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THE STUDY OF DEATH

IT NEED NOT FILL THE MIND WITH GLOOM AND DEPRESSION.

Properly Conducted, It Should Become a Source of Consolation and Holy Joy—The Work of the Sons Mors, or Good Death Society.

It is a dreadful thing to be conscious of the steady approach of death; to hear its coming at each breath we draw; to recognize its steady step at each beating of the heart; to know that in a short time darkness will cover us and the whole world will be blotted out; that our hand will lose its grasp on what now it clings to; that the place we live in will know us no more; that our very name will be forgotten; that those we lived with and loved will go about their own affairs as if we never had existed and that when it comes we shall stand before a Judge who will scrutinize every thought and action of our life and pass sentence upon us for eternal happiness or eternal woe.

The fact we have to face, whether we like it or not, but the more we study it through the medium of faith the more it is divested of its horror. The specter gradually transforms itself into an angel. For the terror of death is after all not so much in leaving this life, because often one is like a tired laborer who longs for rest; the world has been a disappointment; its ambitions, delusions; its pleasures, deceits, and the grave is welcome even to those who forget God, because it will be the end of it all.

Those things indeed would help to rob death of its terrors were the grave to be the end. But the portals of death open upon the judgment seat of God. In the grasp of death I am to be placed before that tribunal, and my lot is to be decided forever. "It is decreed that all men shall die, and after that judgment."

It is that fact which makes meditation on death one of the wisest things a man can do. Certainly if he is conscious that death may usher him at any moment into the presence of an angry Judge who will pronounce a sentence of eternal damnation, which he has, however, the power to prevent, there can be no better thing for him to do than prevent it. That is why the Church continually endeavors to put that awful fact of death before our eyes.

It is clear also that the more frequently a man contemplates such a contingency the more apt is he to remove whatever would make that curse an actuality. Meantime, by the removal of the stains on his soul, his spiritual perceptions become brighter and more acute. He appreciates better the value of his soul and the right which Almighty God has to its obedience. When he reflects, moreover, that the Judge whom he is to face is Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross precisely to prevent the loss of every member of the human race; when he realizes that, over and above His justice, mercy is the quality that He longs to exercise the terror which surrounds the departure of the soul from this world diminishes, and little by little, while he is earnestly laboring to purify himself more and more from sin, fear of God's judgments will begin to invest itself with love and confidence against the moment of meeting the Omnipotent Judge. Death loses its sting and the grave its victory. Thus the constant study of death, undertaken in a Christian manner, instead of filling the mind with gloomy and depressing thoughts, makes it serious indeed and circumspect and humble, but fills it at the same time with confidence, and, if one advances in sanctity, adds even holy joy, so that it becomes possible to exclaim with the apostle, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."

To cultivate that spirit the Church has established a special society whose particular object is to prepare for death. This *Bona Mors*, or Good Death society, at its establishment immediately appealed to the Catholics in and around Rochester. It is 267 years old and was founded in the Church of the Gesù, in Rome, by Father Vincent Caraffa, seventh general of the Society of Jesus. It was approved by several popes, who enriched it with many indulgences.

Its longer title, "The Confraternity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Dying on the Cross and of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, His Sorrowful Mother," expresses one of the means it has adopted to make death easy. By contemplation of the death of Christ it teaches us the way to die—by dwelling upon His sufferings. His love is made to speak its lesson to us and give us both the reason for avoiding sin and for trusting to Him in the dread hour of dissolution. The sorrowful mother whom we constantly ask to "pray for us at the hour of our death" is also before our eyes as she stands in agony near the cross. We become humbly familiar with Jesus and Mary, whose names are the last we hope to utter before we leave this world to go where Jesus shall be our Judge and where Mary will intercede for us. The exhortations, the prayers and the assistance of many other devoted souls who, like us, are preparing wisely for the inevitable journey are the other helps we obtain by being members of these associations.—Catholic Home Companion.

THE CANON LAW.

Its Codification Will Be a Monument to Pope Pius X.

The giant task to which Pius X. set his right hand so soon after his election to the chair of St. Peter, is to occupy for the coming year, and, indeed, likely for several years to come, a large part of the inner mind, so to speak, of the Church.

Immediately on their return to the Eternal City from their few weeks' rest in the country the cardinals and secretary of the pontifical commission for the codification of canon law resumed their sittings, collecting, arranging, simplifying the rules and regulations that have guided the bark of Peter for 2,000 years. Inspired by the example and exhortations of His Holiness, they are facing their great task with a grave sincerity and zeal that promise a great achievement.

Pius X. will have many claims on history, but his greatest fame will doubtless be as the great legislator of the Universal Church. A magnificent body of written laws for the government of the Church, made plain and solid and covering all questions of doctrine and discipline, will be his monument and will make smoother sailing for his successors.

One of the consultants said recently: "The Vatican council is still open, for it was only prorogued thirty-five years ago and has not since been reconvened for reasons which it would be idle to dwell upon now. I should not be surprised if the date of its reopening were set in time to permit of the reading before all the bishops of the Catholic world of the new ecclesiastical legislation."—Catholic Citizen.

THE TRUTH.

Lord Brampton Found It at Last in the Catholic Church.

Lord Brampton, better known as Mr. Justice Hawkins, celebrated his eighty-fifth birthday on Sept. 14 last. He was appointed a judge in November, 1876, and resigned the post in January, 1890. He was created a peer under the title of Baron Brampton immediately after his retirement. Lord Brampton became a Catholic when he was about eighty. Asked soon after as to the reasons which led him to become a Catholic, he replied as follows:

"It is not very easy to write a definite reply to the question why I became a Catholic. I will not, therefore, make the attempt. To reason the matter out would require much more time than I have at my command, and I would not undertake the task unless I felt that I could accomplish it thoroughly and with satisfaction to myself. To undertake a work and fail to perform it would distress me. Those, therefore, who look for my reasons for taking the important steps I took late in life cannot have their expectations satisfied by me. It must suffice them to know that it was the result of my deliberate conviction that the truth, which was all I sought, lay within the Catholic Church. I thought the matter out for myself, anxiously and seriously, influenced by any human being, and I have unwavering satisfaction in the conclusion at which I arrived, and my conscience tells me it is right."

The Church and Divorce.

Every Catholic understands the attitude the Church has maintained always toward divorce. It is one of uncompromising hostility. Death alone can dissolve the bonds contracted by a lawful marriage. That is the Catholic doctrine, the strict enforcement of which has been of incalculable service to society. As the family is the society unit, anything that tends to break it up necessarily reacts upon the state. It will be seen, then, that the Church, while enforcing God's law, indirectly confers an inestimable benefit upon society by guarding the home against the ravages wrought by divorce. When the hierarchy or the clergy lift their voice to warn their flocks against this evil, Catholics, who are Catholics in spirit as well as in name, will listen and cheerfully follow any counsel that may be given to them.—Freeman's Journal.

Having the Faith.

We see that another version of the "endless chain" prayer, so often condemned in our columns, is in circulation. Despite the denunciations of the Catholic press, this and similar unauthorized so-called prayers continue to be passed from hand to hand or sent through the mails. It is true that the people who thus help to perpetuate a fraud are of that class of Catholics who think themselves too intelligent or too poor to subscribe for a Catholic paper, but the harm to the true faith done by their circulation of these unauthorized, blasphemous and heretical prayers is incalculable.—Sacred Heart Review.

Saturday Night Dances.

All night dances, and Saturday night dances especially, are to be put under the ban by Pope Pius X. in a letter now being prepared to be addressed to archbishops and bishops of this country, and through them to every parish priest. Briefly, the Pope proposes that Catholic societies shall take the lead in this matter by discountenancing the practice of prolonging dances after midnight and of holding them on Saturday night.

IT STANDS THE TEST

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Four Very Plain Marks by Which It Is Distinguished—It Is a Very Easy Matter to Learn the Truth if One Will but Search Aright.

Man is the handiwork of God. He has been created to the image and likeness of God and thereby has become the highest type of creature. To God he owes the supremest act of which he is capable—namely, worship. And it must be not only an interior, but also an exterior, worship. This supreme act is more familiar to us under the name of religion.

In the world today we find millions of people who are rendering such homage to the Creator. They are known by the general name of Christians. This means that all proclaim themselves followers of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who became man. Yet, strange to say, we find them following Jesus Christ not by one form, but by many contradictory forms of worship.

This would indicate that there is something wrong. All these contradictory forms of religion cannot be correct. All are not teaching the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ; therefore many must be teaching error, many must be following false forms of worship. Hence it becomes the duty of all sincere Christians to satisfy reason and conscience as to which one is the form established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

All profess belief in His divinity. All admit that He established a Church, that He taught His doctrines to His apostles and commissioned them to teach others, giving them at the same time the power to commission others who were to do likewise. In this way the doctrine which He taught were to be transmitted to all future generations until the end of time.

Those whom He thus divinely commissioned became the ministers of the Church which He divinely established. And of this Church He made St. Peter His first representative on earth. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

Sincere seekers after the truth should carefully weigh these words. They are the words of Jesus Christ. Clearly and unmistakably they point to the fact that our Lord established but one Church, not many. "I will build My Church," He says, not churches; hence one church is not as good as another. One only is the true Church, the Church established by Jesus Christ; therefore all the others but that built by Jesus Christ are the work of man. They are human institutions and, while Christian in profession, are anti-Christian in fact, because not of Christ's establishment.

Which, then, of the many today claiming to be the true church of Christ is such in fact? How can it be distinguished in the multitude of contradictory professing Christian bodies? Easy enough, Jesus Christ Himself set upon it four very plain marks—namely, its oneness, its holiness, its universality and its apostolicity.

In keeping with our present line of thought, let us seek it only by means of the latter. Any Christian body today claiming to be the Church established by Jesus Christ must also be the Church of the apostles, the immediate successors of Christ. The line of succession must be unbroken. Tracing the various Christian bodies, therefore, back to this source, we find all but one the work of man. The names of their founders and the dates of their beginning are matters of history. The only one which stands the test is the Catholic Church. Therefore the Catholic Church is the only true Church, the Church established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—Church Progress.

The Jesuits.

The Jesuits have passed the hundredth anniversary of their restoration. There are now in the United States 2,908 Jesuits, divided up in the different provinces as follows: New York, 656; Missouri, 538; German contingent, 238; New Orleans, 270; California, 154; Rocky mountain missions, 157; New Mexico, 95; Alaska, 23. The society has twenty-one colleges, which probably 10,000 students attend, in various sections of the country and more than that number of beautiful churches. In all the world there are now about 18,000 Jesuits.

Selfish Discontent.

Our tendencies to selfish discontent are constantly warring against our love of usefulness and service, and he who wishes to enjoy the full activity of freedom must learn to fight and to destroy the tendencies within himself which stand in the way of his own obedience to law. But he needs, for this, the truthful and open spirit which leads to wise self knowledge, a quiet and a willing spirit, to make the necessary sacrifice of selfish pride.

Shun Him.

The dirty story teller, whose vile tongue indicates a foul heart and inward corruption, should be shunned as a moral leper.—Catholic Union and Times.

THE NEW FRENCH LAW.

It Will Rob the Church, and Will Not Benefit the People.

President Loubet's signature to the bill of separation was hardly dry when his minister of public worship issued two important decrees. The first constituted a commission, charged to supervise the administration of the vast Church property which will fall into the hands of the nation. The second notified the protectors of their duty to see that an exact inventory is taken of all the ecclesiastical property owned by the churches in their department.

The inventory is very exhaustive and embraces practically everything that the state can lay hold on. It will all become national property hereafter, and the penalties for alienating it are extremely severe. The clergy will be simply caretakers and the associations of worship, administrators. At once swoop the property of the Church in France falls into the national net.

But the poor taxpayer will benefit little. He was to have been relieved by the millions reaped from the plunder of the religious and the teaching orders. So far he has not received a penny. The only people who made money out of the confiscation were the liquidators and the lawyers. It will be the same now. The Church will be robbed, but the plunder will not benefit the people any more than it did in Great Britain when Henry VIII. rifled the monasteries. The Church will be poorer and the people poorer still.—London, Catholic Opinion.

Cardinal Richard's Protest.

Cardinal Richard, archbishop of Paris, has addressed a circular letter to the priests of that city in which he says that he will never permit the tabernacles to be opened for the agents appointed to make inventories of Church goods. The letter instructs the priests to declare on their word of honor the number and the value of sacred vessels, but on no account to open tabernacles. Nearly all the bishops of France, including the most moderate of them, have issued letters, similar to that of Cardinal Richard. The order to make an inventory of Church goods is looked upon as a mistake by all except the most violent of the anticlericals and is believed by some persons to be the beginning of a real conflict between Church and state.

THE REAL PRESENCE.

A Convert's Story of How the Word Drawn to the Church.

"I was reared a strict Protestant," says a convert in the *Missionary*. "One Sunday afternoon when I was eleven years old, away back in the forties, I was passing the little shanty church in which the Catholics at that time worshipped. I had never been in a Catholic church or even knew a Catholic, but as I heard the music and singing I was moved to look in. That is all I did. I merely opened the door a little bit and looked in. At that very moment the priest was giving benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. All was absolutely strange to me—the vested priest, the glitter of lights, the tinkling bell, the bowed and busied congregation. I did not enter, but closed the door softly and went home, but a powerful impression had entered my soul, and I was drawn to the church that next Sunday afternoon. My first little visit had allured me with thoughts of God. When I went there every Sunday, having after much pleading obtained leave from my parents to do so.

"But it happened just then that we started for California, across the plains and mountains, my father having caught the gold fever, and our family was of the doleful party that was snowed in near Lake Tahoe in the Sierra mountains. Many died of starvation and exposure, and such seemed to be the lot that awaited us all. Meanwhile I had come to the conviction that the Catholic religion was God's only true Church, and in our wretched cabin at Donner Lake, amid the dreadful storms of winter, I vowed to God that if I ever came through alive I would become a Catholic; and so I did. Providence sent us help, and when I reached California, little girl that I was, I sought the first opportunity to be instructed and received into the Church. I am a convert of the real presence."

The Illusion of Time.

Perhaps it is less a misfortune than a mercy that of all the passing things of life the most precious and the most beautiful are the swiftest to take flight. If the hints of heaven that sometimes pause to lure us upward linger longer we might become too well attuned with earth. Beauty and joy are fugitives, snared only for moments in the bloom of a rose, the glow of a sunset, the glamour of youth, the uplift of a dream. To try to fix them is to destroy them of just that rare and elusive charm which sets them apart. The rose blooms and is withered in a day, the sunset flashes and fades in a moment, youth dashes its heights and dies, the dreamer has his vision and is awakened. Better things remain—daylight, the rich levels of maturity, the calm and steadfast progress of the dreamless. Yet who would exchange the rose bloom of a day for the evergreen of a year, the rapt moment of the dream for a lifetime of barren illusions? The illusions of time are, after all, the intimations of eternity.

THE TRIALS OF LIFE

IN OUR FAITH WILL BE FOUND THE REMEDY FOR ALL OF THEM.

Trust in the Infinite Power and Love of Almighty God For Healing and He Will Make Up to Us in Due Season For All of Our Sufferings.

The remedy for all our trials is in our faith. Faith teaches us that God is always with us, always ready to help us. Faith teaches us that God's design in all these trials and temptations is for our good; that they are temporary and soon over; that, though we cannot see the meaning of them, it is all right; we must trust in God, and all will be right in the end.

It is true that many of us may be spared such severe trials as these, or not have so many of them, but I say we shall have enough of them in taking such as are sent us. We may have trials of another kind which are dangerous for our salvation. These come from our passions, which draw us from God's grace to gratify them.

One has a propensity to the use of liquor or other stimulants, another to sins of the flesh. These may have increased influence by having been indulged heretofore and draw one powerfully to neglect or to disobey the law of God in order to indulge them. Whatever such trials may be, they must be resisted or the shipwreck of the soul will ensue.

Besides, we have our daily trials, which come every day and many times a day. A sudden storm of passion arises by an insult or provoking word, by a nagrant injustice which may be done us, by an opportunity to make money by unscrupulousness, by the sight or hearing of what is impure and indecent. If we do not resist and give assent, we shall fall from grace. These things give great fear to a well meaning soul. And when nothing of this kind happens the soul may be beset by dreadful temptations within—by interior trials, trials against faith, temptations to doubt God's goodness or the truth of what He has revealed, temptations to despair or to doubt even the existence of God. In all these trials God is with us, the strength of His word on the sea of Galilee, and Jesus present. They were perfectly tested. He is always with us, always ready to help us. He sees us and knows all about us. If He allows these temptations, He adjusts them to our strength. As the apostle says, "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it."

But our Lord was in a deep sleep while all this tempter was going on. We learn much by this. When a temptation comes upon us our passions are aroused and drawn into action. We are carried away by them. Jesus is asleep, but His divinity is awake and is with us all the time. It suggests to us a little while: You are in danger; call on God for help, or you will be overcome. We do so; Jesus wakes up; the storm of passion subsides; the danger is over.

Sometimes the attack and fear come while the danger does not exist. That is when the will is firmly fixed on duty but the temptation still appears. These are the temptations which appear to the saints. These temptations are the tests of our faith. We do not feel His presence. He seems not to hear us or to be concerned about us. We may be a long time in a state of desolation, apparently abandoned. But it is not so. He is with us all the time, but He hides Himself, as it were, behind a screen. He seems to us great, but we do not see Him. Let us take comfort in such circumstances. It is for our good or good. This is the road of perseverance. As our Lord said to St. Thomas, "I have chosen thee that thou mayest believe, blessed art thou, because thou hast seen Me; Thomas, thou hast not seen Me and yet thou hast believed; blessed art thou, because thou hast not seen Me and yet thou hast believed." Let us be content to grope our way in the security and darkness as long as God sees it that it should be so. He is with us all the time and knows all about us.

Will make up to us in due time for all this mental suffering, and we shall see that it was exactly adapted to our needs and the best and most loving thing that could be done.—Catholic Digest.

Contending Ancestors.

It is interesting to note how Protestants are coming around to a Catholic way of thinking in many matters. Catholics, for instance, believe that pictures and statues in the churches and schools and in the home are aids to devotion. They are objects of devotion. Protestants long accused this opinion. To place pictures and statues in churches was to them nothing more or less than idolatry. Our separated brethren are not quite so sure about this now, and we hear more and more of their coming to the Catholic view. The use of pictures in Sunday school teaching is increasing rapidly. Reading the mind and heart through the eye of the child is easier and more effective than through the ear.—Sacred Heart Review.

Churches to be Reinstated.

Women singers will be excluded from Catholic Church choirs in Philadelphia, after Sept. 1 next. Archbishop Ryan has issued this order. It is the result of a recommendation made by the general synod of the diocese.

Rocking Cradle.

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which was reported in the *Times* of New York. The report was that the Pope had just given his sanction to the new law of the United States, which would allow the Catholic Church to own property in the United States. The report was that the Pope had just given his sanction to the new law of the United States, which would allow the Catholic Church to own property in the United States.

CATHOLIC PROGRESS

The Way the Church is Growing in the United States.

From advance reports it is known that the Catholic Church in the United States is growing rapidly. It is the most rapid growth since the beginning of the century. The increase of the Catholic population in the United States is estimated at 1,400,000 in 1900. There are now in the United States 1,400,000 Catholics. The Catholic Church is growing in the United States.

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