

Looking back when they have trudged over the road for many a weary mile, their hearts will rejoice to see the fringe of the hills of Palestine growing more indistinct, and they will thus feel safer from pursuit. Through these sandy plains God led the chosen people and went before them in a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. Through all the years, as they wandered over these wild stretches of country without guide in the midst of enemies, God fed His chosen people with the manna which daily at the dawn was on the ground outside their tents. But now when His only begotten Son is driven forth in the arms of His Mother, there is no pillar of fire to lead them during the night, no cloud of smoke to guide them during the day and hang over the true Holy of Holies and protect Him from the sun's burning heat. No bread from heaven is rained down daily for His nourishment, who later on will say on the lake-shore: "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead... He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life." This difference, implying our Blessed Saviour's choice of suffering for Himself and His closest friends, will only make Mary's and Joseph's heart grow warmer in their love for the helpless Child. These and other wonders which God wrought in other days among His people will not be absent from their thoughts.

But the wind is blowing cold over the sandy billows, so Mary wraps her child in His little blanket and lays Him to rest. Does she think of that dark Good Friday when she and Magdalene with loving hands will wrap the winding sheet about Him and lay Him in the tomb? And now the eyes close, the features relax and the Babe of Bethlehem sleeps. Yet all the while, even from eternity He has been watchful. Even now He is ruling countless worlds, guiding the planets with the touch of His power, watching the destinies of men and directing them by His providence with more than a mother's love. The same Child is hidden on our altars and at times we are tempted to think Him unmindful of us and our needs. How ungrateful of us to doubt Him! There is no least detail, no slightest circumstance of our lives that is not a matter

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