

THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

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PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD AND PURGATORY.

TO THE HON. W. H. G.

DEAR SIR,—I have received your very kind letter, and hasten with infinite pleasure to give you the Catholic doctrine in reference to prayers for the dead, as you desire, and which is as follows:

The Catholic church declares that the dead receive benefit and comfort by the prayers and suffrages of the living, and that, therefore, it is a pious and wholesome institution of the Catholic church in behalf of those who died in the faith thus taught.

St. Clemens, lib. viii. constit. cap. 18.

St. Dionysius, de eccles. hierarch. cap. vii. p. 3.

Terullian in lib. de Corona Militis.

St. Cyprian, lib. i. ep. 9.

St. Basilus in liturgia instituit. orationem pro mortuis.

St. Greg. Nazian, in oratione in Cæsarium.

St. Ephrem in Suo Testamento.

St. Cyrillus Hier. Catechesi. v.

Euseb. lib. iv. de vita Constantini. Imper. ubi dicit eum voluisse sepeliri in celebri templo ut fieret particeps multarum orationum.

St. Epiphanius in fine operis contra hæreses.

Numerat inter dogma ecclesie orationem pro defunctis et Hæresi. 75 Aerium hæreticum declarat quia hoc negabat.

St. Chrysost, Hom 41 in 1 Corinth.

Et Hom. 69, ad populum Antioch.

Et Hom. 84 in Ivan.

Et Hom. 21 in Acta Apost.

Et Hom. 3 in Epist. ad Philip in Morali.

St. Ambros. lib. ii. Epist 7, ad Faustum de obitu Sororis.

St. Hieronimus, in epist. ad Pamach. de obitu Pauline uxoris ante medium.

St. Paulinus Nolanus, in epist. daphnum episc.

St. Gregorius, lib. iv. dialog. cap. 55.

St. August. decura. pro mortuis, cap. ii. et c. 4.

That this was the universal practice of Christendom, and of the primitive church, I refer you to the liturgies St. James, p. 7; also pp. 29, 34, 38; the liturgy of St. Basil, pp. 60, 61; the liturgy of St. Chrysostom, pp 74, 80, 81, 98, 99; the liturgy of St. Basil the Great, translated from the Arabic, pp. 9, 23, 31; the liturgy of St. Greg. Naz. p. 34; the liturgy of St. Cyril, pp. 60, 61, 62. All these are to be seen in the library of Oxford; and this belief is most widely diffused among all men who know any thing; and I challenge the Rev. Wm. Palmer of Oxford to find a man pretending to the reputation of a scholar who can bring himself to deny it.

THE CONTRARY, VIZ:

"That it is not lawful either to sacrifice or to pray for the dead."

This was an old heresy of the Arians, condemned by the primitive church, as is proved by St. Augustine and St. Epiphanius (St. August. 1. de Hæc. cap. 63; St. Epiphanius. Hæc. 75.) Justly, therefore, was it declared to be a pious and holy institution of the church; and the contrary declared against by the Council of Trent.

PURGATORY.

I shall now give you as you also request of me to do, the doctrine of the Catholic church on this most important point, viz. that, besides heaven and hell, there is a pur-

gatory according to the scriptures, or a third place for some souls after this life, wherein the souls of some of the faithful undergo temporary punishment, and are purged there as well for the remainder of their venial sins, as for the intermitted satisfaction which is due to mortal sin, before they can be translated into heaven, to be partakers of eternal bliss. Ps. xv.; Acts ii. 24, 27; 1 Peter. iii. 18, 19, 20. Here we behold a proof (v. 19) of a third place, or a middle state of souls; for the spirit in prison, to whom Christ went to preach after his death, were not in heaven, nor yet were they in the hell of the damned, because heaven is no prison. And Christ did not go to preach to the damned. 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15; St. Matt. v. 25, 26; St. Matt. xii. 33; Revel. xxi. 27.

This is included in the foregoing doctrine, which I have extracted from the writings of those ancient fathers who have invariably taught that it was lawful, pious, and commendable to pray for the dead. I shall now produce clearer testimonies from the same fathers, who more fully and in more express terms maintain this very doctrine:—

St. Cyprian, lib. iv. Epist. 2.

Origenes, Hom. vi. in Exod.

St. Greg. Nyssen, in Orat. pro Mortuis.

St. Gregory Nazian. in Oratione S. Lumina.

St. Basilus in Cap. 9. Esaiæ.

St. Euseb. Emissen, Homil 3. De epiphania Lactantius, lib. vii. cap. 21.

St. Hilarus in psa, 118.

St. Ambrose in Ps. 36.

Idem St. Pater in locum Pauli. 1 Corinth. iii.

St. Hieronimus, lib. 1. Cont. Palagianos.

Idem, in fine Comment in Esa.

St. Paulinus, Epist. i. ad Amatum.

St. Augustin, lib. xxi. de Civit. Dei cap. 16.

Idem. Hom. 16.

Et, lib. ii. de Genes. Cont. Manich. cap 20.

Et in Ps. 39 Oratione.

Et infra Explicans, nostop, locum Apostoli, 1 Cor. 3.

Et lib. de vera et falsa pœnit.

THE CONTRARY, VIZ:

"That there is no such thing as purgatory, and that it is a vain thing to pray for the dead." This was an old condemned heresy of the Arians, who were the first that ever broached that heresy, as is testified by St. Augustin, Hæc. 53, and St. Epiphanius, Hæc. 75.

1st. The Arians were the first who denied this doctrine, and were condemned by the church, and were wrote against by those two ancient and renowned fathers.

Secondly. The Woldenses would fain revive the same heresy, as is mentioned and condemned by Quido Carmelita, (in Summa de hæreticis.)

Thirdly. There were Henry and Peter de Brius who endeavored by all possible means to propagate this doctrine, but were prevented by the great labor and exertions of St. Bernard, who wrote against them (Bernard Epist. 240.)

Fifthly. The Albigenses taught that there was neither hell nor purgatory, as is mentioned by St. Anthony: and the next doctrine will be, that there is no heaven, and then we shall have neither God nor devil. See St. Ant. 4 part. tit. ii. c. 7. sec. 5. Justly, therefore, did the Council of Trent, according to the Catholic and primitive church, according to the holy word of God, according to the decrees of general and ancient councils (sess 25 de Purgatorio), and according to the faith, doctrine, practice, and tradition of the ancient fathers, who com-

mand "that there should be special care taken by all the bishops of the church that the doctrine of purgatory should be every where preached and taught as a pious and wholesome doctrine." And these are better foundations for a christian to rest his faith on than to pin his belief upon the sleeves of Arians, Brusians, Woldenses, Albigenses, Harrians, Lutherans, Calvinists, and God knows who, who derive their authority I know not whence, to make us believe I know not what. Your parson desires you to ask me, how I can reconcile the following quotations from scripture with the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. God says he will not remember our sins, that they shall not be mentioned to us in the day when we turn from our wickedness." Isaiah iv. 25. Jer. xxxi. 24. Ezek. xviii. 22; to which I answer, that all we learn of the pains of purgatory is, that they are a temporal punishment justly inflicted: and a temporal punishment of sin is as consistent with forgiveness as God's justice is with his mercy. Thus Adam's sin, as soon as he repented of it, was not remembered in the sense meant by Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Ezekiel. That is, God entirely forgave him both the guilt and the eternal punishment due to it. Yet the gates of heaven were shut for near four thousand years after a punishment of it; and Adam himself performed the penance of eating his bread in the sweat of his brow, enjoined him by God for above nine hundred years. In like manner God forgave David as soon as he confessed to Nathan, but the temporal punishment of it lasted for many years after. Yet, pray remark, though the whole sin was forgiven (for God forgives not by halves) that part of it, as your parson must confess, was punished for many years after, which clearly demonstrates the falsehood of what Protestants continually assert, that the justice of God is satisfied before the sins are forgiven, and the parties concerned received into favor. Here, in conclusion, my dear friend, I am delighted that you are determined to examine every point of Catholic doctrine, and that as far as you have gone, to use your own words, you are delighted with it, for you are sure that the spirit of God is with the church in communion with the see of Rome. Persevere then in your noble enterprise, and you will not fail to secure to yourself a crown of glory in a better world; hasten, therefore, I implore you, to enter without delay into the true sheepfold of Christ, viz. into the bosom of the Catholic church, and hearken to the wisdom of God advising you to avoid delay (St. John xii. 45) and run whilst the light of life serveth, lest the darkness of night overtake you (St. John ix.), "for night will come, when no man can work." Recollect there is always danger in delay, and in a business of this nature the greatest. Without a particular grace of God you can do nothing—no nothing; therefore let me recommend you to say, night and morning, on your knees, with perfect humility, the following prayer which was given to a Protestant lady of high rank, a much esteemed friend of mine, and who is now a member of the Catholic church, by the late saintly Archbishop of Paris, as follows: "Oh my God grant me thy grace to find out the true church, and, when I have found it, grant me thy grace to submit to its holy decisions." The effect of this short prayer is wonderful, if said with the necessary dispositions; and believe me, in haste.

Yours, most sincerely,

VERAA,

A CATHOLIC LAYMAN.