

by their fierce enemies, Tobias 'forthwith leaped from his place at the table, and left his dinner, and came fasting to the body,' to fetch it away and give it the rights of sepulture. His brave and merciful conduct met the approval of heaven, and merited that an ambassador should come from on high to applaud his work, and say to him: 'I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. Bless ye Him, and sing praises to Him' (Tob. xii., 15-18).

When John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah, was beheaded by the command of Herod, his disciples came and took the body, and buried it, and came and told Jesus' (Matt. xiv., 12). The disciples of the austere and saintly Baptist might have feared the tyrant king and his vengeful court. A cruel and inhuman murder had been committed. Timid minds would have been cowered by so foul an act. But the disciples of the martyred Precursor braved the danger and paid their last respects to their illustrious master. The inspired writer has recorded their charitable and heroic conduct, for their glory and the edification of future ages. To borrow the language of St. Mark:— 'They laid his body in a tomb.'

No less heroic and loving was the office of two brave men to the lifeless body of

Our Lord.

The four Evangelists narrate how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came forward and paid the rites of sepulture to their crucified Master. Joseph 'went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.' And Nicodemus also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. They took, therefore, the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen-cloths with the spices, as it is the custom with the Jews to bury. And the inspired narrative goes on to describe how Joseph and Nicodemus laid the sacred body of their Lord in the rock-hewn monument, which was near at hand, and wherein no corpse had yet been placed. Finally, they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and went their way, with the testimony that they had done well and religiously to the bleeding body of their beloved Master. St. Paul, also, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, fifteenth chapter, testifies: 'How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried.'

Behold the zeal of the holy women, who anxiously expect the earliest dawn to come to the sepulchre in the garden, and anoint their beloved Saviour with the most precious spices! Beyond all expectation is the reward of their vigilance and generosity. The risen Redeemer greets them and gives them a message to Peter and the other disciples. How rich the recompense Christ bestowed on his faithful and devoted followers! Their hearts were all aglow to honor His entombed body. Nothing but the darkness of night restrained them from the place of sepulture. But the dawning of the day found them on their loving errand undeterred by the fear of the Jews, and filled with the desire of serving their buried Lord. The aspect and the greeting of their risen Master fill them with such joy and exultation as to banish all the sadness and sorrow of the Crucifixion. They had sown in tears, they now reap in joy. Never has history, sacred or profane, recorded so blessed a pilgrimage to any tomb.

In the Apostolic constitutions, there is a most striking testimony of the respect paid to the faithful departed. The same ancient records prove the belief in purgatory and the practice of praying for those detained therein. 'Assemble in cemeteries, read the sacred books there, chant the hymns in honor of the martyrs and of all the saints, and for your brethren who have died in the Lord.' Hereinafter follow the remarkable words: 'And offer the Eucharist.' Gather from this that the very earliest Christians had their own cemeteries, met therein to perform religious rites in honor of their martyred dead, and for the solace of those in need beyond the grave; and how, finally, they offered the adorable sacrifice to assuage and release the holy souls in purgatory. Surely the Church of to-day is heir to the Church of the Apostles. As of old, so now, the Catholic Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Who has not heard or read of the famous

Catacombs

of Rome? It has been our good fortune to traverse a goodly portion of the Catacombs of St. Callistus, on the Appian Way, which leads by the Quo Vadis. Those wonderful underground passages and chambers and galleries the early Christians excavated for a two-fold purpose. In the days of the fierce persecutions, the faithful used them both as burial places for their dead, and as safe retreats for the celebration of the Divine mysteries. There on the tombs of the martyrs they offered the adorable Sacrifice, and sang their psalms and hymns for their beloved brethren, who had fallen in sleep in the Lord. There, also, they performed the

usual obsequies and funeral rites. How immense the expenditure of time and labor upon the hundreds of miles excavated by those devoted Christians! The catacombs are vast cities and cemeteries of the dead. Streets and squares and rock-hewn chambers are there without number. Has not the Count De Rossi made the exploration and illustration of them the great work of his life? This monumental work recalls the unflinching faith and heroism of the early Christians during the ten tremendous persecutions. It shows with what pains they secured honorable and religious sepulture for their stricken heroes in the faith. It proves out to demonstration their belief in purgatory, and a practice exactly corresponding to such belief. It brings out into relief the inscriptions which ask the faithful to be mindful, in prayer and Sacrifice, of the departed brethren. Assuredly those early Christians made valiant battle for the faith of Christ, and for the burial and succor of their dear departed. Nor did they give way to unseemly sorrow and weepings, like those devoid of faith in the resurrection. They conducted the corpse to its sleeping-place with torches and the singing of sacred hymns, with palms and olive branches, the emblems of triumph over the enemies of the immortal soul. The death of the just they regarded as a new birth into eternal felicity. For the redeemed and sanctified soul it was a happy passage from the perils of temporal life into the security of heavenly bliss. Funeral services, prayers, and Masses for the dead were then as rife as now-a-days.

Very appropriate here is that memorable passage of

St. Paul

respecting the lifeless body. It furnishes the reason why the people of God, in the olden Covenant and the new as well, have ever, with so much devotion, committed their dead to mother earth. It forcibly inculcates the beautiful and consoling doctrine of the resurrection, and confidently mentions the 'spiritual body,' which shall spring up into life eternal. 'It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown in a natural body, it shall rise in a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body' (I. Cor. xv., 42-45).

How clear and forcible the teaching of the Apostle touching the resurrection of the just! Their bodies shall be endowed with the same glorious attributes as those of the risen Saviour, Who is the Exemplar and efficient Cause of their resurrection. He is 'the first fruits of them that sleep.' But the same Apostle makes a distinction respecting the general resurrection. 'Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed.' The reprobate shall have no share in the change from 'corruption' and 'dishonor' and 'weakness' into the likeness of the risen and glorified body of Jesus Christ. But they shall be given immortality only to suffer eternal punishment.

(To be concluded.)

The Christian Brothers in West Australia

On Sunday, September 30, his Lordship Bishop Gibney blessed the new schools erected for the Christian Brothers at Kalgoorlie, an event which is hailed by the local press, as it was by the Mayor (Mr. J. H. Cummins), who presided over the gathering, as an important epoch in the history of the goldfields. The school is admirably adapted to the climate. In his financial statement Canon Robinson said the house the Brothers would occupy had cost £2350, but the Bishop had guaranteed £2000 for three years. The new school had cost £1750, without extras demanded by the Board of Health and the furnishings, which would bring the total up to practically £2000. Against this he had collected £520, of which the Bishop had given £100.

Bishop Gibney said that, after the eloquent address delivered by Canon Robinson, he only intended to make, with a few exceptions, some commonplace remarks. As the Mayor had so aptly put it, the day marked an epoch in the history of Kalgoorlie. Canon Robinson did not belong to the diocese till a few months ago, but his Bishop had now handed him over to him (the speaker), and he intended to take good care of him. He was pleased now to find that the education facilities of Kalgoorlie were almost complete. The convents had been doing excellent work, and when he applied for Christian Brothers the Canon was promised the very best man they had. In Brother Duggan he was satisfied the promise had been fulfilled. It gladdened his heart to see Brother Duggan at Kalgoorlie, for nothing would now be left undone to train

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