

short the time, however many years or ages—in comparison with eternity, till the day of the Grand Resurrection—then Eternity!

“Devotedly in the Sacred Hearts,

“JAS. A. McMASTER.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE MARRIAGE OF MR. JAS. A. McMASTER.—HE SEEKS A PARTNER IN LIFE FROM THE HANDS OF GOD.—NUPTIAL MASS!—MISS GERTRUDE FETTERMAN, THE BRIDE.—McMASTER'S FAMILY.—HIS LOVE AND DEVOTEDNESS.—ITS PIETY.—DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

There is an important truth which many at the present day are apt to forget. It is extremely difficult, aye, morally speaking, impossible, for us to be saved, unless we choose that state of life to which God has called us. For, in order to be saved, we must fulfil the obligations of our state of life, and avoid all the dangers which are naturally attached to such a state. The duties of a priest, for instance, are different from those of a layman; the duties of a religious are different from those of a secular; the duties of the married life are different from those of the single life, and so on.

Now, each of these states has its duties, its difficulties, and its dangers. Upon the fulfilment of these duties depends our whole eternity. To fulfil the duties of our state, we need not only the ordinary graces which God gives to all men, but we need, beside, the particular graces belonging to that state; and without these particular graces, it is morally impossible for us to fulfil our obligations.

Now, to whom does God give these particular graces? Only to those who have chosen that state of life for which God created them. As for those who enter a state of life to which they are not called, they cannot expect to receive those particular graces; consequently, they will not be able to fulfil the duties of that state. There is, therefore, every reason to fear that they will be unhappy in this life, and forever miserable in the next.

Mr. McMaster had been assured by Father Ottmann, his confessor in Belgium, that he had no vocation for the priesthood. So he remained single for several years. One day he felt a kind of a desire

for a partner in life. He did not heed it much in the beginning. But gradually this desire grew stronger upon him, and he began to think that it might be the will of God for him to marry. Not being sure, however, of his vocation to this state of life, he often prayed for light to know the will of God in this regard. With St. Paul he said: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Thus he prayed daily, especially at Mass. For this intention, he also often received Holy Communion and performed other good works. As he had always walked in sincerity before God, the Lord heard his prayer in the way He had heard it when he prayed to ascertain for certain whether he was called to the priesthood. He spoke to Him again through his confessor, to whom McMaster had communicated his reasons for judging that God had called him to the married state of life. His confessor, a prudent and enlightened priest, advised him to enter the marriage state. But, he added, you must pray very much, in order that you may have for a partner in life that person whom God has already chosen to be your wife; for you must remember that the Holy Ghost says in the Scripture: “A good, virtuous wife, is a great treasure, her worth is beyond compare. But better dwell in a desert than with a woman who is ill-tempered and quarrelsome.” (Prov. xxi., 19.) Mr. McMaster followed the counsel of his director. He besought the Lord in heartfelt prayer to lead him to acquaintance with that person whom he had destined for his wife. His prayer was heard and soon answered.

In the spring of 1856, McMaster was invited to lecture for the benefit of the St. Vincent de Paul's Society, in the city of Pittsburg, Pa., by the president of the society, Gilbert Lafayette Fetterman, eldest son of the deceased Wilfred Washington Fetterman and Sarah B. Fetterman. The next evening he dined at the house of Mrs. Fetterman, and Miss Gertrude, as eldest daughter, was placed at his side.

This was their first meeting, although Miss Fetterman had a long acquaintance with the editor of the *Freeman* through the columns of his journal.

Mr. McMaster also knew of her by reputation, some lady in New York having told him about her, remarking that she