

increase of perfumes, assist me with your prayers. For the dead are benefitted by the prayers of the living saints." In nearly one hundred of his funeral pangyrics, the same holy Father speaks of the Christian duty of praying for the dead. In his sermon on the death of the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian, St Ambrose says: "Blessed shall both of you be if my prayers can aught avail. No day shall pass you over in silence. No prayer of mine shall omit to honour you. No night shall hurry by without bestowing on you a mention in my prayers. In every one of the Oblations will I remember you." On the death of Theodosius he thus ends a beautiful prayer for his soul. "I loved him, and therefore will I follow him to the land of the living. Nor will I leave him till, by tears and prayers, I shall lead him unto the holy mount of the Lord, where life is undying, where corruption is not, nor sighs nor mourning." St Chrysostom says: "It was not without good reason, nay, ordained by the Apostles, that mention should be made of the dead, in the tremendous Mysteries, for they well knew that these would derive great benefit therefrom."

In the ninth book of his Confessions, St Augustine tells us that his mother was at the point of death when she made him this last request: "Lay this body anywhere. Let not the care of it in any way disturb you. This only I beg of you, that you remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you be." Listen, dearly beloved in Christ, to the impassioned words in which this great Doctor, one of the loftiest geniuses the world ever saw, prays for his dear departed mother. "O God of my heart, I now beseech Thee for the sins of my mother. Hear me through the merits of the wounds that hung upon the woods of the Cross. May she then be in peace with her husband. And do thou, O Lord, inspire Thy servants, my brethren, whom with voice and heart and pen I serve, that as many as shall read these lines may remember at thy altar Monica, thy servant."

"The souls of the dead," says the gentle St Bernard, "dwell in three different abodes, according to the difference of their merits, hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. In Purgatory they undergo expiatory sufferings which dispose to redemption."

With the light of civilization and Christianity St Augustine, who was sent into England by St Gregory the Great, taught our Saxon forefathers the honour and invocation of saints and devotion to the dead. St Patrick did the same in faithful Ireland. In those far away lands at home splendid architectural piles, churches and chantries, monasteries and convents were built and endowed by their founders for the especial purpose that prayers and Masses should be offered in them for ever in behalf of the donors when departed. This is more than enough to show that far from being a new fangled view, the doctrine of Purgatory and prayer for the dead were enforced in the earliest and what are called the priest ages of the Church.

The most illustrious Fathers and Doctors of the Church treated this beautiful doctrine not as a purely theoretical principle, but as an imperative duty, an act of daily piety, which should be, as, in fact, it was in the early ages of faith, embodied in the daily exercises of devotion. The dear departed were prayed for morning and night in the Divine Office, in the Holy Sacrifice at which our Catholic forefathers made it a duty to assist every day of their lives. On Sundays they did what we do to-day, they asked the prayers of the congregation for the souls of the faithful departed. In excavating the Roman catacombs many most interesting inscriptions have been brought to light. Many most touching in their pious simplicity, implore peace and rest, and prayers for those over whose sepulchre the inscriptions had been placed. They are speaking memorials proclaiming that the Church of God, at the very cradle of her existence, taught her children, as she teaches them to-day, to offer up fervent prayers in behalf of the dead.

The beautiful doctrine of Purgatory, together with the practice of praying for the dead is embodied in all the most ancient Liturgies of the world. In the 4th and 5th centuries the heresarchs Anus, Nestorius, and Eutyches, snatched countless souls from the centre of unity which had hitherto and happily united the churches in the East and in the West. The sects founded by these wretched apostates have since formed many distinct communities, separating from the one and only Catholic Church in the East, as the Protestant Churches, with their hosts of offsprings, have separated from her in the West. The Greek schismatic Church, of which the present Russo-Greek Church is the offshoot, severed her connection with the Apostolic See in the 9th century under the unhappy Phocas. Now in all these Liturgies, that is to say in the established formulary of public worship containing the authorised form of prayers in the several sects, we find formularies of prayers for the dead, almost identical with those to be found in our authorised Liturgical formulary, the Roman Missal. Listen to this: "Remember, O Lord, Thy servants who are gone before us, with the sign of faith, and sleep in peace. To these, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace, through the same Christ Jesus our Lord." During the Vatican Council the illustrious Cardinal Gibbons called upon the Oriental Patriarchs and Bishops, belonging to Armenian, Chaldaeic and Coptic, Maronite and Syrian Rites, They all assured him that the schismatic Christians of the

East among whom they live, have, without exception, prayers and sacrifices for the dead. Now how could all these sects who have so long been separated from the Church, have adopted the Catholic practice of praying for the dead, unless they knew that it had come down from the Apostles?

It may not be out of place to remark that the Jews, who, two thousand years ago, offered up prayers for the dead, still retain that pious practice in their Liturgy.

In justice to our separated brethren, we must add that many, better than their religion, are returning to the faith of their forefathers as to the belief of Purgatory. Of late several English Protestant works have been published all bearing on the subject of Purgatory. They all contain prayers for the dead, and prove from Catholic grounds the existence of a middle state after death, and the duty of praying for the departed brethren. So true is this doctrine of Purgatory that some in our own days go so far as to deny that hell is eternal. Now a hell which is not eternal must be Purgatory. Luther and Calvin declare their belief that the Apostles themselves approved of prayers for the dead. Treating of the text of the beloved Disciple, St John, "He that knoweth his brother to sin a sin which is not death let him ask and life shall be given him who sinneth not to death." Luther says: "I believe that there is a Purgatory. I am certain of this truth, I believe that the souls imprisoned there are helped and relieved by the prayers of the living."

In face of such strong scriptural and historical warrant for our belief in purgatory, it will doubtless occur to some amongst you to wonder how the contrary opinion has gained ground among non-Catholics? How England, though for some time after she had thrown off her allegiance to the true Church of the Bible and held the Catholic doctrine, so soon caused this astounding assertion to be inserted in her Thirty-nine Articles. "The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons . . . is a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." From whom did this lying article emanate? Was it not from the apostate Cranmer? Is it not a stern, stubborn, historical fact that this perjured priest, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, would fain painter to the passions of the Protector Seymour, who had obtained from a servile Parliament an Act, in virtue of which he might seize upon the rich foundations made by our Catholic ancestors for Masses for the dead? Is not the Catholic doctrine of purgatory most reasonable, one most consoling to the human heart? Is it not a comfort to know that with the funeral rites all is not over between us and those who were once so near and dear to us on earth? How dreary the religion which would set up impassible barriers between the living and the dead? Do not the very instincts of our heart urge us to follow our dead beyond the cold grave? Do not they tell us that in praying for our dear departed ones we are acting with the strongest scriptural and historical grounds—with the voice of the whole Church from the very dawn of her existence? Is it not a consolation to feel that if, like Augustine, we fondly watch over the couch of a dying mother or father, we may, too, like Augustine, follow those beloved ones even beyond the tomb by praying for the repose of their souls? Oh! what a comfort for the grief-stricken soul to know that the golden bond of the communion of saints still unites us to those who fall asleep in the Lord, and that, thanks to this holy communion, we may still hold fond converse with our dear departed, and help them by our prayers and indulgences.

Our late Laureate seems to have grasped this Catholic feeling, when he makes his hero Arthur, in his last moments thus address his comrade in arms, Sir Bedivere:

"If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Be like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep and goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now, farewell. I am going a long way.

* * * * *

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

This it is, dearest in Christ, which robs death of its bitterest sting and enables us to bear up under the sad separation of those who were once more to us than all the world beside.

To sum up what we have hitherto said on the doctrine of Purgatory and devotion for the dead:—This doctrine and devotion are grounded on the authority and teaching of the Bible. Enforced in the Church of the Old Law, it is equally so in the Synagogue of to-day. Coming down from the Apostles, it has been taught by the Fathers of the Church in every age and clime, whilst the East and the West have incorporated it in their Liturgies. It is proclaimed and practised by the schismatic Christians scattered over different parts of the East. It was the cherished belief of every nation, civilised and pagan, Greek and Roman, British, Celt, or Saxon. It is a devotion firmly believed and fondly treasured by the three hundred millions of the children of the Catholic Church, as well as by a few of the children of the Church of England. What but pride or presumption could prefer a private opinion to this immense weight, carrying with it, as it does, the greatest learning, holiness, and authority? Were it not a proof of impiety to hold back with silent lips while the Catholic world is unceasingly sending up to the throned God an "Eternal rest give to them, O Lord" for our dear departed? Were it not cruelly cold, heartlessly cold, to refuse a fervent prayer for your dear departed father or mother, sister or brother, wife or husband, out of a mere prejudice, against every Scriptural, historical, and logical authority?

(To be concluded)

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