

Is it not reasonable to believe that our prayers for them are listened to, and answered? We say we believe "in the life everlasting," do we not? Then surely our loved ones are living, not dead. This is all very true, you say, but it does not explain about the saints. Please wait. Stop and think a moment, and you will realize how few perfect ones have ever lived on earth, and how dear those few must be in the sight of God. Would He not willingly grant their petitions in reward for their great love for Him which sanctified their lives? And if we who are so sinful, so lax in our duty towards Him, strive to imitate their virtues and ask their assistance, can this be wrong? If so, then it is equally wrong for me to ask my living friends, whom I love, you say, that they pray for me. Living and dead, past and present are bound together by the chains of God's love. We are one great family, mutually helping each other—yet Catholics are doing wrong to venerate the saints.

Then again my friends question our use of statues or pictures. Yet when I visited their homes I found countless photos of relatives and friends adorning their rooms, but their Greatest Friend, Christ, was nowhere to be seen. They hung pictures of Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, Rossini, Bonheur, Corneille, and any other worldly favorite upon their walls, but Mary, blessed amongst women, the one woman above all others whom God chose to carry out His Divine plan, was thought unworthy of any place. Can you tell me why? And as for praying to the picture—when a mother picks up the photo of her absent boy and kissing it, breathes a prayer to God for his safety, is she praying to it or to God? If I keep my eyes upon the pictured face of Christ while I murmur my petition my attention is more apt to be firmly held than if I have no such image for my mind to cling to. If we were all strong enough to fix our minds upon Our Savior without the help of visible things we might do without pictures, but we are only human and need the evidence of our eyes to sustain our wandering thoughts.

While walking with a friend one day we passed a window where church goods were displayed, and at the sight of a crucifix she exclaimed, "Oh, how I hate to see those things! It gives me the creeps. I think they are heathenish." Yet neither fear of the heathens, nor dislike, nor "creeps" kept Christ from suffering for our sins the terrible death of which we see only the symbol. She was a Christian and loved God, but could not bear to see His cross, or the picture of His Mother. And "they say" the Catholic Church is inconsistent. Fanny, isn't it?

Do you see how glorious a thing it is to be able to point to a higher, wiser authority for every act which you do? No country, not even the tiniest town, can run smoothly along with no definite form of government, but the ever-lasting City of Religion is supposed to be able to stand firm with no ruler, no advisors, no infallible guide. Of all the churches you know or hear about, which one stands unshaken by the present-day waves of heresy and godless principles? Which church is steadily growing in spite of terrible opposition? What church can point with pride to the little ones in her care and say, "These are the Master's sheep, and they are safe?" You will say that these very sheep often go astray, and it is all too true. But which Church turns out the greatest majority of clean manhood? I have studied and tested it all, and the answer is found in the Catholic Church alone. So let others say what they will—hold fast and you will soon see a way to answer every question and perhaps do, as I hope I am doing now, lead some weary soul back into the "House of the Lord."

We know each other now, and I have tried to tell you how reasonable every part of our Faith seems when once you understand and grasp its beauty. We are near to one another, you and I, and only two converts traveling side by side can be. I have traveled by little ahead, and am looking back to smooth the rocks from your path, or tempt you to join me. Will you come?—The Missionary.

LOYALTY TO THE "POOR SOULS"

"Forgetfulness of the dead is a peculiarly base form of inconstancy," says the Catholic Universe. "What- ever obligations we owe to the living—of kinship, or friendship, or common charity—are immeasurably increased when the living become the dead and lose the use of those opportunities of eternal gain that make life most precious. Death is a surer bond than life because ester from life's inevitable changes and estrangements, and its faithfulness as well as its helpfulness is a claim upon the generosity of the living. The 'poor souls,' we call the dead who are expiating their sins in purgatory, not because they are poorer than we who have not yet won purgatory's assurance of heaven, but because they are beggars in so complete a sense that they can receive no help unless it comes as the alms of our charity. To the earthly mendicant a fraction of the rich man's wealth represents affluence, and to the souls in purgatory one day of life's opportunities of grace and petition stands for the attainment of eternal happiness. The prayers we give them are not great gifts in themselves, but they become inestimably great in the good eyes of purchase."

LITERATURE IN THE HOME

Every mother desires the success of her children, and this is quite natural, but it is of the greatest importance to discover in what success consists, and then what are the means to secure it. There is sometimes seen in a community a family whose members are honored above their neighbors; both parents and children receive the confidence of their Pastor and others. Sometimes this compliment provokes the ill-will of the thoughtless, who fail to recognize the cause—superior ability.

One such instance recurs to my mind. A lad in the elocution class gave in so slovenly a manner the extract assigned to him that the teacher called from a lower class a much younger boy, who recited the selection, with delightful clearness of enunciation, eloquent modulation and rare gracefulness of demeanor. The listeners showed their appreciation by their enthusiastic applause. The difference between the two lads was traceable to their mothers, or rather, to their grandmothers. In one family the station in life was the same, but in one home reading was a delight, and the parents led their little ones along the flowery paths of knowledge.

There succeeded to the study of the catechism readings in Scripture and church history. The children were taught the Mass so carefully that they could unite with the very words of the Priest when Mass was in progress. They recited in Latin the Gloria, Credo and Pater Noster; the other parts in English as the priest said the words in Latin. The father of such a family had been taught by a blind aunt who lived in that Emerald Isle, where persecution drew the faithful to the church. They prized the faith in proportion to the price they paid for it—many gave their lives.

In the household of the intelligent Catholic the arrival of the Catholic weekly paper is a delight. Therein may be found the answers to many of the charges against the faith which are met in intercourse with non-Catholics. The Catholic weekly, read aloud in the family, furnishes information not only on the latest news by the exquisite style of the writer, but by the variety and excellence of the articles and greatly to the knowledge of science and of scientific men, who have been also faithful sons of the Church, loyal to their God and useful to the world, whether as statesmen, physicians, artists or artisans, or in any occupation in life.

It is but recently that a well known priest received a call from a committee of men prominent in the municipal affairs of a great city who desired the names of some men of the parish who were capable of administering certain departments. The priest expressed surprise, and asked if there was some mistake. But no, a clean administration was desired, and only men of good principles could cope with the existing corruption.

The home wherein good reading is cultivated is usually remarkable for the courteous manners of the family; gentleness and good English give a pleasing grace and a delightful voice. Familiarity with good reading is like companionship with good society, both stimulate and refine. The young folks are prepared for the success that comes to the deserving.—Catholic Bulletin.

WAS SHAKESPEARE A CATHOLIC?

Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, 1915, begins the three hundredth year since the poet's death which occurred on April 23, 1616. As a fitting preparation for the observance of this tercentenary celebration Catholic students of Shakespeare should examine thoroughly all the evidence that can be adduced to prove that he was a Catholic, and in a special way belong to us. In the following paper the main heads of that evidence are presented:

There is no doubt that Shakespeare's mother lived and died a Catholic. Her name was Mary Arden and many of the Ardens continued to be staunch Catholics even during the dangers of Elizabeth's reign. Indeed, one of the prominent members of the family suffered death for the faith. Shakespeare's mother, moreover, made a will in which there is a mention of the Blessed Virgin, a custom that had gone out of vogue in England at this time except among Catholics. Shakespeare's father, too, is on the list of Stratford recusants who were summoned by the court for not attending the Anglican service on Sundays. Shakespeare's immediate surroundings, likewise, were distinctly Catholic, for the spirit of the old religion had not died as yet in England. Indeed, it was very much alive in the central portion of the country.

It is sometimes said, however, that there can be no question of Shakespeare's being a Catholic for he was married, baptized and buried in the Anglican Church. But these facts, it must be remembered, have in themselves no such significance as they would possess at the present time. There was no way of having the birth of a child properly registered then in England except by having it baptized in the Church by law established. Obsequies also had to be observed according to the Anglican rite, for the only cemetery was close to the parish church. As for Shakespeare's marriage, in recent years the interesting suggestion has been made that the real reason for the circumstances attending the ceremony, which are supposed to carry a

hint of scandal with them, is because he was originally married by a Catholic priest. As it was then very perilous for a priest to show himself in public or to perform any official church service, the marriage was, of course, performed secretly. Anne Hathaway's family, moreover, was Catholic by tradition and about the time of the marriage it is known that a priest, not entirely without the knowledge of the local authorities, used to say Mass privately, in the loft of one of the houses at Shottery.

But if Shakespeare was a Catholic should not his plays show it? Unquestionably. And I maintain they do. Commentators have pointed out for instance, that Shakespeare in "Romeo and Juliet" follows Arthur Brooke's "Tragicall History of Romeo and Juliet" very closely. He has, however, changed the whole of the play's attitude towards the Catholic Church. Confession instead of being a source of sin actually protects the young people from their own passion in the most difficult circumstances, and almost succeeds in rescuing them from an unfortunate complication. Instead of being "superstitious," Friar Lawrence is pictured as a dear old man interested in his plants and what they can do for mankind, but interested still more in human souls, trying to care for them and quite willing to do everything that he can, even risking the displeasure of two noble houses rather than have the young people commit sin. Friar Lawrence is represented in general as one to whom Romeo and Juliet would naturally turn in their difficulty.

But "King John," it is maintained, represents an altogether different attitude toward the Church. In that play they assert that are passages which make it very clear that Shakespeare shares the general feeling of the men of England in his time. King John protests, for example:

That no Italian priest Shall tithes or toll in our dominions. But as we, under heaven, are supreme head, So under Him that great supremacy, Where we do reign, we will alone uphold, Without the assistance of a mortal hand.

So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart To him and his usur'd authority.

In this play, too, there are some bitter comments on monks which would seem to prove that Shakespeare shared the opinions of many of his contemporaries regarding monasticism. But let us turn to "The Tenthredin," of King John," from which Shakespeare made his play, was probably written in the year of the Spanish Armada when English national feeling ran very high and there was bitter antagonism against Catholicism as the religion of England's greatest enemies. The dramatist—we are not quite sure who it was—saw the advantage of this political situation in order to gain favor for his play. He tickled the ears of the groundlings and attracted popular attention by stimulating the prejudice of his audience. Shakespeare modified all this to a very marked extent when he rewrote the play seven years later, though it can be seen that he used many of the words of the original version and was evidently following it very closely. But for some good reason he was manifestly minimizing all the anti-Catholic bias in it though letting stand whatever sentiments were suitable for such characters as King John and his entourage. In the matter of monks and nuns and their treatment in the original version of "King John," Shakespeare has been even more drastic in the changes that he made.

But the best evidence of Shakespeare's attitude toward the Anglican Church is to be found in "King Henry VIII," one of his poet's greatest plays and the last he wrote. Some of the Wolsley speeches in it are the finest examples of English that were ever penned. It is conceded by all the critics to be the ripest fruit of his mature years. Therefore, if a play can be considered the expression of Shakespeare's settled opinion, that play is "Henry VIII." Now it so happens that the subject of "Henry VIII" is exactly the story of how the change of religion came about in England. But it is sometimes urged that the fifth act, with its culminating scene in the birth of Elizabeth, and the high prospects for England and the rejoicings which this occasioned, indicates that the writer considered that the marriage of King Henry to Anne Boleyn and the birth of a daughter by that union marked a great epoch in English history and, above all, that the steps that led to this happy termination, though dramatically blameworthy, must be condoned owing to their happy consequences. It is well known, however, that the fifth act by every test known to Shakespearean commentators was not written by Shakespeare at all, but by Fletcher.

Our knowledge of Shakespeare's relations with people in London would indicate that a great number of his friends and intimates were Catholics. It is possible that the Burbages, the actors with whom he was so closely joined during most of his dramatic career, belonged to the Warwickshire Catholic family of that name. One of Shakespeare's dearest friends, the Earl of Southampton, who was his patron in early years, and his supporter when he bought the Black Friars' theater, was closely allied to a Catholic family and, as Simpson has pointed out, was cradled in Catholic surroundings.

The conversion of Ben Jonson about the middle of the last decade of the sixteenth century showed how easily men might be Catholics in London at this time. Ben Jonson was in the Marshalsea prison on a charge of murder in 1594 and found himself surrounded by priests who were charged with treason because of their refusal to take the oath of supremacy. By associating with them Jonson became a Catholic and when released from prison married a Catholic wife. His child was baptized Mary, and Shakespeare was chosen as her sponsor. This choice of a godfather seems to indicate that Shakespeare was a Catholic at this time for, in his order as a new convert, Ben Jonson would scarcely have selected an Anglican for that office.

One more proof of Shakespeare's Catholicism in conclusion: About the close of the seventeenth century the neighboring county of Staffordshire but who was well acquainted with Stratford and its history, and who could easily have had very definite sources of information denied to us, declared that Shakespeare "died a papist." It would have been perfectly possible, it must be remembered, for Archbishop Davies to have spoken during the years that the poet spent in Stratford at the end of his life. After this review of the evidence I can not but conclude that Shakespeare not only "died a papist," but also lived as one.—James J. Walsh, M. D., Ph. D., in America.

EFFICACY OF THE MASS

The Lenten pastoral of Bishop Hedley is an admirably fervent exhortation to make use of the Mass as the most efficacious means of placating Almighty God and of delivering the world from the scourges which it is now afflicted. Before speaking of the August Sacrifice, however, the Bishop explains the duty of prayer, its propitiatory and intercessory power, its offices, and fruits; declaring that at so momentous a time as the present this duty is a most pressing one. War, plague, famine, flood and earthquake are chastisements of God, and He wills that it should cease by the repentance and prayers of His people.

The Bishop points out that, while private afflictions may be good for us, spiritually, and therefore we should never pray to be delivered from them, except with careful submission to the will of God, public calamities are not favorable to His Kingdom. "They are intended to correct great evils and to teach the world great lessons; but as long as they last, they, on the whole, and with most men, interrupt, interfere with and spoil both the internal and the external activity of love, prayer, and work, which ought to be the unceasing life of the Christian soul. Fear, suffering, uncertainty, apprehension, hunger and wandering sanctify the saints, and turn men and nations to their Creator and their Last End; but they are more or less fatal to religious practice, whether individual or general; they hinder sacramental life, they silence and paralyze the word of God, and too often they desolate the altar and devastate the Church. . . . Nothing can be more vital to the world's welfare than the peace and well being of organized religion. On that depend the religion of every individual, the eternal salvation of the multitudes, the practice of the Christian ideals, the education of the young, and the happy deaths of those for whom Christ died. If, therefore, the Church—for that is what we mean by the Christian community—is disturbed by heresy, by war, by pestilence, or by persecution, it is a calamity which has the most far-reaching consequences." Therefore, it must be the divine will that when men's hearts have turned from evil, public calamities should have an end.

The Mass, as no well instructed Catholic needs to be reminded, is the supreme means of intercession with God and the most stupendous act of adoration and thanksgiving; but it is also the great sacrifice of propitiation and impetration. . . . Just as the sacrifice of the Cross made atonement for the sins of all the world, and merited for men all help and protection unto life everlasting, so the Mass applies this satisfaction and impetration daily and hourly to the end of time." The Bishop's further words call for extended quotation:

"The Church teaches that the Sacrifice of the Mass is a true propitiatory sacrifice; that we find therein mercy and grace when we stand in need of assistance;" and that it is rightly and justly offered for the remission of sin, and of the punishments of sin, for satisfaction and for other necessities." (The Council of Trent, Sess. xxii.) Let us observe that this offering of propitiation is not the same thing as the effect of impetration. As we shall see just now, impetration means obtaining a thing by prayer, and the Mass is the greatest and best of prayers. But propitiation is something different; that belongs to the Mass because it is the Mass, and can never be separated from it. It means that the Mass placates Almighty God, as the phrase is and causes His just anger to cease. We must not suppose that in the most pure bosom of the God-head there is any passion of anger, such as it is experienced by mortal man. But, however we express it, it is certain that God pun-

ishes as if He were justly angry; and when He is said to be propitiated or placated, the effects of what we call His anger are suspended and He punishes no longer.

It is of faith that this propitiation of our God and Creator, which was perfectly accomplished by the Cross, is applied to the course of Christian life by the Mass. The importance of this tenet of faith arises from this consideration—that no graces, blessings or deliverance from evil can be obtained by men, however ardently they may pray for them, unless the just and holy anger of God is first made to cease. Hence, any of the faithful who follow the admirable prayers of the Missal must have noticed how frequently the priest prays that the sacrifice may placate—that is, appease or propitiate Almighty God. In the words of the Roman Catechism, "The Holy Eucharist was instituted that the Church might have a perpetual sacrifice by which our sins might be expiated, and our Heavenly Father, so often grievously offended by our wickedness, might be turned from anger to mercy, from just severity to clemency." (Part 2, ch. iv.)

It may be said, without extravagance or exaggeration, that it is difficult to understand how the world could be allowed to continue to exist without the daily propitiation which is offered by the Mass. Consider the sinfulness of men in every age—in the past and in the present; consider how human life, even in Christian countries, is little else than sin; consider the forgetfulness of God, the indifference to His obedience; the pride, the selfishness, the violence, the injustice, and the impurity that prevail everywhere on the face of the earth. Could things have been worse when the waters of the Deluge were sent to destroy the greater part of the race? Would it be any easier to find just men in our own day than it was to find them in Sodom and Gomorrah? Did the children of Israel deserve more justly the wars and the plagues that darkened the pages of the chronicles and the Prophets than the civilized peoples who boast of the Gospel light? God still visits men in His wrath; but it is certain that His visitations are less terrible, less disastrous, and less absolute than they were before Christ came. Where can we find the reason for this except in the propitiation of Calvary, renewed and applied daily in the innumerable Masses that are our happy privilege as children of the Church? The Mass is offered for our well being and that of the whole world—pro nostra totiusque mundi salute.

The Mass is the rainbow—the true rainbow symbolized by that which gladdened the eyes of those who came down out of the Ark. Of the Mass it can be said even more absolutely than when the words were spoken on the slopes of Mount Ararat, "When I shall cover the sky with clouds, My bow shall appear in the clouds, and I shall see it, and shall remember the everlasting covenant that was made between God and every living soul which is upon the earth." (Genesis, ix, 14.) There is nothing that should so often our hearts with certainty in the mercy of God—with hope and trust that He will deliver us, and deliver the world from the present awful war—as the grace of hearing Mass. Everyone who assists at Mass and devoutly unites in the great action does his part in lifting from the world the chastisement which the world has deserved.

As has been said, the Mass is also a prayer. When the divine anger has been appeased, prayer can approach the Throne; for the gates of justice are unbarred, and there is nothing in the way. But the prayer, or impetration, of the Mass is not ordinary prayer. In the Mass it is Christ, our Head, who prays; and we, His brethren, do no more than join our stammering accents with His mighty cry. As St. Alfonso says, "God more readily hears our prayers during Mass than at any other time. He does indeed at all times impart His graces, as often as they are asked of Him through the merits of Jesus Christ. But during Mass He dispenses them in more abundant measure; for our prayers are then accompanied and supported by the prayers of Jesus Christ, and they acquire through His intercession an incomparably greater efficacy, because Jesus is the High Priest who offers Himself in the Mass to obtain grace for us. The time of the celebration of Mass is the hour at which

Our Lord sits upon that throne of grace to which, according to the counsels of the Apostle, we should draw near to find mercy and help in all our necessities."

The Bishop concludes by urging his flock to hear Mass daily, intelligently and fervently; thus giving glory to God, honoring the Faith, extending the Church, bringing themselves very near to Christ, and drawing down blessings upon the world. "If Mass in war time makes every one of us a more real and earnest Catholic, peace will be all the sooner restored."—Ave Maria.

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill; our antagonist is our helper.—Mason.

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