

General Business News

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PURGATORY

A Splendid Treatise on the Doctrine of the Church in Regard to Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead—By His Rev. Lawrence B. Casey, Assistant at St. Mary's Church, Rochester, N. Y.

The doctrine of Purgatory is so reasonable that many Protestants of our day have been obliged to change their attitude about it. Many of them no longer deny the existence in the next life of a middle state in which are detained souls whose condition bars their immediate admission into heaven. This new attitude found expression during the late war when tragedy entered so many homes. Prayers were offered for the dead soldiers at services held in non-Catholic churches. The wives and families of these soldiers in their distress instinctively turned to God and asked Him to help their husbands and fathers. These services for the dead were so natural, so much to be expected, that we find it hard to understand why so many of our separated brethren continue to reject the notion of Purgatory. A brief consideration of the subject, should suffice to show that this doctrine is both national and scriptural.

In her doctrine of Purgatory the Catholic church holds as a matter of faith that there is a state, where the souls of the just are cleansed from all trace of sin before they can be admitted to the presence of God. The church also teaches that the living can lessen the sufferings of the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, good works, and especially by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

This doctrine has a firm foundation in Holy Scripture. In the Second Book of Maccabees we have the following fact recorded: During the wars of the wars of the Maccabees there were forty thousand of the garments of some of the fallen soldiers, gifts that had been offered to the idols of Jamala, which was contrary to the law. All prayed to God that the sin which had been committed might be forgiven. But Judith Maccabee took twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. . . . It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Macc. XII, 40-46) Here we have not only the fact that Judas, and the priests, and the Jewish people believed in the existence of a state of purification, but Scripture also commends the deed as holy and wholesome.

In the New Testament we are to find many utterances of Christ and the Apostles which confirm this belief. Our Saviour said: "Be at agreement with thy adversary before thou goest to court, lest thou be taken away by our prayers and good deeds. God must decide this. We do know, however, that our Saviour said: "Ask and it shall be given unto you" (Matt. VII, 7). He is always ready to answer our prayers, especially for those souls whom nothing can ever turn from Him again. The church realizes this, because there is a note of great confidence in her prayers for the dead.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the most powerful means we have of releasing the poor souls from their sufferings. The Mass has an infinite value in the sight of God. No greater gift can be given the dead. Every Mass has a special commemoration for the dead, and the priest says: "Be mindful also, O Lord, of thy servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who sleepeth sleep of peace." The Requiem Mass, however, has a special efficacy for the dead, which other Masses do not have. There are special prayers by which the Church calls upon God to lessen the sufferings of the poor souls. The whole rite aims at this, so much so that the Requiem Mass admits of no collect for the living. Our Masses for the dead are no mere "memorial services." We do not merely remember people who used to live; we have no least temptation to think of them as less alive. They are very much more alive. We can still help them by the Mass to reach the glory of God and of His privilege the Church would have us make the fullest use. To this end she grants to her priests different privileges to be used in favor of the souls in Purgatory. Among others, the favor of the Privileged Altar. On certain days of the week from certain altars, a plenary indulgence is attached to the Mass which may be applied to one departed soul. The Church favors also other pious practices, such as the Gregorian Masses, a successive series of thirty Masses said for the same dead person to obtain the deliverance of that soul from Purgatory through the benevolent dispensation of God's mercy.

Besides Masses for the dead, the Church advocates many indulgent prayers to aid the souls in Purgatory. For example, the prayer of indulgence by reciting the prayer before the Crucifix after receiving Holy Communion together with the prayers for the intention of the Holy Father, can be applied to the souls in Purgatory. The richly indulgent prayers of the Rosary and the Way of the Cross will also help them.

There is another way of helping the poor souls which is not so well known, namely the Heroic Act of Charity. A Catholic making this act offers to God in behalf of the souls in Purgatory not only the good

Archbp. Hanna Is Honored By Hebrew Group

New York, Nov. 6.—The Most Rev. Edward J. Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco, has been awarded the American Hebrew medal for the promotion of better understanding between Christian and Jew in America, for 1931. It was announced Sunday by officials of the organization sponsoring the effort.

Formal notification of the honor, by a committee composed of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, was made Monday at a luncheon tendered the archbishop here.

The award declares it is presented to Archbishop Hanna "because he sponsored the Berkeley Seminary, because he personally addressed audiences to promote better understanding between Christian and Jew, and because his active promotion of the movement has been a major influence in its progress."

Committee Award

The committee of award which selected him as the recipient of the medal this year included James Addams, Father M. J. Ahern, Robert W. Bingham, Paul Block, Mrs. Sidney Cecil Borg, Frederick Brown, the Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, Judge Benjamin N. Cardozo, Prof. John Dewey, Father Francis P. Duffy, Prof. John Erskine, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Mrs. J. Walter Freiberg, Edwin S. Friedly, Albert M. Greenfield, Clark Howell, Otto H. Kahn, Lucius N. Littauer, Dr. Charles S. MacFarland, Bishop William T. Manning, Henry Morgenthau, Dr. James Harnoy Robinson, Charles M. Schwab, Dr. John Sparge, Ida M. Tarbell, Ludwig Vogelstein, Miss Lillian D. Wald, James J. Walker, Felix M. Warburg and William Allen White.

Archbishop Hanna, native of Rochester and long time resident here, is greatly beloved in this city. His many friends here will join in congratulations and good wishes to him on this new and well deserved honor that has come to him.

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