

that it doth thee" (Ch. 25). Doubtless she did, for throughout her book she displays a remarkable grasp of the deepest theological principles, and her teaching on this subject of the Motherhood is only the application of two such principles enunciated by St. Thomas: firstly, that "a name is applied to that wherein is perfectly contained its signification, before it is applied to that which only partially contains it; for the latter bears the name by reason of a kind of similitude to that which answers perfectly to the signification of the name" (I, 33, 3.) So that just as Paternity is applied firstly and pre-eminently to God, and only secondarily and imperfectly to creatures, so, too, does that which we call Motherhood exist in its perfection only in Him. And secondly, that God "produced things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures and be represented by them" (I, 47, 1) which explains our Blessed Lady's position in relation to the Divine Motherhood.

It will be noted that Mother Julian treats of this subject only as it effects us: that is to say, she does not attempt to explain whether and how the relation of Motherhood exists within the Blessed Trinity, but is concerned only with its operations *ad extra*—a method which she follows throughout her book, for her revelations have an essentially practical value "for thine and our safe guide, to conduct to everlasting bliss" (Addition by the Scribe). Consequently, having shown the working of Motherhood on God's part, which pertains to His "lovelonging that shall last until Doomsday" (Ch. 63) she proceeds to describe our response, our reaction, which she says is the attitude of Spiritual Childhood.

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## THE ENGLISH MARTYRS

By

M.M.M.

"Of twisted scarlet, the work of an artist, with precious stones cut and set on gold . . ." (*Ecclesiasticus*, XLV. 13). Nor this nor any text, inspired word of God, can be too high for these, his Saints, canonised or uncanonised, to whom He gave the great gift of martyrdom.

In early times, the Church rightly set her precious stones in the Mass, cut them out in the first Litanies, wove their scarlet threads of love and fame into and out of the histories of the first great basilicas, in Rome and elsewhere. We bless and revere the practice of the Church, then as now, and in all humility follow it, in speaking of our own later Martyrs, since there is no time with God . . . "Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day and for ever."

It is true that we in these islands would not have the Faith, humanly speaking, did not in God's Providence some early mis-

siary bring and preach it to our forefathers; but it is as least as true that we could never have kept the Faith were it not kept for us by those whom we have come to call the English Martyrs. This name is peculiar to that company of men and women who were put to death for their Faith, and for that only, between the years 1535 and 1689; that is, from the beginning of Henry VIII's first claim to be Head of the Church, to the Titus Oates Plot and the wave of anti-Catholic feeling in the reign of Charles II. But for the lives and deaths of these men and women, these islands might now be as frozen in heresy as Norway or Sweden. All ranks of people are represented in our list; all types of nature; all grades of education; animated alike by that flame of living faith in which they lived and died. There are included Fisher, the saintly Cardinal, with More, the saintly layman; Campion, the preacher and orator par excellence; Southwell, the priest-poet; Milner, a sturdy yeoman; Philip Howard, "of all the Howards"; Swithin Wells, a "hunter before the Lord"; Horner, the tailor; Owen, the carpenter; Mason, the serving man; and Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh. There were women, too, as Margaret Clitheroe, wife and mother; Ann Lyne, widow; and Margaret Pole, the last of the Plantagenets.

The period of persecution began with the suppression of the monasteries, fruit of Henry's greed and accompanying his cruel divorce of Catherine and invention of the Oath of Supremacy. There was a brief restoration of the Faith under Mary, and then a final establishment of Protestantism in blood under Elizabeth. Later still there were the persecutions of the Commonwealth times and all the train of false brethren and apostates, time-servers and traitors of every kind; and then the vacillations of the Stuarts. Naturally, no set order was followed in such a course as putting men to death for their faith; naturally, too, these orgies were not comparable to the barbarity of Roman times; the whole period in this country hardly being equal to one month of the slaughter of Christians, for example under Diocletian. Yet these were supposed to be Christian times; and the fiercest agony that swept the spirit of many a martyr was the knowledge that his nearest and dearest were instrumental in putting him to death; or at least that they cheerfully signed or agreed to the very thing he died to deny. Margaret Clitheroe could not plead her own cause for fear of implicating her family in her downfall; Thomas More's favourite daughter Margaret could not fathom his real reasoning in the cause for which he died. Side by side with this distressing confusion of aim and ideal, this painful clouding of an issue dearer to the Martyrs than even their life itself, was the dreadful and artificial persecution of the Penal Laws. Unless one has read the text of these, it is possible to think the grievances of Catholics over-rated; but Daniel O'Connell was a lawyer, and his fresh reading of them led right-thinking

Englishmen to the repeal, in fact if not in name, of 1829. In the days of persecution both conditions and penalties were so severe that the mere living under them became a persecution in itself. Without the warmth of Faith and love, and in England, without the strong support of brotherly love, in certain districts, the survival of even average Catholics as Catholics would have been impossible. Without the welcome hospitality, often at the cost of life and always at the risk of it, and without the services of the Catholic laity, the apostolate of priests would have been impossible. Considering the ubiquity and cunning of both private informers and Government spies, it is wonderful to think that any missionaries ever found a footing in England, much less time and scope for work extending in many cases over months and years. When we remember that harbouring priests was always regarded as felony, and was not seldom punished by death, we can well be astonished to find that cottages and shops of the poorer classes, mansions and manors of the gentry, were always open to the missionary. No doubt, in the providence of God, the fire of persecution strengthened men's souls.

This fact is well borne out by the different attitude to the "reformed" religion as time went on; for many who took the oath under Henry relented later, when its full import was growing clear; as it was not in the beginning, when save in the matter of the King's Supremacy, a matter which was differently interpreted, the Faith was left intact. Under Henry, Fisher alone of the twenty-two Bishops of Convocation refused to conform; under Elizabeth, when Protestantism undisguised stood waiting for their allegiance, the whole Marian episcopacy, with one exception, died in prison rather than present it. We may notice that the Bishops suffered for their Faith alone; since their civil loyalty was never questioned. The martyrs who were not Bishops were tried and condemned on a charge of treason; treason meaning any resistance to the Crown or State in the matter of religion; and for this resistance, that is, for their Faith, they suffered and died. Those who like Felton, Storey and Woodhouse, refused to admit that Elizabeth was Queen once she had been deposed by the Pope, won their crowns, not as rebels or conspirators, by championing the Pope's authority, refusing the Oath of Supremacy, declining by apostasy to save their lives. Loyalty to the lawful authority of the Crown was ever a first principle with Catholics. The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Rising of the North, although both undertaken to restore the old religion, were both also heralded with explicit directions as to the claims of loyalty, and even declarations and protestations to the same effect. Revolution was counted as the offspring and badge of heresy. Thus Edward Powell, knowing his death was inevitable, challenged the apostate Barnes to show that the ancient creed was ever known to produce sedition or rebellion. In

the Armada crisis, Catholics came forward, led by Howard of Effingham, as if they were not then most grievously suffering from the unjust laws that threatened to stifle their power in the country for which they were willing to fight. Thirty years later, under Charles I, Catholics formed a third, or at least more than a quarter, of the Royalist Army. When in 1580 Pope Gregory III exempted Catholics from the obligation of the Bull of excommunication, we find priests and laymen alike declaring Queen Elizabeth their right and lawful Queen; and from then onwards their expressions of loyalty were emphatic and outspoken. "God bless and save Her Majesty", "Preserve the Queen from all her enemies", were almost the last words of many a martyr; and Felton, whom she said had "betrayed her trust" by refusing to conform, sent her his most valuable ring as a token of his "undying affection and esteem"; though its owner had no hope of preservation when he made the gift. Robert Drury and twelve appellant priests inserted in their declaration of allegiance that they would be as ready to shed their blood in the defence of their country as they were in defence of their religion, should they be called upon to do so; and these were not empty words. But for priest or layman, high or low, recusancy was treason, treason meant death; and the appellants suffered with the rest.

The penalty of joining the Communion of the Church, or of being reconciled to it, was never less than death, yet between 1577 and 1681, at least fifty martyrs were converts from conformity or Protestantism. Of these, thirty were of the University of Oxford, nine of Cambridge. Among them were Fellows of Colleges, as Campion and Hartley (St. John's) Sherwin (Exeter), Munden (New College), Ford (Trinity), Richardson (Brasenose), Pilchard (Balliol); noted schoolmasters like Shert and Cottam; holders of rich benefices, like Sutton, Vicar of Lutterworth, promoted to a wealthy living by the University of Cambridge; librarians such as Heath, of Corpus Christi, Cambridge . . . men whose scholarship, learning and position were so well known and so valued, that honours and preferments were offered them as bribes for apostasy. Yet very, very few of them were shaken; none, of the great company of two-hundred-and-sixty-five who have since been declared by the Church as Blessed or Venerable.

In childhood, many of us thought a moment's martyrdom a cheap way of gaining Heaven, as compared with a long life and many risks on the way; it is only as we grow older that we realise what a long and arduous preparation was that of these martyrs for the death which God's grace and their own lives enabled them to face so well and so heroically. Only great mortification could bring forth such jests as Thomas More about his beard; such shining cheerfulness as that of Robert Walpole; such steadfastness as that of Woodcock, who, when butchered alive,

could or would say only JESUS.

The spiritual life of the martyrs, their unwearied prayers for the constancy of themselves and others, their fasts and penances, their vigils and disciplines and hair-shirts, reveal their inner training for their inevitable conflict; while their forgiveness of their persecutors under most bitter torture shows Whose disciples they were. Some of the loveliest characteristics of English manly life at its best in the face of death are shown in the stories of these martyrs; as Briant, the splendid Oxford boy; Lockwood, aged eighty-seven, apologising for his slowness in mounting the ladder to the scaffold; Cadwallador, lying in agony in his fetters, calling them his little golden bells; Anderton, ready in his wit while clear in his theology, bursting the old foolish bubble of Pope Joan; Sherwin, Roberts, Plessington and Barlow, accurate and theological, not to save their own lives but to convince the erring that the Faith was theirs too, would they but hold and use it. Lesser than these great traits, and others, as the hidden heroism of Margaret Ward, we may notice the matchless melody and stately diction of the martyrs' prayers; and remember that with all else we were deprived of no little scholarship by these barbarous executions. Classic examples of such prayers are those of More in the Tower and Philip Howard on the walls of the prison where he died; Campion's defence on his trial; Hart's letters to his Protestant mother or his clarion call "Stand fast!" to the Catholics in prison with him. Such again are the poems of Robert Southwell, the rugged but truthful verses of William Blundell.

Last of all we notice the candour and simplicity of the martyrs in the face of what, for most of them, was certain and dreadful death; their utter absence of mannerism or affectation, the complete lack of anything like posturing or the claiming of attention, save to the Faith of Christ. This stands out in strong contrast to the pretentious cant of many of their tormentors, and often to the inane but virulent pomposity of their pseudo-judges, even when these were Bishops.

"We are not of your faith," said Ralph Kirby to those who asked him to pray for himself before death; "to pray with you would be to dishonour God." So strongly did they hold to the practice as well as to the principles of their own true religion. Under Henry VIII, to take the Oath of Supremacy would have saved their lives; under Elizabeth, and afterwards, the rack, the rope, the knife, need never have been theirs had they but consented to go once to a Protestant church or accused themselves of the treason which they had never committed.

May we learn to set a higher value on our Faith the more we study the cost of its inheritance. May we grasp the truth that our Faith is to be preserved for us, not by concession or compromise, not by crying peace when there is no peace, or by declar-

ing its professed enemies our surest friends, but by its steadfast and outspoken defence at the sacrifice of every temporal interest, even, if need be, life itself.

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## A TREATISE ON THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF OUR REDEMPTION

By

LUIS OF GRANADA, O.P.

(Translated by a Nun of Stanbrook).

CHAPTER VI (cont.).

2.

*The glories of Divine goodness shown in this work of our Redemption.*

These foundations having been laid, we will begin to explain how divine goodness shows forth in our Redemption. We said that it is the nature of goodness to communicate itself to all things; that is, with regard to men to make them good and happy. We said that the highest grade of goodness was to suffer in order to make others good, and the greater the suffering, the higher the grade of goodness. Therefore the Son of God, desirous of making us good and happy like himself, saw that there was no other means under heaven more effectual than that he should descend to earth, clad in human flesh, and suffer in it death and Passion for the sake of the inestimable fruits that would result for us, and the splendid example it would give us in all the virtues, besides the immense and precious graces it would gain for us. Seeing this, our Lord, overcome by the power of his love and desire, thought nothing of the heavy burden he was taking on him, but only of our remedy. This reveals how immense was the goodness in offering to undergo such severe trials and to give his life for that cause. For, as our Saviour said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We can say that there is no stronger proof of goodness than that a man should die to make others good, especially when his death entails so many insults and torments.

Let us then consider the immensity of the trials and torments undergone by our Saviour and all the circumstances of this sacred Passion, such as the dignity of him who suffered, the unworthiness of those for whom he suffered, and the manner and cause of his tortures, for these details taken together manifest the grandeur of his Passion. We spoke of this in the *Book of Prayer and Meditation*, but will treat of it briefly here, for in each detail the devout soul finds material to nourish the spirit and arouse devotion.

Firstly, as regards the dignity of him who suffered, let man raise his eyes and consider the sublimity and sovereignty of the