

Three Tabernacles

Where to Find God.

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Catholic Truth Society of Ireland No.dd0523a (1944)

We were walking up and down the deck, somewhere in the middle of the Indian Ocean if I remember rightly. My companion was not a Catholic and, perhaps in consequence of this, we had struck up a friendship for he wanted to discuss many points of the different Churches' teaching. It was quite clear that he was deeply interested and we had talked things over by the hour, sometimes sitting on deck or in the divan, sometimes strolling as we were strolling on this pleasantly tropical afternoon. I forget what the precise point this time was; but I can recall him presently standing still and looking me straight between the eyes in a piercing way he had. "Father," he said, "people call me a great success in life, but deep down in my heart I know perfectly well I am a failure. When I was a young fellow I set out to make money, and now I have money to burn. I have a grand home over in England and a good wife and children. I see clearly that the world has no more to give me, and in spite of all it has given I feel disappointed, I know I'm missing something, but I can't find out what it is."

What was lacking? Any Catholic could have told him. There was a hunger in the man's heart for God Whom as yet he did not know, or at least knew very imperfectly. He was only echoing the cry of the king of old who gave himself unrestrainedly to every sort of enjoyment and was finally disillusioned. "Whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not, and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure... and I saw in all things vanity and vexation of spirit... and I was weary of life."

That is the very alphabet of the spiritual life, but what years we often consume in mastering even the alphabet! Solomon was an old man and discovered his mistake only when the best years had been squandered. Sooner or later, the truth must of necessity dawn upon the mind of every man and woman. But what one longs for is that this solid truth would brow into your most intimate conviction while you are still young and have time to put to splendid account the realisation that in this shifting, unstable, fickle world there is one abiding reality — God.

Have you ever come home after a dance or a picture and thought how unsatisfied your night's fun has left you? It was all right while you had it in your hands, but now it is gone and your only refuge is too look forward to the next thrill. Have you ever sat back and considered how silly and empty is much of your conversation? What hours you spend telling about your new house, or discussing the different hotels in the country, or debating about the respective merits of the two sides of a team. What a lengthy description, — or series of descriptions — you must enter into in order to make sure that your neighbour will have the full facts of your recent illness, — while he good man, is all the time wondering when you will get to the point where the recovery started! I have often sat and listened in a railway carriage or bus and this is the sort of tittle-tattle that absorbs men's minds.

Do not think I am cynical. Far from it. My point is simply to bring out how superficial all this is! How many of us realise that in the midst of these tremendous trifles we are hastening out of this world to another where all these things will count for nothing? To listen to men and watch their conduct, even when they are living tolerably good lives, you would think they were destined to live here for ever. Cinema, radio, the gossip of the day; — ‘these are your gods, O Israel!’

It is true that when young people sit back and begin to think on these lines they are often led to turn their backs entirely on the world and its baubles, and seek their happiness in a life of consecration to God in the priesthood or the Religious State. And it is their invariable experience that if there is a man or woman who finds a corner of paradise in this vale of tears it is the true priest or religious. And the reason is obvious. Such a person seeks God with all his heart and he does not seek in vain. And in the measure in which he looks and discovers, in the same does the peace of God inundate his soul.

It is our purpose in these pages to try to trace out three roads, which will lead the soul to the Object of her search. You remember that one day, when John the Baptist was preaching at the Jordan, Our Lord appeared on the scene and John stopped speaking and fixed his gaze upon the newcomer. "There He is!" he exclaimed. "Behold the Lamb of God!" Two of John's disciples slipped away and proceeded to follow the stranger down along the little pathway at the bank of the river.

Presently He turned around and put to them the most natural question in the world: "Whom seek ye?" They were embarrassed and awkward, for the truth was they were simply tracking Him down and they were shy about admitting it. So after a moment's pause they answer His question by blurting out another: "Master, where dwell You?" And He answered: "Come and see."

It is a very significant scene and it well illustrates the aim of our own lives. Like those men, we too are seeking Him, — sometimes even without knowing it. That man on board was seeking Him but he could not find out how to fill the void in his hungering heart. Those crowds in O'Connell Street running here and there are seeking Him, — but they do not believe it or understand that ‘they are trying to satisfy themselves by taking shadow for substance’.

As we turn over the pages of this booklet, He proposes to walk with us in spirit away from the madding crowds and to teach us the answer to our question. Seeing that God alone can give us the satisfaction we long for, the question must be answered, — Where am I to look for Him? "Master, where dwell You?" It would be the height of cruelty to give me a craving, which only He can ease and then baulk me of the means of satisfying it. I could never imagine even an earthly father who professes to love his child leaving that child to starve by the roadside. As long as the father who loves has a crust, he will feed that hungry little mouth, even if, famished, he tarnishes himself by eating the soiled crumbs. Can we dream of imagining that our heavenly Father is less merciful? He knows we need Him. He has created us for Himself and only He can ease and satisfy our longings. So we take it for granted that He will further teach us where we are to look for Him. "Master, where dwell You?"

Now there are three tabernacles in which we can find God, even in this life. In answer to our question, Our Lord walks with us down the bank of the river and invites us. "You want to know where to find God? Come and see."

The first of these tabernacles is nothing else than the world in which we are living. It is the sheer truth that the Presence of God permeates the atmosphere around us like the aether: There is never a moment, sleeping or waking, alone or in company, but the eye of God is fixed upon me. You go

down the street and chat with your friends, — every word is heard by the ear of God. You think in your mind, — unkind thoughts or kindly thoughts, unclean thoughts or beautiful thoughts, — not a thought passes through your mind, even in the most fleeting manner, but it is witnessed by the eye of God. "In Him," says the apostle, "we live and move and have our being." God's eye therefore is always upon me, — not as the eye of a stern Judge, but as the eye of a most loving Father. Every effort to live a decent Catholic life is known to Him. Every attempt to stir up in my neighbour a love of Him and a sense of responsibility to Him meets with His divine blessing and approval, though in men's eyes it may be a failure.

"Whither shall I flee from Your face? If I ascend into heaven, You are there. If I descend into hell, You are present.

"If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Your hand lead me... Perhaps darkness shall cover me? But darkness shall not be dark to You and night shall be light as the day..."

Just as a little child will wander all over the great palace of her father and be interested in everything it contains, because of its connection with the one she loves, so does the soul seeking God gradually come to regard the universe as His great home. The Child looks at this strange animal stuffed and preserved in the glass-case. She is interested in it, — why? Because she knows it was shot in the jungle by her father. Here is an oil-painting, which she loves — why?

Because it is a likeness of her father. Look at this illuminated address. The child reads every line, studies intently every tiny decoration on the margin, — why? Because this address was presented to her father when he was coming home from India. She is keen to see and to learn about everything that serves as a reminder of the father she loves.

This is exactly what the world means to a soul earnestly seeking God. On every side, she sees "the shadow of His hand outstretched caressingly." "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." The glory of the summer sun, the winter landscape, the starlit sky, — all these have their message to speak, all tell of the beauty and the power of the Creator, of the love of the heavenly Father.

What a difference it would make to your life to realise this magnificent truth! I see you sitting in that office, all day hammering your typewriter or answering the phone. Do you ever pause for a minute to bring home to yourself that He too is there in that office; all day and every day? "In Him we live and move and have our being." Or you are busy about the work of the house, — a little "domestic" and you have to wax the stairs or wash out the hall and the stone step outside, or, you have to get ready the youngsters for school or wheel out the baby. As you busy yourself thus, you are not for a single moment unobserved. God's eye is upon you all the time, and if you are wise and train yourself, you can very easily offer your humble tasks for His blessing. Or you are a man of the world. You consider, and quite rightly, that your business is of first importance. But tell me, is it going to injure your various employments today if you, as a Catholic layman, make yourself, force yourself even, to "recall the tremendous fact that God is here with you, listening to every word, witnessing that deal, reading that letter and knowing your reply and what it implies"?

Look at the unseeing, unthinking multitudes thronging the street outside. How many of them, even in a Catholic city, have the dimmest perception of the marvellous truth that God has pitched His tabernacle right in the midst of them? "In Him we live and move and have our being," but often our life and movement pay but scant tribute to the all pervading Presence of Him Who dwells amongst us.

What would be one big result of this realisation of God's first tabernacle? Saint Teresa of Avila, maintains that all sin, from the smallest deliberate imperfection to the most heinous crime, is committed for one reason, — because men do not remember the Presence of God. And that stands to reason. Let me suppose you are on the point of flying into a rage and giving vent to your feelings in a tirade of abuse. Or that you are just about to tell a very indecent story over the teacups. (God grant that you wouldn't because, as we have pointed out elsewhere, there is no knowing the far-reaching evil effects of this sin. Or you are going to indulge in deliberate laziness and throw yourself any old way on the bed or sofa.

But just before you fly into that rage, or tell that story, or throw yourself about, your eye wanders towards the door of the room where you are sitting. Now for the first time you notice the shadow of a man and you look more intently. To your amazement, you learn that the archbishop or the cardinal has called and is chatting in the next apartment with your father and mother. Now what about your tirade of abuse or your suggestive story? You forget it at once. And why? Out of respect for the presence of such a dignitary. You will mumble instead, somewhere down in the depths of your heart, — "Thank God, I saw him in time." You would have been much embarrassed to be heard by such a person airing your grievances or venting your fury on some unfortunate child, and you quickly smile pleasantly and advance with your best Sunday manner to kiss the episcopal ring.

But a greater than any dignitary is present by your side always. Don't you see that if you would curb your wrath or disguise your annoyance merely in presence of a bishop or cardinal you have a thousand times more reason for doing so in the Presence of God? "In Him we live and move and have our being." And I need not insist that if this Presence will restrain you from lesser offences its influence ought to be mightier still if there is question of mortal sin. What, does it avail to crawl out into the darkness in order to hide your sin when the eye of God penetrates all darkness? "Darkness shall not be dark to You and night shall be light as the day." If you were to pause and say quietly to yourself: "I am a Catholic, and I know that God's eye is watching this," — would you dare to go on with it?

The darkness of sin must disappear if men understood that their foul deeds were done under the light of God's Presence. The storms of passion must be quieted in men's souls if men would but remember the majestic Presence of Him Who commanded the winds and the waves and there followed a great calm. The wounds of sin in the wayward soul must be healed if the sinner will realise Who his Physician is and what are His remedies. It is only by shutting off the light of His Presence, or by trying to do so, that man can dare to commit sin. It is only by deliberately making himself forget the nearness of God in Whose sight the angels are not pure, that a man has the effrontery to wallow in the cesspool of passion.

We are hearing a great deal about the prevailing laxity and many remedies are discussed. Let men be brought to an understanding of the fact that the earth is God's Tabernacle and much evil must disappear. It is a truth we do not dwell upon sufficiently. The time to begin to teach it is in the impressionable years of childhood. Little children have an innate reverence for God and can very easily be led to a sense of His nearness to them. This sense, if cultivated in childhood, is going to be an invaluable help to them all through the subsequent years. And who is to develop it if not the parents, to whom God has entrusted the soul and the body of that child? Another time we hope to return to this theme in so far as it bears upon our fathers and mothers and their responsibility in this connection.

Forgetfulness of God is undoubtedly the cause of much sin. Saint Teresa would say it is the cause of all sin. "Master, where dwell You?" "Come and see." The first tabernacle in which to seek and find Him is the world around you.

And how is the realisation of this nearness to grow? I would suggest, by way of a start, that at fixed times every day you train yourself just to think for the space of thirty seconds about the truth we are stressing. Suppose you said quietly twenty times every day: "God sees me at this moment," or "God's eye is upon me now," I am inclined to believe that little by little the grand truth would become a greater reality to you.

Then, perhaps with that thought you could couple a tiny prayer. We have seen that the first way in which He is tabernacle should have the effect of making us hate sin and flee from it. Very well. Now having steadied my mind for a moment and focussed it on the fact of His Presence, I make a small act of sorrow for my own sins, or I beg for grace to side-step the occasions that have led me to sin in the past, or my prayer takes on an apostolic turn and I beg His mercy on the many sinners of the world. A determined effort of this sort will, I am convinced, revolutionise your whole outlook on life. Try it. And remember that your care is going to be most powerfully supported by God's grace. The habitual sense of His Presence, which is so marked a trait in the lives of all His saints, is the product of grace taking hold of and using to the full, their generous co-operation.

If you are a stranger to this sense of His Presence, it is time you made a start to develop it. The more determined your effort and the more persevering, the more fully will grace cooperate with you. And the result will be a loathing of sin, a horror at the very thought of sin, an eagerness to open men's eyes to its true nature. And this fear and disgust is the beginning of a solidly holy life. As the light of the Presence grows stronger, it will show more clearly sin in its true colours and the result must be the happy one we envisage.

If forgetfulness of God is the explanation of all sin, then surely continual remembrance of Him must be the most powerful antidote to sin.

Continuing our walk with Our Lord He now proceeds to tell me about a second tabernacle in which God is to be found.

He opens out before me a stupendous plan He has formed, — nothing less than to leave with His Church the power to consecrate bread and wine into the body and blood of God Himself. Let me return for a moment to the friend whom we encountered on page one of this booklet. When our voyage was over, he came to see me in a Jesuit College in Australia. We went all over the various rooms and halls, and finally I asked him if he would like to see the College Chapel. Of course he would like, and very much.

So we went in and I can still see him looking intently in the direction of the Tabernacle. He stood there and listened as I explained that we Catholics believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is as truly present there as He is in heaven or as He was in Nazareth or Jerusalem. Never have I seen a more serious face, and he continued to look fixedly towards the centre of the altar. At last, with a deep sigh, came the result: "No, Father. I can't. It is too much for me. I can't believe it."

Yes, you feel sorry for such an earnest man who, through no fault of his own, is deprived of the light of faith. But we Catholics do believe it, and we know and are certain of the reasons why. Our faith is not a mere emotional assent or a blind accepting of something forced upon us by our parents

or our priests. Our faith is eminently reasonable. We know that to doubt or to contradict the truth of the Presence in the Blessed Eucharist would be not only blasphemous but the height of folly.

All this we know. But it is not mere knowledge that is wanted. The Blessed Eucharist is, above all, a challenge to our personal love of Christ. In the first of the three tabernacles, we learn to hate sin and to shun it. But the service of God is not merely the avoidance of sin. Important though this is, it is only the first step, for you will never get much distinguished service from a man who stops short at the mere negative side of his work. The soul of man is hungering for happiness, — as we saw from the start, — and the avoidance of sin is the first requisite if a healthy appetite is to follow. According as a man starves his soul of its hunger for what is of sin so does his desire increase for what is of God.

It is true that the world around us is His tabernacle, but He has set up a second tabernacle wherein there is a very special Presence. And as the first tabernacle deters us from sinning, the second fills the heart with a burning love of God. Nothing is easier to illustrate. Do you remember how Father William Doyle describes "the mad longing for His Presence, which is at times overpowering"? Or have you read about Saint Paschal Baylon, the Franciscan lay-brother and patron of the Blessed Eucharist? If so, you will recall how his heart used to bleed when he listened to the Mass bell and was unable to answer the summons.

You know that Matt Talbot, the Dublin workingman, found in the Blessed Eucharist his support and his strength? As a young man, he was a slave to drink. He took the pledge and kept it. But who can tell what it cost him? When the temptation was fiercest Matt would make his way to the church and sit there. "I'm safe as long as I stay here!" One of the finest things in his life, don't you think?

Personal love of God through the Blessed Eucharist? Only this day I spoke to a broken-hearted man. His young wife died just a year ago and the tears in that fine strong man's eyes were sad to see. "There is the only place I can get consolation, Father." And he pointed towards the church. "I'm going every morning to Mass and Holy Communion." And who knows, in the mysterious designs of God, what treasures he is laying up for himself in heaven because he has discovered this pearl of great price, which perhaps he never would have known had all gone well?

If intimacy with Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist is going to develop, there must once more be co-operation between Him and the soul that is seeking Him. In the hurricane existence of many a modern man or woman there will never develop this delicacy in relations towards the Blessed Sacrament. For this, it is essential that the soul gives itself time to think and to pray. Now what is your attitude towards the Blessed Eucharist? If you realised that here lives your best Friend would you dream of passing His door without at least a word of salutation? This is a good milestone on the road to salvation.

If you understood a little better the Presence here, would it be so difficult for you to get up a bit earlier in order to receive Him into your soul? And would you rush up with such scant preparation or hurry away with such a listless thanksgiving? How do your genuflections before the Presence bespeak the faith that is in you? I well remember a venerable old man, a Redemptorist lay-brother, and the reverence of his genuflections. He was crippled with rheumatism or arthritis, and it cost him much evident pain to bend his knee. But never would he let himself off, and to this day, I can see his feeble body bending, and his knee going down, so slowly, but down none the less till it touched the ground.

Other practical suggestions will come readily to your own mind if you are keen, for love, Saint Teresa tells you, is always showing itself in a thousand different ways. Let this divine flame once begin 'to blaze up within you' and it will urge you forcefully to prove your sincerity, not by high-sounding words but by deeds. You could, for instance, spread among your friends some of the Messenger pamphlets, which tell about the Marvels of the Eucharist, the fruits It bears in your soul, the reasons why those fruits are often not produced. [From the website where you found this booklet you will probably find some titles of the Eucharistic Series. Read them. Share them.] I know nothing more in accordance with the expressed wish of Our Lord than that you should enkindle in yourself and in others a practical living love for God in this, His second tabernacle with men.

And what is the third tabernacle in which the soul can find God, even in this life? "Master, where dwell You?" By way of answering you, Our Lord points to yourself, and tells you that your own soul is actually the place where God has deigned to choose His abode. If you doubt this, listen to His assurance. "If any man love Me, My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him." Or turn to Saint Paul. "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? Now if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are." This is what it means to possess in one's soul this inestimable treasure, purchased for us through the merits of Christ, — sanctifying grace.

So it is true that your soul is His tabernacle. The world around us will one day crumble and fall to pieces. A day will come when the last Mass will be said and the last Sacred Host consumed. But the third tabernacle is eternal for the soul will live for ever. Indeed the world exists for the good of the soul; the things God has placed in the world are to be used or not used just in so far as they help or hinder the soul's progress. Even the Blessed Eucharist is given us for the nourishment of the divine life of grace within the soul.

Learned people, in trying to make us understand a little better the truth of this third Real Presence of God in the soul, ask us to make two suppositions. Suppose, by an impossibility, that God was to be annihilated in heaven and also in the Blessed Sacrament. There is then no God in heaven and every particle of the Sacred Species has been destroyed. Does God therefore cease to exist? No. For there is still another Real Presence, distinct from the other two, — the Real Presence of God by grace in the soul of the just man.

It is a good many years now since a certain poor old Woman, living in a small country town, received a letter from her son in America containing a large sum,—something like £400 or £500. [Remember, this was the 1930's.] She had had a hard life and now old age was setting in. Most of her children were in America, and the boy writes to tell her they had collected this sum between them to ensure that she would have a little comfort at the end of her days. A short time before this, she had heard a sermon on the Blessed Sacrament. In the course of the sermon, the priest had asked his audience to turn their eyes towards the Tabernacle and to try to bring home to themselves the stupendous fact that God was really and truly present there, — as truly as He is in heaven.

The thought had been haunting her ever since. And now that she possesses this sum of money, her mind is made up. She seeks out the priest and asks him to accept the gift sent her by her son. "Why?" "Father, I've been thinking quite a lot about your sermon and the way you emphasised the Real Presence. I can get along nicely without this money, as I've managed to do for nearly seventy

years. But what I want you to do is to buy a tabernacle for Him. Get the best you can. I want the entire sum spent on the tabernacle alone."

Yes, you admire her generous spirit of sacrifice. But it is even more incumbent on you to adorn the tabernacle within you. "I sought You outside, O God," wrote Saint Augustine, "and, lo, all the time You were within me." A soul in the state of sanctifying grace shares, in some mysterious way, in the very life of God Himself. This happy state of things we owe to Jesus Christ. He came, as He tells us, that men might have life and might have it more abundantly. Our first parents had been raised to a state to which they had no claim. Through God's great love alone, they had been lifted up to a plane in which God's own life was shared with them. When they sinned they lost this gift, which had been freely given to them, and the loss became the sad heritage of their children.

A homely illustration will serve to clarify what happened, and also to show us how to beautify this third tabernacle. Suppose you go for a spin on your bike and on the way home this evening you see over there in the field a cow, standing under a tree, and a man sitting and milking the cow. That tree which, shelters them has life, though of a very inferior kind. The tree grew from a small seed, and it puts forth leaves and branches. To do that implies that it is a living thing. The cow standing under the tree has life also, but of a higher grade. The cow can walk about, and she can make known her wants though in a very crude fashion. If she is hungry or in pain you will know all about it. And the man milking the cow? Well he may not be a genius, but unless he is an utter dolt, he can understand at least elementary truths, — that two and two make four or that he must get out of the way to let a car pass.

It would be a very marvellous state of affairs if, as you cycle past, you saw that tree pull out its roots and begin to walk around the field! Or if you could make the cow understand that two and two are four! Although both tree and animal have life, they do not possess the kind of life, which would enable them to perform acts of this sort.

Now when God created our first parents He raised them to a status, which did not belong to the kind of life that was their due. Man was made to share in the life of God Himself, — a much more extraordinary miracle than to raise the tree or the animal to a grade higher than belongs to their nature. To help the imagination, think of God's life on one plane and man's life on a parallel plane. Those two parallels can never meet, but God raised the lower to the higher and man then shared the very life of God.

When sin entered into man's soul, at once he lost this divine lift. In other words he fell back on to the plane that belonged to his nature, as if the tree, having walked about for two hours settled back again into the earth and was ever after deprived of the power of motion. Man too must have been so deprived for ever, for all that he could do could never reinstate him in the condition from which he had fallen. He could never regain the divine life if left to himself.

But he was not left to himself. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity "descended from heaven and became incarnate." He descended from the higher plane to the lower and brought with Him the divine life which man had forfeited by his sin. "I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly." "If any man love Me, My Father will love him and we will come to him and take up our abode with him." Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, then, the damage done to souls has been repaired. The tabernacle was in ruins, but He has rebuilt it. The temple was desecrated but in His great love for the beauty of God's House Jesus Christ has restored it. Once more man is God's

tabernacle. Once more he is lifted up to a state (to which of himself he has no claim), — to a kind of life in which he shares in the very life of God.

From this, it is easy to see that the closer man keeps himself united with Our Lord the more will his soul grow in the life divine. Our Lord is the source and fountain-head from which this divine life emanates, so man's great object should be ever to foster and increase his union, his contact, with Jesus Christ. From Him all grace flows as from a fountain of living water and that is why Holy Church asks for everything she wants "through Jesus Christ Our Lord."

Hence, the work of adorning this third tabernacle resolves itself into the work of keeping united with Christ. The closer that union, the more freely will grace flow into the soul. And this union is synonymous with holiness.

A saint is simply a man or woman who lives united to Christ by grace, and his holiness is to be measured by the care and constancy with which he fosters this divine life within his soul.

The Sacraments have been happily called "taps to an infinite reservoir of grace:" Our Lord has left them to His Church as seven channels by means of which this divine life is borne into the soul. That is why you are urged, in season and out of season, to frequent the Sacraments, frequently and worthily. With every Sacrament received in this way, you increase your stock of sanctifying grace, and moreover you receive an additional grace, which it is the effect of that particular Sacrament to bestow upon your soul. Thus Holy Orders gives a man, in addition to sanctifying grace, the special grace to live as a worthy priest. Matrimony enables those who receive it worthily to fulfil the duties of the married state.

Much of the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon the dispositions with which they are received. Fire cannot ignite a piece of damp timber; water cannot penetrate into a frozen surface. Hence, in order to adorn this temple fittingly man has to foster prayer and sacrifice in his life. In this temple, his own soul, there are many false gods, many idols raised by sin and selfishness. To destroy these is the work of sacrifice. It is not easy, and the difficulty appalls many and makes them give up the struggle. Prayer is nothing else than a loving attention to the divine Guest Who deigns to make the soul His tabernacle. Once let the soul begin to realise Who she has continually within her and this attention, loving and unbroken, becomes the most natural thing in the world.

Hence, on Our Lord's side, the beautifying process is done principally through the seven Sacraments, and on the soul's side, the co-operation will consist of prayer and sacrifice. Often Our Lord will help the soul's share too, — by inflaming her heart with loving desires in prayer and drawing her towards Himself and letting her see very clearly the emptiness and futility of worldliness and sin.

Often He will grant her opportunities, — great and small, — of sharing in His own life of sacrifice. Little by little, the soul comes to see His guiding hand in every detail of the passage of life. Little by little, she schools herself to accept lovingly whatever He ordains for her. And in the proportion in which this frame of mind develops, in the same is divine grace, received through the Sacraments, enabled to produce its effects upon the soul.

Briefly, these effects will be that the seed of divine life will expand, wondrously, in the soul, and the life of sin and selfishness decrease. And as this happens, the man who is undergoing the process will change even in his external behaviour. Ordinarily you will find him more pliable, more ready to lend a helping hand, more inclined to keep silence about the faults of his neighbour. You will note

that now he is more zealous, more on the alert to work for the salvation of the souls of others, more eager for prayer whenever he can manage to give it a little extra time; in a word, the divine life developing within is manifesting itself exteriorly too. Not only is that man a living tabernacle but he is also a living monstrosity, showing Christ to the world by his external demeanour and outlook on life and interest in what is of supreme interest to Christ, And such a man is on the high road to great and solid happiness.

"Master, where dwell You?" And He answered: "Come and see." And the soul begins to realise what is the third tabernacle, and, out of loving regard for the divine Guest she fosters a life of prayer and sacrifice and drinks deeply at the fountains of divine life, the Sacraments He has left for the nourishment of her gift of life. This is what Our Lord meant when He told Pilate His kingdom was not of this world. This is Saint Luke's statement that the kingdom of God is "within you." Such a dignity and how easy to forget it and ignore the Presence that floods with light and beauty the halls of the temple!

Every soul that ends the journey of life in the state of sanctifying grace has a gilt-edge guarantee that she will possess God throughout eternity. Every soul in heaven will be perfectly happy but not every soul will be equally happy. In God Whom the soul possesses there are, to put it in our human way, endless avenues to be explored. In God, there is the plenitude of every perfection so that a soul can know more and more of God, and as she knows more, she is rapt more in love of His marvellous beauty. Now what will determine the amount of knowledge of God and love of God that is to be her everlasting portion? These will be in direct proportion to the amount of sanctifying grace accumulated in her soul at the hour of death.

Suppose you are out in a small rowing boat and you put over the side a tiny thimble. Your thimble floats on the surface for a minute, then fills with water and sinks. Put out next a wooden tub. Let it too float about for a while till presently it fills with water and goes to the bottom. Next, let me suppose that your own little craft begins to take in water. You can do nothing to save it. You call in a frightened manner to your companion in the next boat and he rows over and delivers you, only just in time for regretfully you watch the water fill your boat and send it to the depths of the sea.

Lastly, suppose a great ocean liner springs a leak in mid-Atlantic and fills with water and founders.

Now all these vessels are completely filled with water but not equally filled. The thimble cannot hold as much as the tub, nor the tub and thimble combined as much as your rowing boat, while the great liner can contain ever so much more than thimble, tub, and boat all three together. They are each as full as they can be, and the amount of water they contain depends on the capacity of each. There is plenty more water in the sea but they cannot contain any more. A few drops fill the thimble, a few gallons fill the wooden tub; the rowing boat can hold no more than fifty or sixty gallons; the liner is able to contain several thousand gallons.

In some such way, we may say that each soul in heaven will be completely filled with happiness just according to the capacity of the soul to receive. And this capacity in turn will be measured and determined by the amount of grace possessed by the soul at death. The more assiduous she has been in cultivating the divine life in the third tabernacle, the more abundant harvest will she reap in eternity. God contains in Himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and it will be the soul's ecstasy to contemplate Him, to know Him, to love Him. Regret is not possible in heaven but if it were, how the soul would mourn her loss! It is much indeed to have secured, her eternal salvation

and the soul is inundated with joy. But so much more might have been secured, and at such a small price!

I suppose it is thoughts of this sort that draw such exclamations of encouragement from the lips of the saints. "I reckon," writes Saint Paul, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us. For that which is at present light and momentary of our tribulation works for us, beyond measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory."

I suppose that is why Saint Peter of Alcantara appeared after his death to Saint Teresa with a countenance radiant with joy. "O happy penance," he cried out to her, "which has purchased for me such ineffable happiness."

Nearer our own day, I suppose these thoughts were in the mind of the old Jesuit, who, himself on the threshold of eternity, gave this advice: "If there is anything that will cause you regret on your deathbed, it is the thought that you have ever spared yourself in the service of so good a God... Do all you can for Him while you are 'in it'. He's worth it all."

"If there could be sorrow in heaven," wrote Cardinal Merry del Val, "it would be the thought that now there is no more left to do for Jesus." To these men the supernatural world is the great reality. Sin is the only misfortune. Grace is the only treasure. The soul is a pearl of great price. With such standards, they measure values and they know that their standards are correct. Their one longing is to set up God's kingdom in the souls of men, and to co-operate themselves with the workings and promptings of grace in their own souls.

If God is living in this third tabernacle, His Presence sanctifies everything you do and renders your every good act highly meritorious. If His Presence be banished by mortal sin, your naturally good acts have no merit for heaven, only a natural reward for a naturally good deed. Let me try again to illustrate.

You are standing at the corner of a street, watching a poor blind man begging at the other side. A well-dressed gentleman passes the poor man, and, moved by natural sympathy, he puts his hand into his pocket, finds a sixpence, places it in the old man's hat, goes around the corner and forgets all about the incident.

After a few minutes, you see a second gentleman approach. He too is ended to compassion at the poor man's plight, and in his turn, he places a sixpence in his hat. Now you looking on would say that these two men have done exactly the same act. They have each given the same amount, to the same man, and moved by the same motive of natural compassion for a less fortunate fellow-man. But there is all the difference in the world between the two. Why?

We suppose that number one has sanctifying grace in his soul and number two is in mortal sin. The moment number one gives that alms, although he perhaps is not thinking of doing it for the love of God at all, still, because he is in the state of grace the act is registered at once on the right side of his ledger for heaven. If he dies in the state of grace, he will find to his amazement that that tiny act of kindness, so quickly forgotten, has been treasured up by the heavenly Father and now actually adds to his eternal happiness.

The second man's act can merit no such surpassing reward. He has no grace in his soul and so his act of kindness is merely a natural one. God in His goodness will give him a reward but it will be a

natural one, — good news, health, an unexpected recovery of a friend. But as long as he remains in mortal sin, he can lay up no merit in heaven.

Does this seem unfair? It oughtn't to. If you see a farmer digging in his field, you see him turning over the sods with his spade. If there is a ceremony in town, which we call the "turning of the first sod," what do we expect?

A new building is to be erected and the bishop is invited for this ceremony. A great crowd has assembled, and, clothed in his vestments the bishop takes a spade and drives it into the ground and turns over a square of the earth. He has done the same material act as your honest farmer in his field, but everyone can see that the moral value of the act is enhanced enormously by the dignity of the person performing it today.

Gentleman number one is invested with a dignity that the second lacks. God is living in his soul; he is clothed with the raiment of sanctifying grace.

Because of his intimate union with Christ, the source of grace, his act has a stupendous value which a man deprived of this intimacy could never possess.

At the same time, it is true that the more a man tries to refer his different deeds actually to God at the time of doing them, the more pleasing they will be to God and the more meritorious.

It is true that number one will receive a great reward for his kind act, but if he had trained himself, here and now to refer it to God, to give his alms actually from the motive of pleasing Him and showing love to Him in one of His suffering members, — if all this was in his act the merit would have increased enormously.

That is why the saints tell us "to seek God, not only in a general way but in all details, striving to please Him alone." If it is good to preserve sanctifying grace and to lay up treasure by so doing, it is sanctity or something like it, to pay the divine Guest the compliment of presenting your good deed first for His blessing, and to protest that you wish to do it for the single motive of pleasing Him.

As the incense is presented to the priest to be blessed before it is offered to the Most High, so does the fervent soul take care to present her entire life, in general and in all details, for the blessing of the Guest Who dwells within her.

And in this wise does the third tabernacle reach its perfection. On His side, God sheds into it His divine life "through Jesus Christ Our Lord." And on the soul's side, there is prayer and sacrifice, and a care to increase the divine life by training herself to act consciously from the motive of pleasing God. She is buoyed up by the promise of eternal life when the seed will bring forth abundant fruit. She drinks at the fountains of the Sacraments and every Sacrament received with such fervour and care adds enormously to her stock of grace. Such a life! "To those who love God all things work together unto good."

To live in the first tabernacle, means that you will flee from sin. To live in sight of the second, means that your heart will glow with love for God. To live as befits you as His Tabernacle will lead you to co-operate each day more fully with grace and such co-operation is the way to spell sanctity. Now Mary knows what sin is, for she saw its dire work as she stood on Calvary. And Mary loved Him as never since or before He was loved for she was His Mother. And to Mary He has entrusted the work of distributing His graces. That is why Mary is qualified as none other is qualified to answer the question of the eager soul: "Master, where dwell You?"

(Thanks to the Irish Messenger Office.) 1943.
