

The Blessed Saints and the Holy Dead  
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IN commemorating All Souls' Day we must remember that our relation to the Holy Souls may be considered from a doctrinal or from a practical point of view, though, as is very evident, the latter must depend on the former; and as I have been asked to preach to you both to-night and at the Solemn Requiem to-morrow, I propose to divide what I have to say thus: that to-night we will consider the teaching of the Church as to the Faithful Departed, and to-morrow some of the practical results which follow from this teaching.

But first we must ask, What do we mean by "the Holy Souls," and in what way do they differ from the Saints? that is to say, have we any real reasons for keeping All Souls' Day as distinct from All Saints' Day? The Collect for All Saints' Day recognizes two classes, the Elect, who are "knit together in one communion and fellowship in [1/2] the mystical Body of Christ," and the Blessed Saints; and as this collect is not, like so many others in our Prayer Book, a mere translation of an older one, but was written for the first Prayer Book of Edward VI in 1549, the putting of the Blessed Saints in a class by themselves evidently shows the mind of our Church.

Now there are three possible views as to the condition of the Souls of the Departed. There is the Protestant view that immediately after death they go at once either to Heaven or Hell. There is the Catholic view that they go to Heaven or Hell or into an intermediate state of purification, or purgation; and there is a third view, which, denying that any souls pass into Heaven, that is to say into the Beatific Vision, before the Day of Judgment, calls the Intermediate State Paradise, and in it locates, all the Faithful Dead, dividing it into compartments, so to speak, in some placing the greatest saints, in others those who are only just saved, but allowing to none the sight of the Beatific Vision until the Day of Judgment. In the dense ignorance of years gone by it was enough for us to plead for the recognition of an Intermediate State in which there was some sort of purification or development; but now that by the goodness of God this has come to be recognized by almost everyone in our Communion, we can hardly be content with so vague a statement, and may reverently go on to inquire, What do the Bible and the Church teach us about the state of the Faithful Departed? In the present age, when haziness of thought and absence of clear definition is mistaken for breadth of view, it is not a little important that our view of this subject should at least be definite. I do not mean that we may dogmatize upon matters which are not revealed in Holy Scripture [2/3] nor taught by the Church, but I do mean that we should carefully sift both these sources of teaching and from them frame our conception of the condition of the Holy Souls.

It may be well for us to pause here to discuss and disprove the third view of which I spoke--I mean the view which consigns all the Faithful Dead, both Saints and those who

are barely saved, to the same place, which it calls Paradise. This is not a modern error, indeed there have been traces of it in almost all ages, but the one to whom it was reserved first to promulgate it in the form of a definite doctrine was Pope John XXII, who died in the year 1334. On All Saints' Day, 1331, he preached a sermon in which he said that the Saints would not enjoy the Beatific Vision of the Holy Trinity until after the Last Judgment. This teaching was referred by Philip of Valois, King of France, to the Theological Faculty of Paris and to others. It was condemned by the Doctors of Sorbonne and opposed by the Dominicans, while the Italian cardinals threatened to bring him before a General Council. At length, on his deathbed, John retracted all that he had taught on this point. If, therefore, the adherents of this view cannot claim for it Scriptural authority, as I hope to show, they can claim the authority of an heretical Pope.

They generally object to the Catholic view, that the Saints are now enjoying the Beatific Vision, on three grounds; and first, that the soul without the body cannot enter Heaven. It may be a sufficient answer to this that St. John, in the fourth chapter of the Book of the Revelation and the fourth verse, tells us that he saw in Heaven "four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." In the [3/4] next chapter he tells us that these elders, "sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Chap. V, 9). I am quite aware that some commentators take these twenty-four Elders as representing symbolically the twenty-four books of the Old Testament; but while it is difficult to understand the symbolism by which the books of the Old Testament are clothed in white raiment and have on their heads crowns of gold, it seems absolutely impossible to conceive that they can say that they were redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, and I do not see how anyone can avoid the conclusion that human souls, and human souls only, can here be meant, inasmuch as it was for them alone, so far as we know, that Christ died. Some, however, would answer to this that the Book of Revelation is largely prophetic, and that what St. John saw was to take place in the future. This does not weaken the argument very much, because, however prophetic it may be, it was certainly before the Day of Judgment, which does not come before the end of the Book of Revelation, and the whole contention of those who hold this view is that no souls can enter Heaven until after they have been reunited to their bodies, after the Day of Judgment. But if we pass to the next chapter we have an even stronger statement, for St. John says: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them" (Chap. VI, 9, 10, n). Here St. [4/5] John distinctly says that he saw the souls of the martyrs, to whom white robes were given.

The second objection is that if the Saints are in Heaven it renders the General Judgment purposeless. The reply to this would be that it is at the Particular Judgment, at the moment of death, that the state of the soul is forever settled. This is quite clear, since in our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man is *already* in torments, he is in Hell, for Abraham says, "there is a great gulf fixed, which cannot be passed," and this would not be true of any view of Purgatory. And further, the purpose of the General

Judgment would seem to be not so much the deciding of the fate of a soul as the manifestation of God's justice to all the world.

The only other objection which the holders of this view advance, I believe, is drawn from our Lord's words to the penitent thief upon the cross. The thief said to our Lord, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (St. Luke XXIII, 42, 43). Here some would say, Paradise must be the [5/6] Intermediate State, since our Lord did not ascend into Heaven until forty-three days later. But surely Paradise is to be with Christ. The promise is not merely that he shall be in Paradise, but "be *with Me* in Paradise," and when He rose from the dead He broke asunder the bars of death and brought forth the "Prisoners of hope," taking them with Him to Heaven, some supposing that the cloud which received Him out of sight at the Ascension was the souls of the Patriarchs of the Old Covenant, who ascended with Him; and if to be in Paradise is to be with Christ. Paradise must be the same as Heaven, since our Lord is locally there, and there only. So Saint Paul speaks of being caught up to the Third Heaven and to Paradise (2 Cor. XII, 2, 4), in which the terms "Paradise" and "the Third Heaven" seem to be synonymous.<sup>^</sup> And here I would remind you that no text of Holy Scripture spoken before the day of our Lord's Ascension can be fairly applied to the condition of the Saints after our Lord's Ascension.

But having shown how unscriptural are these three objections, we may point out how exactly in accord with Holy Scripture is the Catholic view that the Saints are in Heaven. At the risk of repetition I must emphatically assert that it is *de fide* that our Lord is locally sitting at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven, and is locally there only. Even His Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, while absolutely real, is a sacramental presence, and hyper-local. While the Substance of the Divinity is omnipresent, we must bear in mind that the Sacred Humanity of our Lord is not ubiquitous, and that this view of its ubiquity is a Lutheran heresy, which has been formally condemned. With this introduction let us examine two or three other texts referring to the condition of the Saints.

"We are confident . . . and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v, 8). Here to be absent from the body is evidently equivalent to being present with the Lord, and we have a similar statement: "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil, i, 23). Now we have shown that Christ is only in Heaven. To be with Christ, therefore, must be to be in Heaven. In Phil, ii, 10, we have the statement that "at the name of Jesus [6/7] every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," and in Rev. v, 13, the Song to the Lamb is uttered by "every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth." In both these texts, written by different Apostles, we have the same three-fold division of the church under exactly the same terms--in Heaven, in earth, and under the earth; the Church Triumphant in Heaven, consisting of the Angels and the Blessed Saints; on earth, being the Church Militant, and under the earth, the Church Expectant. It is quite impossible to refer the phrase "under the earth" to the devils, as some very few have attempted to do, because the devils will not join in the Triumph Song of the Lamb, which is what we are distinctly told that those under the earth do. "Under the earth" then, is a

description of the Intermediate state, where the Holy Souls are waiting until their purification is accomplished and they are made perfect. Heaven is the place where the souls of just men made perfect, that is of the Saints, behold the Vision of God.

If we turn from the testimony of the Bible to that of the Fathers of the Church, the evidence is overwhelming. The only ones who seem to question the fruition of the ... Saints are Tertullian, Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, Irenaeus and Lactantius. But Tertullian was a heretic, of Victorinus St. Jerome says he was unlearned, Irenaeus held the extraordinary view that the holy dead were waiting in the Garden of Eden for the general resurrection--a view which has no followers now, I believe--and of Lactantius Bishop Bull states that he was more of a rhetorician than a theologian, and that his want of learning led him into serious and absurd errors. On the other [7/8] hand we have Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa and Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius, Theodoret, Eusebius, St. John Damascene, Theophylact, Cyprian, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Anselm and St Bernard. I quote only from one, Gregory the Great, in his Dialogues, Book IV, Chap. 25. The pupil Peter says: "I am well pleased at what you say, but I would gladly know whether before the resurrection of the flesh the souls of the just are received into heaven?" Gregory replies: "We can neither affirm or deny this of the just *en masse*. For there are souls of the righteous kept out of the heavenly kingdom, for what reason, except that they are not yet perfected! But nevertheless, it is clearer than day (*luce clarius constat*) that the souls of just men made perfect after that they are delivered from their carnal prisons are immediately received to their heavenly places. Which the very Truth Himself attests when he saith, "wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together," because where our Redeemer himself is in body, there without any doubt will the souls of the just be gathered together. Moreover, Paul desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Whoever then does not doubt that Christ is in heaven, neither let him deny that the soul of Paul is in heaven (*esse in caelo negat*)," It would be difficult to find anything more unanswerable or more to the point.

In conclusion we might remark that the practice of our opponents is better than their theory, as they have no hesitation on All Saints' Day in singing that glorious hymn of Bishop Wordsworth, No. 179 in the hymnal:

"Now they reign in heavenly glory, now they walk in golden light,  
Now they drink; as from a river, holy bliss and infinite;  
Love and peace they taste forever, and all truth and knowledge see  
In the Beatific Vision of the Blessed Trinity."

And again in Hymn 394:

O Paradise! O Paradise!  
Who doth not crave for rest?  
Who would not seek the happy land  
Where they that loved are blest;  
Where loyal hearts and true

Stand ever in the light,  
All rapture through and through  
In God's most holy sight?

It is not a little inconsistent for those who would make Paradise practically to be the same as Purgatory, to sing such words as these, and yet I have never heard any objections made, and as they are in the authorized Hymnal of our Church, I suppose in some measure at least they may be considered to represent Her teaching on this subject.

We may sum up, then, our examination of this theory by saying, it is not the teaching of the English Church, nor of the Roman Church, nor of the Greek Church, nor of the Protestant schismatics, but only of a comparatively small body of men, headed by Pope John XXII. And if it may thus be called Papal, it is certainly not Scriptural.

As to the souls of the Faithful Departed, then, theology divides them into two classes; first, the Blessed Saints, who have been made perfect and have reached the Beatific Vision (although, as St. Thomas and other theologians point out, after the Resurrection there will be [9/10] for these an increment of their glory when the glorified body is reunited to the soul); secondly, the Holy Souls, who having died in grace but not yet being made perfect are in a state of purification, or Purgation. There are many who, while quite accepting the fact that a soul which dies in grace may yet need to receive purification in the Intermediate State, yet strongly deny that there is any such thing as Purgatory. One can only confess to these one's inability to see the distinction between purification and Purgatory. Are they not words of exactly the same meaning? And if it be replied that our Twenty-Second Article protests against the "Romish doctrine of Purgatory," must we not be just to the Church of Rome and point out that "the Romish doctrine of Purgatory" to which the Article refers, was a mediaeval doctrine, which the Roman Church condemned in the Council of Trent quite as strongly? Our Articles were adopted in their present form by Synod, in 1562, but the Twenty-Second Article, on Purgatory, is the same as the Twenty-Third Article of King Edward VI's Articles, put forth in the year 1552, with the exception that instead of the expression "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory" Edward VI had "the doctrine of the school-authors." On the 3d and 4th of December, 1563, the Council of Trent at its twenty-fifth session discussed the question of Purgatory and passed the following decree upon it: "That there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are relieved by the suffrage of the faithful, but chiefly by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar."

This is now the only authoritative definition on the subject in the Roman Church. As it was passed more than a year after our Articles were set forth by the Synod [10/11] in their present form, and more than ten years after the Article has been drafted in its original form, it is not too much to say that by no conceivable process of reasoning can it be said that our Article refers to a decree which did not come into existence until so many years after, and that in protesting against "the *Romish* doctrine concerning Purgatory" the very words used imply that there was a doctrine of Purgatory against which the Article did not protest. A Protestant would protest against the *Romish* Church; an infidel against *the* Church. The Protestant, by his protest against the Romish Church, implies his belief

in some other Church; the infidel, in protesting against the Church without any limiting adjective, protests against Christianity altogether. So surely, if language means anything, it is in the Article. The protest against what it terms "the Romish doctrine" leaves a doctrine which was not the Romish doctrine untouched. If we ask, then, what was this Romish doctrine against which the Article is directed, it is not at all difficult to answer. It was a mediaeval corruption, which was thought to invalidate the power of the Passion of Christ, which led to the most scandalous abuses and against which the decree of the Council of Trent was as true a protest as our Article, for we must remember that the Council of Trent in the Roman Church did effect very great reforms. As Bishop Forbes, in his work on the Thirty-nine Articles, remarks: "The doctrine of Purgatory against which the Article protests is that which is made patent to the eye of every traveller as he passes from Germany into Italy. The wayside shrines which so edify him still continue, but the subjects are changed. In the place of the Crucifix which speaks to the soul of [10/11] the wayfarer now, terrible representations of the Holy Souls in flames in those days appalled him, appealing for a few pence to the awakened sympathies of the passersby. The popular doctrine thus symbolized prevailed in England at the time of the Reformation, and probably had come to take the place of a living faith in the eternal pains of Hell in the case of most men. It was also mixed up largely with interested motives on the part of the Clergy. There was a perfect traffic in Masses for these souls, and men fancied that by leaving money to the Church at the hour of death, and at the expense of their heirs, they might purchase mitigation or exemption from pains which in degree, though not in duration, were said to equal the pains of Hell."

How different from this is the wise reserve on this mysterious subject of the definition of Trent, which simply affirms that there is a state of purification, without attempting to dogmatize on it, and adds: "Let the more difficult and subtle questions and those which tend not to edification and from which, for the most part, there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude. In like manner, such things as are uncertain, or which labor under the appearance of error, let them not allow to be made public and treated of. But those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition, or which savor of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandalous and stumbling blocks of the faithful." Are not these words as strong as the protest of our Article?

There are some who, in their blind prejudice against everything that is Roman, shut their eyes to these and many similar excellent teachings of the Council of Trent, [12/13] which was for the Roman Church truly a reformation. But such prejudice is surely not Christian, nor is it a mark of faith in the strength of one's own position to refuse fairly to examine the authoritative teaching on the other side, and to admit what is true and good in it. In speaking of the state of the Faithful Departed it is best, surely, to remember the wise reserve of the Council of Trent, and to be very careful not to lay down as doctrines what are only the opinions of theologians.

St. Augustine says in his 172d sermon: "There can be no doubt that the dead are helped by the prayers of Holy Church, by the life-giving sacrifice, and by the alms which are offered for them, to such an extent that they are treated by the Lord more leniently than

their own sins have deserved." This statement we may hold to be the opinion of all the Fathers and of the whole Church. Beyond this we can only speculate. At the moment of death the Particular Judgment of the soul takes place, which decides its state in eternity. Then it has been thought the soul sees our Lord, and by that sight is filled with intense love for Him, with clear light as to its own sins and their enormity and with deepest sorrow. Then begins its purification. Of this there are two views, not in any sense contradictory, found in different writers. Some have dwelt on the pains, others on the joys of Purgatory. Those who have taken the dark side have been influenced by a consideration of the dreadfulfulness of sin and the perfect justice of God. Others have thought more of the joys of souls perfectly conformed to the will of God. St. Catharine of Genoa, the theologian of the joys of Purgatory, [13/14] writes thus: "It would be impossible to find any joy comparable to that of a soul in Purgatory, except the joy of the Blessed in Paradise; a joy which goes on increasing day by day as God more and more flows in upon the soul, which he does abundantly in proportion as every hindrance to His entrance is consumed away." Again she writes: "The souls in Purgatory, having their wills perfectly conformed to the will of God, and hence partaking of His goodness, remain satisfied with their condition, which is one of entire freedom from the guilt of sin."

These souls are from the moment of the Particular Judgment confirmed in grace. They cannot sin, and therefore they cannot merit, and hence depend, as St. Augustine says, on the prayers, alms, and offering of the Holy Eucharist of the Church on earth. One day we shall be with them. We, too, shall depend on the good offices of the living. Let us not, therefore, forget the Holy Dead, but let us try to help them, especially those who when on earth were near and dear to us in ties of love or relationship, and also all the Church Expectant and suffering; praying, in the words of the Office for the Dead, "Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen."