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## THE SILENT SUFFERER.

In His great passion our Savior endured unspeakable agony, but rarely spoke. When He did open His mouth, it was to pray to His Heavenly Father, to warn and comfort His friends, to bear testimony to the truth, or to make intercession for His enemies. He began His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane on Thursday evening, and ended it on the cross in the late afternoon of the next day. During these long hours He submitted to cruel and inhuman treatment without one word of resentment or complaint. He heard the taunts and jeers, and the false accusations of His enemies, and said nothing. "Neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." 1 Pet. 2, 22, 23. It even happened that He positively refused to speak. Although Christ spoke on certain occasions, still He appears throughout His great passion as the Silent Sufferer.

The silence of Jesus is most remarkable. It is very unusual. Why did He suffer in silence? How shall we be benefited by it? Let us study this aspect of Christ's suffering.

*Christ was silent because His silence was foretold by the prophets.* "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John 1, 29, must by His silence resemble the lamb of the Mosaic sacrifice, which was dumb when it was brought to the slaughter. The Messiah must not only be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but also a man of silence. He must bear His intense torture without complaint. He must not cry, nor bewail His hard lot. He must not revile those that revile

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## THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRAYERS IN EARLY LITURGIES ON THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY.

During the period of destructive criticism which was ushered in by rationalism, many of the traditions of the ages were carefully examined and proved to be false. But in many cases the critics, not unlike the evolutionists of Haeckel's type, arranged the subject-matter presented for their consideration according to preconceived hypotheses, and thus reversed cause and effect, reason and result.

This mode of criticism was applied not only to the Scriptures, resulting in such monstrosities as the "Rainbow Bible," but also to all other ecclesiastical books and manuscripts which had been preserved through the Middle Ages. Liturgiologists whom the virus had affected did not hesitate to disclaim antiquity for any of the traditional liturgies, and to place the majority of them at the beginning of the medieval era. Fortunately, a reaction toward a healthy sanity has set in, as recent publications tend to show. And this fact enables us to consider a question which has long vexed students of liturgy, namely,

that of the relation between the doctrine of purgatory and the liturgical prayers of intercession and inclination, as found in the earliest liturgies.

We may keep in mind, from the beginning, that the Liturgy of the eighth book of the Apostolic Constitutions, the so-called Clementine Liturgy, is now conceded to belong to the end of the fourth century, while its nucleus may well have originated in the middle of the third century, that the Liturgy of St. James, in its original form, may have been codified before the end of the second century, and that the Ambrosian Liturgy and that of Alexandria were framed, in substance, well within the fourth century. We should remember, also, that there is not one of the ancient liturgies but had its inception in the Post-Nicene era, being pretty well established before the seventh century, that is, before the doctrine of purgatory was formally promulgated.

Keeping these facts in mind, it seems strange, at the outset, that the assertion could be made: "Prayer for the dead presupposeth purgatory." (Harding's *Answer to Jewel's Apology*, 119. Antwerp, 1565.) And again: "Oratio pro mortuis, quae purgatorii doctrinam invehit necessario." (Renandot, *Liturgiae Orientales*, I, 296.) Thus many writers claimed that prayers for the dead, since they had always been made in the Church, were an absolute proof that the Church had always held the doctrine of purgatory. (Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, II, 95, and note.) Let us examine the evidence, and find, if possible, what relation obtains between the liturgical prayers commemorating the dead and the doctrine of purgatory.

Turning, first of all, to the text of the ancient liturgies, we find that practically all of them contain prayers of this nature. In the Clementine Liturgy we read: "We also make intercession (*prospheromen*) for all those that of old have been well-pleasing to Thee: the holy patriarchs and prophets, the righteous apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, presbyters, deacons, subdeacons, readers, singers, virgins, widows, lay people, and for all those whose names Thou knowest." (Brightman,

*Liturgies, Eastern and Western*, 21. 22.) And again: "For those who are resting in the faith (*en pistei anapausamenon*) we pray." (p. 23.) In the Liturgy of the Syrian Jacobites the corresponding passages read: "Again we are commemorating our fathers and our brethren and our masters who have taught us the Word of Truth, and our departed, and all the faithful departed. . . . We beseech Thee—in behalf of the living and the dead and the repose of their souls in the heavenly Jerusalem." (pp. 73. 75.) Again, then, we commemorate those who among the saints have aforesaid fallen asleep in holiness and are at rest. . . . Give rest also to the spirits of the departed, and have mercy upon sinners in the day of Judgment." (pp. 93. 98.) In the Liturgy of St. Mark we read: "Give rest to the souls of the fathers and brothers that are sleeping in the faith of Christ" (*ton en pistei Christou prokekoimemenon tas psychas anapauson*). (pp. 128. 129.) The Coptic Jacobites have almost the same words: "Remember, O Lord, our fathers and our brethren who have fallen asleep. Receiving their souls, give them rest. . . . To our fathers and our brethren who are fallen asleep, whose souls Thou hast taken, give rest, remembering all saints who have been well-pleasing to Thee since the world began." (pp. 157. 169.) The passage in the Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites reads: "For those of the Christian congregation who are fallen asleep we beseech that the Lord vouchsafe them a place of rest." (p. 208.) And again: "Remember, Lord, our fathers and our brethren who have fallen asleep and are gone to their rest in the orthodox faith: give them rest. . . . Rest the souls of our fathers and our brothers and our sisters that have fallen asleep and gained their rest in the faith of Christ: rest them. . . . Remember, Lord, and loose all them that are asleep and resting in the right faith, and lay their souls in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (pp. 221. 229. 236.) In the Liturgy of the Nestorians the intercession is simple: "And of all them that in a true faith departed from this world, of whom our Lord knoweth the names, that Elohim crown them in the resurrection of the dead."

(p. 281.) The list might easily be augmented by similar passages, but the evidence presented may suffice at this time.

A careful comparison of these excerpts will show that the prayers of intercession and inclination of the early Christian Church, so far as they had reference to those that had departed this life in the true faith, were merely prayers of commemoration. Even the petition to give rest to their souls or spirits holds nothing objectionable in this connection, being nothing more than a pious wish: *Requiescat in pace*, just as we make use of it to-day. There is no intimation of doubt as to the complete possession of the glories of heaven by the sainted faithful. The instances cited by Palmer furnish further corroborative testimony. For the Liturgy of Caesarea pleads that God would grant to the petitioners grace and mercy with all the saints, living and dead. The Liturgy of Alexandria asks that the Christians be made partakers of the eternal gifts with all saints. The Liturgy of Antioch includes a prayer of commemoration, and asks that the petitioners be numbered with the elect whose names are inscribed in heaven. The Liturgy of Milan, which agrees closely with the early Roman, pleads that the believers on earth may be made partakers of the multitude of God's mercies, with the sainted apostles and martyrs. And the Orthodox Alexandrian says: "Grant us to have portion and heritage with all Thy saints." (*Loc. cit.*, 97. 98.)

The explanation for these passages is therefore not difficult. So thoroughly were the Christians of the early days imbued with the idea of the unity of all believers, with the belief in the one holy catholic Church, that they made no distinction between past and present, between living and dead. The difference between the Church militant and the Church triumphant was to them merely one of degree. The members that had gone before, and those that would soon follow, still were united by the bonds of a common faith, a common love.

Nevertheless, the possibilities for a misunderstanding were present in such passages, and when the Church was no longer permeated with, and actuated by, the first love, but had begun

to make a very decided distinction between the kingdom here on earth and the eternal kingdom above, the teachers began to draw conclusions which were at absolute variance with the earlier, simpler belief. The departed brethren were no longer regarded as mere *anapausamenoï* or *dormientes*, but as such as had been separated from the congregation, and whose present state was not clearly defined. As Kliefoth shows, the *stare ad Deum cum mortuo*, which put the living and the dead on the same level, sure of the grace and mercies of God, was changed to a *commemorare in oratione*, which signified a local separation. This was succeeded by actual concern for the soul of the departed and became a *commendare eum Deo*. After that, the *orare pro anima eius*, then the *postulare pro spiritu eius*, and finally the *postulare ei refrigerium et in prima resurrectione consortium* followed as a matter of course. (*Liturgische Abhandlungen*, 1, 242.)

The successive changes in the passages of the liturgy were a correct index for the position of the great teachers of the Church. Tertullian expressly states: "Enimvero et pro anima eius orat, et refrigerium interim adpostulat ei et in prima resurrectione consortium, et offert annuis diebus dormitionis eius." Again, he says of a widower: "Pro cuius spiritu postulas, pro qua oblationes annuas reddis." He also mentions a *commendare per sacerdotem*. (Quoted in Kliefoth, *loc. cit.*, 240.) Cyrillus of Jerusalem explains his position in his *Mystagogic Catecheses*, when he writes: "We also make mention of the departed, first of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, in order that God, through their prayers and intercessions, accept our prayer; then we also pray for the departed holy fathers and bishops, and, in general, for all that have lived among us, with this opinion that it will be a great gain for the souls for whom prayer is made before the sacrifice." (Kliefoth, *Die urspruengliche Gottesdienstordnung*, II, 73.) And again: "We finally pray for all that have died in our midst, since we believe that it is of great benefit to the souls of those for whom prayer is made at the Eucharist." (Alt, *Der kirchliche Gottesdienst*,

651.) Origen writes in a similar strain: "Celebramus memoriam defunctorum . . . , ut fiat festivitas nostra in memoriam requiei defunctis animabus, quarum memoriam celebramus." (*Liturgische Abhandlungen*, I, 241.) Cyprian's words do not sound quite so unorthodox, although he mentions another factor of danger: "Ne quis frater excedens ad tutelam vel curam clericum nominaret, ac si quis hoc fecisset, non offerretur pro eo, nec sacrificium pro dormitione eius celebraretur." (p. 248.)

When Acrius of Pontus protested against such prayers for the dead, maintaining that the custom had only a doubtful use and was certainly subject to very decided abuse, he and his followers were denounced and persecuted as heretics. The account of Epiphanius, as recounted by Gieseler and Alt, is tinged by a very decided partisanship.

Meanwhile the idea and the application of prayers for the dead gained ground very rapidly and progressed with the sacrificial idea in the Eucharist. Chrysostom had no hesitation to assert: "Let us not grow weary in coming to the aid of the departed and in praying for them. For the sacrifice of the Eucharist is propitiatory for the whole world. For this reason we pray at the altar with confidence for the entire world, and with the martyrs; confessors, and priests we mention also them, and it is possible indeed (*dynaton pantothen*) that through our prayers, through the gifts, and through the saints mentioned with them, we obtain remission for them." (Alt, 652.) Still more daring is the noted passage of Augustine: "Orationibus vero sanctae ecclesiae et sacrificio salutari et eleemosynis, quae pro eorum spiritibus erogantur, non est dubitandum mortuos adjuvari, ut cum iis misericordius agatur a Domino, quam eorum peccata meruerunt." (*Liturgische Abhandlungen*, 257.) The same teacher also, on the basis of Matt. 12, 32, regarded the doctrine of purgatorial fire for the cleansing away of the remnants of sin as not improbable or incredible: "Tale aliquid etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est, et utrum ita sit quaeri potest; et aut inveniri aut latere nonnullos fideles per ignem quendam purgatorium, quanto magis minusve bona

percuntia dilexerunt, tanto tardius citiusque salvari; non tamen tales, de quibus dictum est, quod regnum Dei non possidebunt, nisi convenienter poenitentibus eadem crimina remittantur.” (p. 261.)

Augustine himself, in spite of this peculiar position, was sound in the doctrine concerning sin and grace. But the teachers that arose in the Church after his time were only too willing to dispense with the last shred of hesitation and doubt, and to carry out the idea to its logical conclusion. The prayers for the dead now became intercessions for their redemption from the fires of purgatory. Passages from a few liturgies are quoted by Kliefoth: “His, quaesumus, sacrificiis, quibus purgationem viventibus tribuis et defunctis, animam famuli tui benignus absolve. . . . Non eum tormentum mortis attingat, non dolor horrendae visionis afficiat, non poenalis timor exerceat, non reorum proxima catena constringat.” (p. 274.) When Gregory the Great, therefore, officially promulgated the doctrine of purgatory, as of an intermediate place where the remnant of sins must be cleansed and burned away by physical fire, he merely asserted, in the form of a dogma of the Church, what its leading men had taught for centuries. At the same time, however, he laid the foundation of one of the most pernicious practises of the Roman Catholic sect, that of celebrating private masses for the redemption of souls from purgatory.