



ST. JOSEPH AND ST. ALOYSIUS

St. Joseph most chaste,
St. Joseph most faithful,
Pray for us.

The
Young Man's Guide

Counsels, Reflections, and Prayers
For Catholic Young Men

BY
Rev. J. F. Lasance

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His Holiness (Pope Pius XI) wishes that these volumes, which assuredly will promote the spiritual life, may receive an ever-increasing welcome in all the Christian families of your great country.

(From letter to Father Lasance written at the Pope's direction, May 10, 1927.)

Nihil Obstat

REMY LAFORT,

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,

Archbishop of New York

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This is one of Father Lasance's books to which His Holiness refers in the above letter.

"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccles. xii. 1).

"Be thou an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity" (1 Tim. iv. 12).

"Rejoice, therefore, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart be in that which is good" (Eccles. xi. 9).

"Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is all man" (Eccles. xii. 13).

"What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. . . . In doing good let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap" (Gal. vi. 8, 9).

"To him that soweth justice, there is a faithful reward" (Prov. xi. 18).

"Listen attentively, my son, to the voice of thy teacher; incline to him the ear of thy heart; receive gratefully the fatherly admonitions of one who loves thee, and resolutely strive to act in accordance with them." — St. Benedict.

Let your watchword be: All for the greater glory of God and in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Preface

THE success of "The Catholic Girl's Guide" augurs well, we trust, for the reception which awaits its present companion. Zealous directors of souls have urged us to undertake this work, and we entertain the hope that pastors will introduce "The Young Man's Guide" to the boys of their respective parishes, and especially to the boys of "the plain people," as Abraham Lincoln was wont to designate the great body of working classes.

There is more than a grain of truth in the adage, "Take care of the boys, and the girls will take care of themselves." Do we give as much attention and care to the preservation of our boys as we devote to the safeguarding of our girls? Are not our boys and young men exposed to greater dangers in the battle of life? Are not they more constantly and more fiercely assailed by the enemies of man's salvation, and tempted to the gratification of disorderly passions, to every kind of sinful enjoyment -- the end of which is temporal misery and eternal ruin?

Hence, any attempt to draw our Catholic youth away from the evil influences that surround them in the world is worthy of approbation; any book that imparts to young

men a word of warning and counsels them in regard to the things that make for their spiritual progress and sanctification, for their temporal welfare as well as for their eternal happiness, certainly deserves the hearty indorsement of a Shepherd of souls.

Such a book is the German work entitled "Hinausins Leben" by Father Coelestin Muff, O.S.B., a Benedictine of the famous Abbey of Maria Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

We have based "The Young Man's Guide" on this work — inasmuch as it is an English version of the same — revised, amplified, and adapted by us to suit the conditions, circumstances, and requirements of the young men of our own country.

In his preface to "Hinausins Leben," Father Muff says: "*Out into life!* So it is decreed for the young man, who is advancing to maturity; and with Schiller we must add, '*Out into a hostile life!*' — out into a *struggle*, not only for his material existence and welfare, but much more in behalf of his spiritual and eternal interests.

"To make his young friends in some measure acquainted with this hostile side of life, to point out to them the ways and means to parry the attacks of the enemies of their salvation — this is for a priest, for a pastor of souls, a welcome task.

"It is the aim of our little 'Guide,' in the first place, to furnish a Catholic young man with a correct view of the social and religious

conditions of modern life, and to call his particular attention to the forces and influences that are inimical to the preservation of his faith and innocence; it admonishes the young man, on his entrance into the busy world, to put on the '*armatura Dei*' (*Eph. vi. 11*), the '*armor of God*'; namely, to acquire, to cultivate, and practise various virtues, such as faith, hope, charity, the fear of God, sobriety, humility, obedience, fidelity, and perseverance; it instructs him, especially, how to fight, how to conquer, in the hardest of battles — that which must be fought in behalf of the virtue of chastity.

"In the second place, our 'Guide' is intended to be a support and encouragement to the young man in all the circumstances of his life, and, in particular, to stand by his side at the parting of the ways, when he has to choose a definite state of life — to give him needful suggestions and counsels at this important period of his career in regard to his vocation. By the grace of God, may this little volume be to our young men truly a lighthouse amid the darkness of unbelief and heresy, a bulwark against the ever increasing flood of immorality, an anchor of salvation when the soul is threatened with shipwreck, and a star of hope in the gloom of life."

To enhance the practical value of this work, we have added to the *Counsels* and *Reflections* a compilation of *Prayers and Devotions*, which, though short, will be found satis

factory for all the ordinary occasions for which a "Prayerbook" is wanted by young men in the world. We certainly desired and planned to add a larger collection of prayers. But this would have made a volume of great bulk, and our young men do not like to carry a bulky book.

To Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Mother of Good Counsel we humbly and respectfully dedicate our little "Guide." May she bless our youthful friends, and pray for them, that they may love and honor Jesus more and more in the Sacrament of His love, that they may learn to know *Him* better, who is "*the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*" and, above all, that they may follow Him and walk in justice, holiness, and truth toward that complete beatitude which is the crown of the saints.

F. X. LASANCE.

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

*Feast of the Assumption
of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1900.*

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PART FIRST

THE PANOPLY OF WAR

PART FIRST—THE PANOPLY
OF WAR

The Shield of Faith

X. Is There a God?

SOLDIERS of Christ, arise
And gird your armor on;
Eternal life the prize
To be by victors won.
The Cross shall give you might
To scare the hellish foe;
Equipped thus for the fight
In God's name forward go.

On to the gates of Sion, on!
Break through the foe with fierce en-
deavor;
We'll hang our colors up in heaven,
When peace shall be proclaimed for-
ever.

Faith of our Fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife:
And preach thee too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life.

Faith of our Fathers! Holy Faith!
We will be true to thee till death.
—*Oratory Hymns.*

I. **T**HE young man's lot is to go out into a hostile life. What is necessary for him? Behold the warrior, as he goes forth to the field of battle. Is he not amply provided with all needful weapons? When you, my dear young friend, go forth into the world, you are going to encounter mighty enemies, the enemies of your soul. You must, therefore, put on a strong suit of armor, one which is capable of protecting you. And what is this suit of armor? The apostle St. Paul describes it in the following words: "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil" (*Eph. vi. 11*).

The first and most powerful weapon in this suit of armor is the shield of faith, as the same apostle says: "In all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one" (*Eph. vi. 16*). And, indeed, faith is an impenetrable shield against the fiery darts of the devil. When the latter strives to lead us astray, by inciting us to voluptuousness, faith lays bare to our view the abyss of hell, in order that we may behold

the torments which will be the punishment of the unchaste. When he desires to dazzle us with the glitter of the riches, honors, and glories which the world has to offer us, faith throws open the portals of heaven, where the highest rewards are prepared for those who persevere in the love of God and the pursuit of virtue. Wherefore contemplate this shield of faith on every side, in order that you may be convinced of its indispensable necessity, may gladly take it into your hand, and grasp it firmly. Let us turn our attention first to the foundation of all faith, of all religion: namely, to the existence of God. *Is there a God?* That is the first question.

2. "Is there a God?" What an unnecessary question, you are saying to yourself. And you are quite right. In regard to this point David says in one of the Psalms: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." And truly; only a man destitute of reason, a man who is mad, could make such an assertion, could question the existence of God.

Let us suppose that you show your watch to a friend, and say to him: "Must not the individual who made this watch, and arranged the works, have understood his business very well? Must he not be a very clever fellow, and possess a first-rate head-piece?" Now, suppose he were to reply: "Oh, nonsense! The watch made itself!" Should you not gaze fixedly at him, and make some such remark as the following: "My good friend,

if you are in earnest, and really mean what you say, there must be a screw loose in your upper story." And you would be quite justified in thus addressing him. Yet wait awhile, and pay attention to the practical application of all this.

3. Fix your gaze upon the splendors of the universe. Behold the countless multitude of the heavenly bodies, as they revolve in their orbits; behold the wondrous creations which are upon this earth, as comprised in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms. Does not the most consummate imaginable skill, everywhere meet the eye?

But now listen to what certain unbelieving scientists, naturalists, and astronomers say to all this. The friend to whom reference was made above asserted that the watch had made itself. Our scientists go still farther and obstinately assert that the infinitely more wonderful machine of the entire universe, earth, sun, moon, and stars, likewise came into being of itself, having gradually developed out of a mass of primeval matter, which had always been in existence.

4. How ridiculous and absurd! But let us for a moment assent to the theory of these overwise gentlemen, let us submit our understanding to them; they owe us, however, a clear and ample explanation of the most important point of all, and are bound to tell us whence came this primeval matter, and the

will only surrender this right to another for a very large sum of money. Yet it can scarcely be said that he created the statue, since the form of it alone is the work of his hands, and not the marble out of which he fashioned it.

Now, dear reader, look once more at the marvelous work of the universe, and all that it contains; look especially at man and tell me whether He who not only made all this, but created it out of nothing, whether God Almighty has not an absolute, unlimited, and immutable right of possession over it all? Must not, therefore, the whole of creation, and especially man, who is endowed with reason, serve and obey this God as the supreme Lord and Master of all, and do His will in all things?

And it is this relation of dependence and subservience in which man stands to God, which is termed religion.

2. Religion (from *religare*, "to bind back, to bind fast") expresses the bond of piety by means of which God has drawn man to Himself, in order that we may serve Him as our master, and obey Him as our father. Man must, indeed, serve God; that is, he must both do and suffer His will. But since man is endowed with free will, can he not do whatever he likes? Most assuredly not! For his free will comes not from himself, but is the gift of God. And it is impossible that God can have endowed man with free will in

order that he should do what he likes, but in order that he should do what he ought, and do it quite willingly of his own free will.

All creation fulfils the purpose of its existence; the sun, the moon, and the stars revolve in their appointed orbits, *not voluntarily*, but in unswerving obedience to the laws of nature, with such mathematical regularity that astronomers can calculate their movements with perfect precision. The animal world likewise, *compelled* by the law of instinct, fails not to fulfil the object for which it was created. Man, on the other hand, is so constituted that he ought to serve, honor, and worship God deliberately and *of his own free will*.

3. This consciousness, this conviction that he is bound to honor and worship God, is deeply and ineradicably implanted in the heart of every human being. Hence we find that in ancient times no nation was without its own religion. It is impossible that this universal conviction of mankind can be a deception or a lie; it is, on the contrary, a plain proof that, to quote the words of a Christian writer of the early Church, "the soul is of its very nature religious."

And indeed the most ancient books of Holy Scripture teach us that not only did Abraham and his descendants worship the true God, but that all nations with whom they came in contact had, and adored, their own deities.