

his mind, ever haunted by the image of his unhappy victim, found no difficulty in transferring it to the cold block before him. The hands, the feet, the lifeless body soon took shape beneath his touch. When he came to the head, however, a mist swam before his eyes, a blank fell upon his mind, and with a groan he fell upon his knees: "O, God," he prayed, "help me to finish the work I have begun for Thee!"

And then, as if in answer to his prayer, a sudden thought flashed upon him. Surely his own face, with its hollow eyes, its lines of pain, its expression of abiding grief, would make a better model for the Man of Sorrows than any he could have found elsewhere. A small mirror was obtained, and with new energy Master Sebald resumed his task. From early morning till darkness fell upon his cell he chiselled away, his strong will carrying him on when the frail body, growing weaker day by day, would have succumbed. If he noted his growing paleness or the deepening lines about his face, it was only to rejoice, for was it not One dying he wished to represent?

At last the day came when the work was completed. The sculptor had given the last touches; he could do no more. For a moment he knelt before the image, as if imploring pardon; then, calling the jailer, he bade him send for the executioner.

Instead of the executioner, it was the chief magistrate who came at the jailer's bidding. As he opened the door and the almost life-like representation of the Christ met his gaze, he forgot all else and fell on his knees with mingled sentiments of admiration and awe; then, unwilling to be alone to enjoy so wonderful a sight, he sent for the bishop, and presently the little cell was filled to overflowing with visitors.

"Where should the crucifix be placed?" was the much debated question. Some suggested the marketplace, while others were for setting it up in the large square outside the church. An end was put to the question by Sebald's asking leave to speak.

"If my work has found favor in your eyes," he said humbly, "might I beg as a last request that it stand in the cemetery, where, better than in any other place, it will serve as a warning to others? And there, too, he added in a lower voice, 'its shadow will fall on his tomb, and plead for my forgiveness.'"

Sebald's request was approved of by all present. With great pomp the stone crucifix was transferred to the cemetery, a large crowd accompanying it to its destination. When the blessing of the cross was over, and it stood out in all its beauty against the blue sky, the sculptor came forward and declared that now his last wish was granted, and he was ready to die. But at this announcement a murmur of protest arose. Some of the more influential persons spoke to the councillors, the councillors debated the matter with the Mayor, and finally the judge declared in a loud voice that, in consideration of his genius, his piety and his repentance, Master Sebald should receive a free pardon.

Great was the enthusiasm at this announcement. Old Sebald, however, took no part in the general rejoicing. "I have no wish to live," he said, "now that my task is finished. But He knows best. May His holy will be done!"

Nor was the old man called upon to spend much more time upon earth. Only a few days later, in the early morning, when the dewdrops hung in clusters on the grass, he was found, hands clasped as if in entreaty, lying dead at the foot of his wonderful crucifix.

MAGNA CHARTA

The Living Church, Protestant Episcopal organ, in a recent issue joggles the terms: "Holy Church," "Church of England," and "Holy Roman Church," used in the historic document of the Magna Charta, in a vain effort to make it appear that the "Holy Church" and the "Holy Roman Church" of the thirteenth century were not synonymous expressions, and that the "Church of England," referred to in the Magna Charta, is the Anglican Church of the present day.

The plain truth of the matter is that there was no Christian denomination in England up to or during the reign of John Lackland, whom the barons forced to sign the Magna Charta, save the Catholics, who owed religious allegiance to Rome. This is clearly evident from a consideration of the following facts:

After the death of Archbishop Hubert, of Canterbury, in 1205, a dispute arose over the selection of his successor. The churchmen elected one of their number for the post; King John proposed his chancellor. The matter was referred to Pope Innocent III., who rejected both candidates and appointed the famous Stephen Langton, whom he had recently created a cardinal. King John remained obstinate, and on March 23, 1208, the Pope placed his kingdom under interdict. In 1209 John was excommunicated. Three years later the Holy Father "had recourse," in the words of Lingard, "to the last efforts of his authority. He absolved the vassals of John from their oaths of fealty, and exhorted all Christian princes and barons to unite in overthrowing the King; and in substituting another more worthy, by the authority of the Holy See."

John sent a deputation to Rome to sue for peace. Innocent sent his legate Pandulf to England, and on

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May 15, 1213, John resigned his kingdom into Pandulf's hands, receiving it back again as a fief of the Holy See. Archbishop Langton took possession of his episcopal charge and set about instituting a series of reforms.

At a meeting at St. Paul's, in London, August 25th, 1213, Archbishop Langton read the "Charter of Liberties," granted by Henry I., and the barons swore to fight in defense of their liberties to the death. The tyranny of John was forced to give way, and a temporary peace was patched up on October 3, 1213.

The King went to the continent to wage war, and returned to England on October 15, 1214. A few days afterwards the barons assembled at St. Edmund Abbey and drew up a constitution of liberties, which they swore on the high altar to maintain at any cost. King John heard of their plans, and blamed Archbishop Langton for their action. His Grace gave his powerful support to the barons, and the struggle ended at Runnymede on June 15, 1215, when the King signed the Magna Charta in the presence of the assembled barons, the Archbishop of Canterbury (appointed by the Pope), and Pandulf, the Papal Legate.

In the face of these facts, how can The Living Church persist in its contention? For its further enlightenment we would respectfully suggest that it peruse carefully and prayerfully the essay upon Magna Charta's Centenary, just published in The Catholic Mind, issued by the American Press.—Catholic Telegraph.

CAN GOD REVEAL MYSTERIES?

By S. H. Horine, S. J., in the Queen's Work

My neighbor cannot see my thoughts, but I can by words, by signs or by writing, make them known to him. He sees or hears the signs I give him. He understands from them what my thoughts are, but he does not see or feel or hear the thoughts themselves. They are not visible, they cannot be felt, they cannot be seen. Yet wonderful I can reach his mind and put it in communication with mine. Now, suppose I am a learned chemist, and my neighbor knows nothing at all about chemistry. I tell him about a great experiment I have just made. He will never grasp fully the nature of the experiment no matter how much I try to explain the matter to him. Yet he knows something about it after I have talked to him. With-out me he would never have known even that little. He lacks the training, the necessary preliminary knowledge and the means for carrying on the tests I have made. To him, chemistry is an unexplored land. My experiment is a natural mystery to him; it is something he could never discover for himself, and which, in spite of my telling him about it, he cannot fully understand. And we are all of us surrounded all our lives by such natural mysteries, truths we cannot enter into completely, yet which other men can reveal to us in some fashion.

God is a pure spirit, infinitely wise and powerful. He created man and knows perfectly every part of his make up. He gave man an intellect so that he might be able to understand at least a little of whatever can be known. Hence God, if He wills, can tell man something about His own great thoughts, something about His infinite beauty and perfection, even though man's mind is unable to comprehend these things. To comprehend them, man would have to cease being man and become God. That can never be. So man can never fathom the mysteries that God understands so well. And since God is a pure spirit and man is a spirit "housed in a hut of clay" through the windows of which he must get his ideas and knowledge, man cannot see God, cannot read His thoughts, cannot even guess at those thoughts or discover fully just what sort of a Being God is. So there are

supernatural truths and facts that man could never suspect to exist, much less understand, if God did not reveal them. These are mysteries in the strict sense of the word.

Now, it seems to be a contradiction to say that God can reveal supernatural mysteries. If they are mysteries, they cannot be understood by men, and if they cannot be understood by men, how can they be revealed to men?

Cardinal Newman has an excellent illustration, which may help to clear up this difficulty.

Here is a man blind from birth. Try to describe grass to him. How will you begin? Show it—but he is blind! Tell him it is green. He does not know what you mean. Green—! What is color to him? He never saw the blue of the heavens, nor the red sun, nor the yellow corn—only the darkness of unending night is his.

Put some seed in the man's hand. Tell him—he can hear—how the warmth of the sun—he can feel—and the moist earth join hands to open the tiny seed and let the grass blades come forth from their hard little prisons. Bid him place his hand upon the ground and feel how soft the grass makes it. Tell him it carpets the wide meadows and the steep hills, that it waves and bends as the wind sweeps over it. Tell him that the air is heavy with the scent of fields newly mown. Put blades of grass in his hand that he may discover their shape. Bid him place a blade on his tongue and note how jagged its edges are. Ah, how much he now knows! But the beauty of green hills is never to be a joy to him. Still he knows how delightful the hills and meadows must be with their wide stretches of soft, yielding, sweet scented grasses.

Man cannot see God, nor feel Him, nor understand Him. How can God tell man what He is, what His love is, what His nature, what His patience with sinners? These things man could never know—not seeing God nor the judgments He passes on souls that come before Him after death has opened the doors to the world in which God dwells.

Man can feel, see, hear and understand the things in this world of sense, and through these signs, through the language of human tongues, he can catch feebly at God and His beauty and truth and terrible power. And so God says—"Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she shall forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isaiah 49: 15). "God so loved the world as to give His Only Begotten Son" (John 3: 16); "If I shall whet My sword as the lightning, and My hand take hold on judgment: I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay them that hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh." (Deut. 32: 41); "Who hath numbered the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and measured the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the depth of the abyss? Who hath searched out the wisdom of God that goeth before all things?" (Ecclesiasticus 1: 2); "I and the Father are one." (John 10: 30); "The heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a Voice from heaven, saying: This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3: 16).

If you will not believe that God can instruct us in knowledge too deep for our minds to grasp, explain this:

How does baby come to know that mother is his mother? That she loves him? He cannot speak; he cannot understand her words. But he understands her voice. The varying inflections of her voice are music to him, revealing mysteries untold. Her crown is as the storm cloud over the meadow lands and the placid river. And if baby were always to remain as he is—laughing and playfully catching at mother's smiling face, clutching at her soft hair and those eyes that speak—speak the wonderful language of her love—then would not he be like us, babes forever in the tender arms of God who is smiling through all the beauties of earth about us, frowning in anger through the storms and the lashing sea, speaking of mysteries through the living voice of His human messengers and in the still, soundless voice within our souls?

Man—we (this matter concerns us too greatly not to apply it to ourselves)—we are indeed superior to dumb beasts. Our souls are faint images of God. Yet we are infinitely below Him. We are little children with heads too small to hold even the wisdom of this earth, and still not too small to catch at the thoughts of God when He stoops to whisper them to us in our own small language. We are blind creatures struggling up toward the light and beauty of the inaccessible and all-loving Father. Surely God who knows us so well, since He molded our frames and put our restless spirit in them, can teach us some of His wonderful knowledge, something of mysteries that we cannot fully comprehend.

DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER

The dignity of a Christian mother is second only to that of the priest of God; and the reward of a Christian mother who fulfills the duties of her calling can be inferior only to that of the priest who does his duty. Both are engaged in the same work, only in different circles; both are instructors of youth, saviors of people.

Too many Catholic mothers do not realize their position in life, are not faithful to their calling, try to shirk their duties, and would prefer to be wives without being mothers. Do they imagine that the childless woman or the society "lady" are held in higher regard than the mistress of a home who creates the hearts of the country's future citizens, the Church's prospective supporters and candidates for heaven's eternal joys?

They are sadly mistaken, for the world does not admire the selfish woman, the woman to whom the home is not attractive, the woman apparently bereft of love and not brave enough to shoulder the sweet burden of child raising. It were a cruel person indeed who would commend any conduct on the part of mothers to prevent human beings from coming into the enjoyment of life here and eternal joys hereafter.—Intermountain Catholic.

THE "HIDDEN BIBLE" BOGEY

One of the most tenacious of all the "hardy annuals" about the enormities of the Catholic Church is the one relating to the "suppression" of the Bible. The story of Luther's having "discovered" a copy of the Scriptures hidden away in a corner of his convent, after he had been appointed to the post of librarian, is just now being exploited by one of the "ex-priest" tribes, of whose mountebank performances we lately gave a graphic description in our news columns. The Ave Maria, in a recent issue, drew attention to the audacity of such lying regendades in face of the remarkable action taken by two of our greatest Popes of the modern era, Leo XIII. and Pius X., to encourage the reading of the Sacred Scriptures by granting extraordinary indulgences to all Catholics who would make them a subject of regular study. Surely the height of impudence could go no further than to endeavor to spread among ignorant people the belief that the Church, which had preserved the Bible for the world, was the self-stultifying institution which had done its best to keep it from the knowledge of mankind for a long course of centuries, until at last its memory had become almost as that of the lost Pleiad! The Society of St. Jerome is an association formed specially for the promotion of the study of the Holy Scriptures. To the members of this society the Holy Father (Pope Pius X.) was pleased to offer rare inducements to such as would diligently study and promote the study of the Bible, as announced in the official Vatican press:

"In an audience granted on April 23, 1914, to the Rev. Father Assessor of the Holy Office, His Holiness has been graciously pleased to grant the following indulgences: To all and several the pious sodalities already canonically erected. Ordinaries of places or which in the future shall be erected, with the scope that their members induce to promote the Gospel more and more and for this end propose to themselves: (1) Frequently, and if possible every day, to read a part of the Gospel, using editions approved by the Church and enriched with numerous and lucid notes. (2) Often and opportunely to recommend this practice to others. (3) To recite frequently the invocation, 'Gloria, O Jesus, that we may obey Thy Holy Gospel!'

The Catholic Church has guarded the Bible as a man is said to guard the apple of his eye from injury. Yet her purblind detractors will keep on insisting that Luther (who read the work only to his own destruction) was the one who dragged it from the obscure nook wherein the malice of 'the monks' had (inspired by the Evil One) relegated it! Marvelous the gullibility of the evil disposed and the bigoted!—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

PORTO RICO

One of the fields selected by the Methodists for exploiting their religion was Porto Rico. After the Spanish American War these good people, fired with an ardent missionary zeal, determined to lead the poor Porto Ricans out of the darkness in which they had wandered under their Roman guides. Money was spent lavishly, houses of worship were multiplied, every inducement was held out to the poor benighted Porto Ricans to receive the light. This, perhaps, was praiseworthy evangelism, in a way. Their efforts, however, it seems, went awry. Not so their zeal. Their fervor rose in inverse ratio to the poor results.

Glowing letters have recently appeared from the pen of Rev. W. P. Thirkfield, the Methodist bishop, who resides in New Orleans. He describes in detail the wonderful front gathered for the Church in Utuado. According to this gentleman, a Methodist conference was in session in this town. "Our church," he says, "was crowded." At the "great church on the plaza" the Roman Catholic—he found "one lone worshipper within, and the Capuchin priest, a clear-eyed, fine-facèd brother, out in front evidently listening to the strains of Gospel music from the Methodist convulsive scenes the way."

Our esteemed Catholic contemporary of New Orleans, the Morning Star, thought it worth while to investigate this state of affairs, the more so that the present Archbishop Blenk, of New Orleans, spent seven years as Bishop of Porto Rico, and

the present Catholic incumbent, Bishop Jones, is well known. The result of the investigation is told at great length in a recent issue of this paper. Among other things we find that whereas Utuado, before the advent of the Methodists, had but one priest, four priests are now kept busy, chapels for the outlying districts have been built, the old church repaired, and a spacious rectory has been erected. There have been during the past four years in this parish 840 marriages and 6,245 baptisms, surely not a bad showing after all the reputed gains of the Methodists. Along side of this, the "one lone worshipper" story certainly smacks of ignorance or worse.

One result of the Methodist "Invasion" has been to make the Catholics stronger in their Faith. As Mr. Henry Hooke, a spiritist and a member of the Insular House of Delegates, recently said in a public debate, "Competition is the source of energy. Look, for example, in Catholicism. The new life of Catholicism in Porto Rico is evident, on coming in contact with the Protestant sects, which aimed at closing its advance."

Thus it is the same old story of Methodist triumphs, in Porto Rico, in South America, in Italy, and elsewhere.

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where. The pyrotechnic display is wonderful; the net result is a collection of old sticks that have fallen from the sky after the fireworks have subsided.—St. Paul Bulletin.

"UNBEARABLE"

In a letter to a friend whom he had converted, Monsignor Benson said: "When things become, as you say, 'unbearable,' there is absolutely only one thing to do, and that is to grasp them, like spear points, and guide them to one's heart. A cross that we cannot 'bear,' when it is laid upon us, is perfectly possible to 'take up'—and that is precisely what our Lord asks of us.

Directly a thing seems intolerable, if one can but make a supreme effort of will, and grasp it, and hug it, and thank God for it—the pain becomes shot with joy. It is so, also, with the souls in purgatory.—New World.

Lament and count that day lost, in which you have not in some way denied yourself for the love of God.—Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi.

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