

SOULS IN PURGATORY.

Instructive Sermon on the Subject by Rev. J. P. Stewart of St. Mary's.

On Monday evening last, vespers for the dead were celebrated at St. Mary's by Rev. M. J. Cluney. An eloquent sermon was preached by Rev. J. P. Stewart. As promised in last week's JOURNAL, we give a summary of the discourse. In opening the speaker gave an exquisitely worded description of his visit to Ireland a few years since.

"Purgatory is taught by the Church to be a place of purification for the souls of those who have departed this life, where by masses and prayers, they may be fitted to enter heaven. Why are these altars draped in black? Why do we say masses for the repose of the dead? There are two kinds of sin—original sin, the eternal guilt of which is remitted by Jesus Christ's blood. Mortal sin not remitted condemns us to hell. But though eternal guilt is remitted, the stain still remains. This shows itself by venial sins. Now, nothing defiled can enter heaven. We know the stain still remains on us, both by personal experience and Scripture. The angel said unto David when he had sinned against Nathan: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, but for this sin the child which is born thee shall surely die.' When Adam and Eve were driven out from Paradise and condemned to wander over the earth, that was the temporal debt they paid to sin. So with us. Although the eternal sin is washed away when the blood of Christ is applied to us, still we have a temporal debt to pay to sin. Sickness, suffering, death itself, is the debt we pay to sin. And if this debt is not fully paid in this life, it must be paid somewhere in the next.

"We call this place Purgatory because it is a place of purgation, a place for the purification of souls. Every Christian recites the Nicene creed. When he says of Christ, 'He descended into hell, the third day he arose again from the dead, would he allow anyone to be so wicked as to say Christ descended into hell, the abode of the damned? The thought is too revolting. Where was it? It was the place we call limbo, the place which is mentioned in the story of Dives and Lazarus; the place where the souls of the dead stay until they are sufficiently cleansed from sin to join in the heavenly procession. There the holy martyrs and even the saints spent a time.

"Our religion teaches us that 'It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be released from their sins.' There is no escape from hell. The souls of the departed could not go straight to heaven with the stain of the battlefield upon their souls. So Scripture proves the existence of a third place. Tradition also furnishes strong proofs of the existence of Purgatory. It is what your forefathers believed and what all the early nations of the world believed. That this belief has not changed during all these years is very strong proof of its reality. To-morrow in the Canon of the Mass we will use the same words as did St. Peter, as do the Russians, who separated from the Church over 900 years since; as do the Copts and Greeks; and as are found in all the ancient manuscripts. Tertullian, almost contemporary with the Apostles, says it is good to offer prayer for the repose of the souls of the dead and offer the sacrifice of the Mass for them. This same statement is corroborated by St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. The latter said Mass for sainted Monica, his mother, for thirty years after her death. Nothing is found in all the words of the Apostles to contradict those words. The Catacombs at Rome also bear witness to them. Rude carvings remain of departed souls beseeching from the depths of Purgatory prayers of the faithful and the priest offering up the sacrifice of the Mass for these souls. Is not the doctrine in keeping with reason? It is impossible to live without offending God, at least venially. Even the hermit and recluse may commit some indiscretion and immediately be called upon to render an account to God, without having time to cleanse his soul from that sin. Would you say that God would damn that soul? Yet, nothing defiled can enter heaven. So that soul could not enter there. But God is His goodness has prepared a place where that soul may be cleansed.

"When one has spent his death bed, and the memory of his sins remains in his mind, and he knows he cannot enter heaven as he is; when the candle is quivering in its socket and almost ready to go out, he can hear the voices of those saying 'God have mercy on his soul!' Oh, the consolation of those who have such faith! When death comes staring those in the face who have not that faith, there is but little hope for them. God forgive me, I should not judge them, but the Catholic faith teaches that there is a place where the soul may be prepared. The other one has not such hope; all he hopes is to recover to enjoy this world's wealth. But with the Catholic it is different. Granite shafts may arise above the other, he may be buried with all the pomp and pageant possible, to say nothing of the lengthy eulogy pronounced over him by those who have naught to do but please the living. But let us go and open the grave. If you are imaginative you can look down into the tomb, and as each clod is thrown out upon clod, with a sound infinitely more terrible than when the first clod fell, because it brings back to the living the saddest of all thoughts—a loved one gone. Now look into the grave of the wealthy man! Oh, God! is that what we loved so well? I speak now of our own loved ones. Those hands once so delicate and of which the owner was once so proud, the bones separated and the sinews gone; the eyes vacant, the mouth, once so beautiful in its smile, now a yawning cavern of death; the tongue, silent in death, a hideous putrid thing; we must close the place. So terrible is death, that life would not be worth living were the cemeteries to be opened a day. Let us remember we are going to the same place. Where is the soul? If it be that of a child, it has flown, like a dove, heavenward, for the soul flees to its natural home. If it is that of an adult, it has flown to Purgatory. True, as our Protestant brethren put it, 'As a tree falls so it must lie.' So, if a soul falls into Purgatory, there it lieth until purified from sin; if it falls in mortal sin, it falls into hell, where it stays forever. There the cry goes up ever and anon, as in Jeremiah, 'Watchman, what of the night?' And he answers back to those sending up that cry from those hideous depths, 'Forever and forever!'

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Where Purgatory has been revealed only to the Saints. Where are our loved ones and how long will be their stay? We know not. What is the character of Purgatory? The only difference between Hell and Purgatory is that Hell is eternal while in Purgatory there is hope. Those in Purgatory have hope to alleviate their sufferings, hope that sometime they will come to an end. Without hope Purgatory would be Hell. Those souls are looking for assistance. How many are there, my brethren, who look in vain? We are so ungrateful and so soon forget our loved ones when they are gone. True, a mother long remembers her dead child; a woman is unworthy the name of mother if she forgets her child. The father sometimes remembers his dead children, for the love of man is stern and rugged, not like the delicate love of woman; it is like the ivy clinging to the oak, and man is the oak. Reflect on some loved ones you have in the cold ground. You were positive you could never forget your father or mother. You reared over their dust a handsome tombstone with eulogistic epitaph inscribed thereon. Maybe as soon as the stone was placed over the grave, your heart was as hard as the stone itself and as negligent. Some so far forget that departed soul that before it is gone they are planning how to divide whatever is left behind. There is only one mother who remembers them and that is their Holy Mother, the Church. What wonder, then we love her? No matter if the waves murmur a sad dirge over them at the bottom of the sea; no matter if they die where no monument is reared over them, still the Church remembers them and Masses are said for them.

This is the same Church that asks you to remember the souls in Purgatory as you wish to be remembered when you are gone. Before you are again called upon to pray for the faithful departed, some of you may be called hence. Blessed are the grateful hearts that pray for the souls in Purgatory. Accursed is the ingrate who forgets this duty. Let us not neglect the mission given us.

Mgr. Dalimberti, the Apostolic Nuncio, consecrated a new church at Leopold, in Austro-Poland, on Sunday, October 13th. On his arrival in the Polish city, the Nuncio was received by Mgr. Felinski, the exiled Archbishop of Warsaw.

Catholic Society Notes.

Branch 88, C. M. B. A. had the honor of a visit from Bro. Jas. Clifford, the first president of the C. M. B. A. in America. Bro. Deare, editor of the C. M. B. A. Monthly, also honored the Branch with his presence. Three new members were received into the Branch Wednesday evening.

Messrs. Charles E. Cunningham, Hugh P. Mulligan, John J. Hoverson, Andrew Schell, J. P. Henry and several other gentlemen left for Baltimore last evening, where they will represent Rochester Council No. 207, C. B. L., in the American Catholic Congress.

The funeral of James Quinlivan, Jr., took place at 9:30 o'clock Monday morning from his late residence, 35 Romeyn street, and at 10 o'clock from the Cathedral. The funeral was one of the largest held at the Cathedral for some time. Many members of Rochester Council No. 207, C. B. L., and Division No. 1, A. O. H., of which the deceased was a member, were in attendance. Among the floral offerings were: Stand and anchor, from lady friends; cross, employees of the Rochester City and Brighton railway; harp, Celtic club; cross, Rochester Council, 207, C. B. L.; pillow, with inscription, "Our Brother," from the A. O. H.; standard anchor and harp, employees Rochester City and Brighton railway. Solemn High Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral by Rev. J. P. Kiernan. The Catholic Benevolent Legion adopted these resolutions Sunday afternoon:

In the death of Comrade John Quinlivan, council 207, Catholic Benevolent Legion, has sustained its first loss.

John Quinlivan was a true and honest man, a devout Catholic and a lover of his kind. In his death society suffers a loss which it ever experiences when a loving father and faithful friend is removed. He was an honest man; he knew no vice. The story of his life is that of the poor but honest man, whose highest ambition was to make those who surrounded him happy and contented. To his wife and little ones, his brothers and sisters, and his aged father, our sympathies go out, in this, the most trying ordeal of their lives.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published in the city papers, and a copy be sent to the family of the deceased.

John M. Murphy, John C. Hughes, Charles M. Lane, Committee.

Next Thursday evening there will be an important meeting of the Y. M. C. A. of the Cathedral.

The last meeting in November of the C. M. B. A. branches will be one of great importance, as officers will be elected for the ensuing year. Members should all endeavor to be present.

Gov. Hill's Thanksgiving Proclamation, Gov. Hill issued this proclamation Monday:

STATE OF NEW YORK, EXECUTIVE CHAMBER.

In accordance with an established custom, and by virtue of the power vested in me as Governor of the State of New York, I hereby set apart and appoint Thursday, the 28th day of November inst., to be a day of thanksgiving. Upon that day let the people express in appropriate manner their gratitude to God for the blessings which he has bestowed in the year now drawing to a close and invoke His mercy and care during the year that is to come.

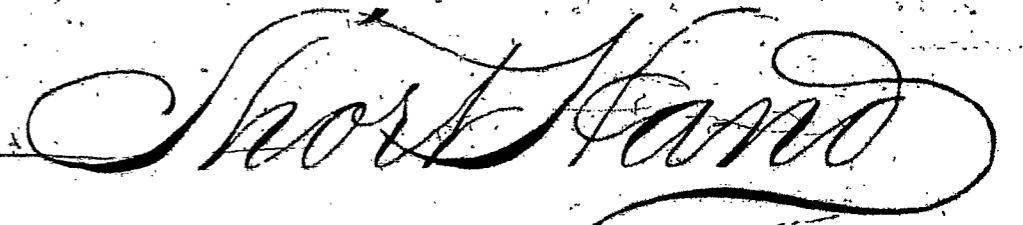
Let the day be marked by rest from secular employments, by cheer and good will at family firesides, by deeds of kindness to the poor and the afflicted, and by devout acknowledgment of our indebtedness and responsibility to the Divine giver of all good things.

Done at the Capitol in the city of Albany this fourth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine.

L. S. Signed, DAVID B. HILL, By the Governor, F. S. WILLIAMS, Private Sec'y.

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