

desire the saints to pray for him? And who would not rejoice to find that the prayers thus offered are received like sweet smelling incense, in Heaven's censers, and born aloft by angel hands to God? There could be no more close or intimate communion than that which is here indicated, between the church victorious and triumphant in Heaven and the church militant on earth. The latter portion of the church is no less than the former, "the Kingdom of God," although still engaged in that warfare in the course of which sin and scandal may come. But, is it not His Kingdom of which it is said, "that the Son of Man the Saviour will weed out of His Kingdom all scandals?" and then this earthly kingdom, all impediments being swept away, will come into closer relation with that which is of Heaven and of Heaven only; and thus will become complete the Communion of the Saints triumphant in Heaven and those who are still contending in that great spiritual warfare. Let such therefore, take courage. The victory is more than half won when once they have undertaken to fight for it; and let it be their consolation to reflect that their Lord and Saviour, who loves them, sends His angels to gather up every stone of scandal against which they might dash their foot. One fears to speak of a communion so profoundly spiritual. But, it is impossible to be wrong in using the language of Saint Paul. The Apostle says: "You are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect." (Heb. chap. xii.)

Let us not forget the suffering Church. "Have compassion on us you at least who are our friends." "Miseremini mei saltem vos qui amiei mei estis." Who are those

friends to whom the suffering souls cry for compassion? They are no other than the brethren of the church victorious in Heaven as well as those of the church militant here below. The former love them as Heavenly Spirits love and as the Saviour taught them. This excellent love causes commiseration which is accompanied by prayers that are bourne in angelic censers to the throne of God. The church on earth is also moved to pity and offers in behalf of the sufferers, sacrifices, alms, giving and other good works. It has been the belief of the church from the earliest times that by such devout and holy practices, souls which may be temporarily excluded from the bliss of Heaven are largely benefited. The members of the church on earth cannot know who they are among departed souls that stand in need of prayer, alms and other good works. Hence they pray alike for all, certain that their prayers will not be lost, but that they will redound to their own spiritual good, if not available for any suffering soul. In this they are guided by the doctrine laid down in Holy Scripture, that *it is holy and salutary to pray for the dead in order that they may be loosed from their sins*. Souls may have departed this life having only some expiatory pain to undergo. Others may have borne with them beyond the grave *sins that may be forgiven in the next life*.

The whole teaching of the church, from the first days of her existence, includes the doctrine here distinctly laid down and insisted upon. It was preached by the earliest Fathers and ecclesiastical writers; somewhat later by Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom: and confirmatory of all they have taught, a voice that cannot be mistaken has been heard from the Catacombs of Rome, proclaiming that *it is holy and salutary to pray for the dead in order that they may be loosed from their sins*.

