

## PEARLS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE FOR OUR LITTLE ONES

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'Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'—*St. Matt. xviii. 3.*

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'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve.'—*St. Matt. iv. 10.*

It is interesting to know, my dearest, that there are salt mines in Europe so vast that they contain streets and villages, and that some people live there always. The mine at Wieliczka, Galicia, is the most celebrated in the world. It is estimated that the mass of salt in it is 500 miles long, 20 miles broad, and 1200 feet thick. This mine, in which about 1000 persons work, consists of four levels, and is nearly 300 yards deep and 1 mile 1279 yards long by 830 yards wide. All the galleries, taken together, are about 30 miles in extent, and the salt extracted from the mine every year weighs 55,067 tons. I once heard of a boy who was born in one of those salt mines and lived there till he was eight or nine years of age. The mine was the only place he knew, and he had no idea of the bright and beautiful world with which we are so well acquainted. At last, one day he reached the open air and the sunshine. What astonishment seized him when he saw the sun pouring out golden light over the sky and the earth, and when he beheld mountains, plains, and valleys, trees, and flowers, the flying and singing birds, and the quiet cattle grazing on the green grass! He was so overcome by the sights and sounds around him, that he fell upon the ground and adored the Lord God Who had made the world so great and so beautiful. Was he not right in making that heartfelt act of adoration?

We, like him, have been created and placed on this fair earth, to adore and serve God. 'The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.' The chief object, then, for which we are in this world is to love God with our whole heart, to prove our fidelity to Him by keeping His Commandments, and thus to gain the wondrous reward of joy and glory which He has in store for us in Heaven. To forget and neglect this great object of our existence would be very foolish, as well as very wrong, for by so acting we should expose ourselves to the danger of losing our soul for ever, and of this danger our Lord warns us when He says: 'What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he suffer the loss of his soul?'

A priest once met a man who was riding a fine horse. 'That is a good horse you are riding?' 'Yes, it is a splendid and valuable animal,' replied the man, who was pleased to hear his horse praised. 'I suppose you take great care of your horse?' said the priest. 'Take care of my horse! Why, I might say I do nothing else. I give him plenty to eat and drink; I rub him down carefully every day; I lead him out for exercise; and I am always thinking of him.' 'Well, my friend, if you take so much care of your horse, I suppose you take still greater care of your soul?' 'My soul!' said the man. 'Oh, I never think of my soul, I do not care about it!' 'Well, then,' said the priest, 'I would much sooner be your horse than your soul.' There is nothing so precious as the soul, and we should shrink from no sacrifice, no matter how painful, by which we can secure its salvation. When Father Piccolomini was dying, he suffered intense pain, and in order to bear it well, he requested those about him to open the window of his room that he might be able to look

up to Heaven. 'Oh, how easy it is,' he exclaimed, 'to endure those terrible pains, when I keep my eyes fixed on Heaven! O, Paradise! O, Paradise! Soon, yes, very soon, I hope to be there, to be there for ever!'

Eternity lasts for ever, this present life of ours soon passes away. Our life on earth compared with eternity is less than one hour compared with a thousand years, and what folly it would be to exchange one hour of amusement and pleasure for a thousand years (if one could live so long) of misery in a dungeon. Yet it is far greater folly to lose a happy eternity and to fall into never-ending misery by spending the years of this life in rebellion against God and in seeking worthless pleasure by breaking His Commandments. When Sir Thomas More, the celebrated Chancellor of England, was in prison condemned to death because he refused to acknowledge the wicked tyrant, Henry VIII., as head of the Church of God, he was visited by his wife, who besought him to comply with the King's wishes and thereby save his life. 'Well, then,' said Sir Thomas, 'suppose I do what you desire, how many years shall I live, for I am an old man?' 'Oh, I dare say you will live for twenty years.' 'And do you think, foolish woman, that twenty years of miserable life on earth are more to be desired than an eternity of happiness, that I ought to choose twenty years here and condemn myself to an eternity of torments?' Rather than make such a choice, he went forward with noble fortitude and laid down his life for the truth of the Church's doctrine, and now he is honored as Blessed Thomas More, Martyr.

O, my dearest, let us ever value the salvation of our soul as infinitely more precious than silver or gold or any earthly possession. As you grow up, you will be exposed to many temptations, but keep steadfastly faithful to the law of God and love and serve your Creator with your whole heart and soul and mind and strength. 'O youth,' says St. Augustine, 'beautiful flower of life and greatest danger of the soul!' Shun whatever may be an occasion of sin, and you will abide under the protection of the God of Heaven. For Holy Scripture says: 'There is none greater than he that feareth God'; 'It is great glory to follow the Lord, for length of days shall be received from Him'; and 'There is nothing sweeter than to have regard to the Commandments of the Lord' (Ecclesiasticus x. and xxiii.).

Prayer to be Said Often.

Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and I am not worthy to be called Thy child.

Hymn.

Arm for deadly fight,  
Earth and hell unite,  
And swear in lasting bonds to bind us.  
Raise the Cross on high,  
Jesus, is our cry,  
With Jesus still the foe shall find us.

The devil, flesh, and world combining,  
Around our souls their snares are twining;  
With proffered joys they seek to lure us:  
O God! our only hope, secure us!

*Chorus:* Arm for deadly fight, etc.

Though crafty is the foe's contriving,  
And ruthless his relentless striving,  
On God, our hope, our strength, relying,  
We'll pledge to Heaven our faith undying.

*Chorus:* Arm for deadly fight, etc.

The number of missionary priests laboring among the Chinese is about fourteen hundred, half of whom are natives. The total Catholic population of China is now one million and a-half, and many conversions are being made every day.