

holy images in whose presence they lose all their power.

To assist in focussing the mind, as it were, upon these visions of fulfilled prophecy, suggested by the Rosary, and also to so simplify the devotion that every human being without exception, can take part in it by the side of the saints and sages, the Mysteries are supported as it were, by a series of vocal prayers. While meditating upon any one of the fifteen selected events in the life of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother which make up the Drama of Salvation, one recites the Our Father once, and then the Hail Mary ten times, concluding with a single recitation of the doxology: Glory be to the Father. By this device the mind is enabled, in case it wanders from the immediate subject of the Mystery, to fall back upon holy and Christian sentiments calculated to immediately recall it to the scene which it is desired to keep before it. In other words, that residuum of attention which is not directed towards the subject of the Mystery is gathered up by the vocal prayers and given a religious direction.

The Essence of Prayer, as of virtue, lies in a certain kind of intention. Prayer is the direction of the soul towards God; and whoever directs his soul towards God, whether in penitence, or faith or supplication or thanksgiving or communion is offering a true and effectual prayer, whether or not he uses any form of words or thinks of those that he uses. Words are merely means to the end, which is the outpouring of the soul towards its Creator. The loving contemplation of the Person of Jesus Christ, especially in those very acts by which He became our Redeemer is a super-excellent degree of true prayer, and it is to this that the Rosary is adapted to give rise. The body as well as the mind is given a part in this wonderful exercise, by means of the beads, which are slipped one by one through the fingers as the prayers are said.

We Are Not Pure Spirits, were never meant to be, and never shall be; our physical part is destined to share in our eternal beatitude or woe, as it has shared in the temptations and trials of our earthly probation. Contempt for the body, in the literal sense of the expression, is a Gnosticising error; the Catholic loves and reverences it; demands only that it shall maintain its normal relation of perfect subservience to the soul. It is the temple of God, made by His own wisdom, and power, and the Eternal, clothed in His Eucharistic garments, has brought into it all the splendor of His infinite Majesty. Not only do the beads perfect the prayer by enabling the body to participate in the aspirations of the soul, but they are also a powerful means of awakening, preserving, and enhancing the interior devotion.

#### The Instincts of Devotion.

According to a now well-established psychological law, the more frequently a certain action has been accompanied by a certain thought, the stronger will be the impulse to a similar thought whenever the action is repeated. When one has been in the habit of reciting the Rosary, one's mind turns instinctively to the contemplation of the Mysteries as soon as the beads are taken in the hand. There are many occasions when the mind would be unable to ascend out of the turmoil of momentary and terrestrial interests into the Holy Mountain where the majestic panorama of the joys and sorrows and glories of Jesus and Mary unrolls itself forever before the eyes of the Initiate; and these are often the very occasions when the need of such a solace and stimulus is most acute.

#### A Garland of Prayer.

It is then that the beads reveal their power; with the transit of each tiny sphere a part of the incubus of earth and sense rolls off, until the spirit stands untrammelled in the presence of the Arcana of God. Other chains deprive the wearer of the illusory and ambiguous freedom of the body; but he who binds this garland of prayer about his heart, attains to the true liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

There is no Teacher so Potent as the Rosary.

to one to whom it has ever been familiar or who can be induced to learn and practice it. Many a hardened sinner or confirmed apostate who would listen to no exhortation, and whose bitter obstinacy the very shadow of death could not break, has

melted into tears of penance when a chaplet has been placed in his hand, and begged forthwith for a minister of reconciliation to rid his soul from the leprosy of sin and unite it in eternal bonds to its Maker and Redeemer. In the historic order the inner precedes the outer, but in the order of human knowledge the outer precedes the inner. In creation the particular unrolls itself out of the universal, and the highest intelligences see the universe in its truest perspective, the particular and the outer in and through the inner and universal. But the ordinary human mind in its earthly developments has to attain to its general truths by the accumulation of isolated facts, and must be prepared by outward experiences to receive its interior illuminations. The Rosary from this point of view is

#### A Ladder of Devotion

with its foot planted in the depths of matter, and its head rising into the uncreated splendors of the Self-Existent Godhead. The neophyte first learns to use the beads, with the prayers attached to them; and then, as he goes on, the Mysteries of the Cradle and the Cross and the Crown begin to appear in dim outlines beyond each decade, growing more and more distinct until those scenes of sacred history stand out in bold relief and vivid coloring, and their Hero and Heroine live and speak and breathe before the Worshipper's gaze.

Unspeakable Sublimities of the Life of God.

In course of time the faithful Rosarian's vision becomes still more wonderful. The halo of supernatural significance surrounding the historic scenes taken on deeper and richer and more varied hues; through all the avenues of thought and sense new images of glory and sacred sorrow and mystic love pour in and cluster around these central figures; broad lines of prophetic type and historic influence stretch off everywhere into the undiscernable distance, the wonders of creation crowned with the unspeakable sublimities of the Life of God loom in blessed portent; and gradually each of the fifteen Mysteries became a world-cycle—a cosmic lotus, a mystical rose with her who is, by excellence, the Rosa Mystica in its centre, holding forth the Word of Life who is the meeting point of the finite and infinite.—"Catholic News," of Preston, England.

#### CONSIDERATIONS ON CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

CCCXXI.

"Sacred Heart Review."

We have seen how the "Springfield Republican" correspondent not only will not allow a Catholic writer to treat a religious question from the point of view of his own Church, and will not allow him, without protest, to regard his own Church as superior to other Christian bodies (although this is involved in the very fact of his being a Catholic) but how he treats it as a serious grievance, that Bremond regards Christianity itself, and the Catholic Church as the representative of Christianity, as superior to the other "world-religions," that is, to Judaism, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Brahminism, or Buddhism, which are the only non-Christian "world-religions" now subsisting.

This seems extraordinary indeed. As the very essence of the claim of Jesus Christ is that He is the ultimate hope of the world, as being the consummate manifestation of God in humanity, it follows of necessity that whoever receives Him for such must regard Christianity as superior to all the other great religions, as containing the embodiment and fulfilment of that which they, at best, are but adumbrations, and some of them distortions and deprivations.

It follows then that if the censure passed by this gentleman upon M. Bremond is to be self-consistent, the genuine acceptance of Christianity is itself to be viewed as an inexcusable offence. The Government of France is rapidly coming to this position, but this American writer seems to have anticipated it.

A French author, a zealous adherent of the Government policy, maintains the duty of the authorities, not merely to depress, but finally to extinguish Christianity in France, by rooting out the Catholic Church. That done, he evidently supposes that the few Protestant bodies left will soon disappear of themselves.

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The ground on which this French writer maintains the obligation of his Government to root out the Gospel, in its most conspicuous French form of the Catholic Church, is, apparently, not that she has such and such rites, or such and such polity, or even such and such special doctrines. He seems cheerfully willing to allow her all these. At least he makes no complaint about them. The one essential and unpardonable feature of Christianity, especially as embodied in the Catholic Church, he views as found in its refusal to treat other religions as being on an equality with itself, and in its claim of being the religion intended by God for the whole world, before which, therefore, all other systems ought to give way, as either evil or insufficient and antiquated.

He remarks, very truly, that the early Christians, chiefly embodied in the Catholic Church of East and West, might easily have obtained acknowledgment from the Empire, if only they would have accepted the overtures made, at least informally by such sovereigns as Hadrian and Alexander Severus, to establish Christ as a god of the Empire, provided that the Church would receive into her temples the image of the Emperor, and of the three great Capitoline gods, and would offer libations and incense to these. She should also interchange tokens of comity with the other "licit religions" of the Empire, and should explicitly avow her readiness to obey every command of the Emperor, any word of Christ to the contrary notwithstanding. I do not mean that all these details of reconciliation are exact, but they seem near enough so for our present purpose.

He does not censure the early Catholics for refusing to entertain these proposals of the Empire. He does not think that they could have done otherwise. The Church could only answer that she could worship but one God, and one incarnate Son of God; that, while she owns that God works in all souls, and that He may go beyond all His promises, she could not recognize any of the heathen systems as authentic organs of His Spirit; and that she could only obey the Emperor so far as he did not contradict the mind of Christ.

Nor does he think that the Catholic Church gives ground of complaint by rendering the same answer to the secular power, when it makes virtually the same demands now. This is the very reason why he desires the extirpation of Christianity, because in its very nature, especially as embodied in the Catholic Church, no compromise with it is possible. He owns that Paganism failed in its early assault

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