannot be cut up or divided as it is all one and has no parts. Yet to help our limited and meager intelligence by so doing we can get a better and a surer insight of that prisoner of the body. We realize that these faculties of the soul may reflect back and afford untold delights to the soul itself. The memory holds in its grasp peoples, countries, events, though years have hurried them on. It recalls earthquakes, pestilences, fires, wars, the scourges of kings, the upheaval of empires, the sorrows and the joys of life. It holds up the imaginary scenes, both pleasant and harassing. The intellect can delve into the various happenings and pluck the real from the imaginary, the true from the false. Its very aim and object is truth and to this

truth it runs unbidden. While the will sees in all these circumstances their beauty, their loveliness, and distinguishes this beauty from the sordid things of earth and as love is its goal it clings to it with unabated affection. Thus does the prisoner, the soul, rise above its fellow-prisoner, the sun, and wanders about the immaterial world sapping its sweetness as the humming bird draws its delights from the fruits and flowers and the bloom of the blossoms. Both the sun and the soul are prisoners placed in their encasement by a superior power and not of their own accord. This higher force, this mightier power, is likewise a prisoner, but a voluntary and a willing one. Christ in the tomb, enters and abides a prisoner of His own accord for He has made Himself prisoner for the love of man. From this prison flow His many blessings. To this Prisoner we come as suppliants seeking rest and peace and grace. Here is His throne from which He bestows His favors. The sorrowful heart weighted down with the cares of this sordid world finds solace and comfort here. The man of affairs comes here for direction and advice. Here General Foch repaired to ask strength and counsel. The priest, the nun, aye, the hermit, the monk, all seek this Prisoner in His prison for light and help, and peace in sorrow and joy. Out over the world His sweetness flows, His favors and graces are unbounded for He holds wide His arms to embrace all sufferers and is ever crying out to us, "Oh, all ye that labor and are heavily burdened, come unto Me and I will refresh you." Both the lowly and the high of station may come and He will alleviate their troubles. He will lessen their burden.

Such, then, are the three prisoners, no walls, can imprison, no bars contain. The sun gives life by

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its warmth, the soul by its faculties, Christ by His graces. The sun's power is borrowed, the soul's bestowed, Christ's from Himself. The sun will cease and be no more. The soul will continue on either sad or joyful. Christ abidest forever, for He is yesterday, today, tomorrow, essentially everlasting happiness.

