

V. Forgive all injuries and offences for in proportion as we forgive others God forgives us.

VI. Avoid mortal sins, deliberate venial sins and break off bad habits. Then it will be relatively easy to satisfy God's justice for sins of frailty. Above all avoid sins against charity and chastity in thought, word and deed for these sins are the reason why many souls are detained in Purgatory for long years.

VII. If afraid of doing much do many little things, acts of kindness and charity, give the alms you can, cultivate regularity, method, punctuality in the performance of duty; don't grumble or complain when things are not as you please; don't censure and complain of others; never refuse to do a favour to others when it is possible.

These and such like little acts are a splendid penance.

VIII. Do all in your power for the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Pray for them constantly, get others to do so, join the Association of the Holy Souls and ask all those you know to do likewise. The Holy Souls will repay you most generously.

IX. There is no more powerful way of obtaining from God a *most holy* and happy death than by weekly Confession, daily mass and daily communion.

X. A daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament — it need only be three or four minutes — is an easy way of obtaining the same grace. Kneeling in the presence of Jesus with eyes fixed on the Tabernacle, sure that He is looking at us, let us for a few minutes repeat some little prayer like these: My Jesus mercy. My Jesus have pity on me a sinner. My Jesus I love you. My Jesus give me a happy death.

How to avoid Purgatory.

BY

E. D. M.

**THIS LITTLE BOOK
OUGHT TO BE READ BY
EVERY CATHOLIC.**

Foreword.

Our Lord came on Earth expressly to give us a perfect Redemption. He gave us a Law of Love, a Religion made in every way to suit our human hearts, destined to make us holy and happy. His Commandments, Counsels and Promises all breathe peace, joy, mercy and love.

The idea that nearly all of us shall, notwithstanding, have to pass a period more or less long in the excruciating fires of Purgatory after death seems to be at variance with this all merciful and loving plan of our Divine Lord.

It is true that we are weak and fall many times and that God's justice is rigorous and exacting but it is equally certain that God's mercy and love are above all His Works.

It is no less certain that Our Lord has given us abundant grace and strength to save us from sin and many and most efficacious means of satisfying for any sins that we may have committed.

This last fact seems to be almost entirely overlooked or imperfectly understood by the majority of Catholics.

Of course those who go on deliberately sinning and who make no effort to correct their faults and refuse to use the many wonderful means God offers them for satisfying for sin, condemn themselves to Purgatory.

The object of this little book is to show how we can avoid Purgatory by using the means God has so generously offered us; and, secondly, that the use of these means is within the reach of every ordinary Christian.

The careful perusal of these pages will be a source of much benefit and consolation to all who read them.

The Author offers them to the loving Heart of Jesus and asks Him to bless them.

How to avoid Purgatory.

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IMPRIMATUR

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Can we avoid Purgatory? Yes.

Many think that it is practically impossible for the ordinary Christian to avoid Purgatory. Go there we all must — so they say.

They laughingly remark: «Well for us if we ever get there»: Alas!, when too late, they will recognize how terribly rash their words are.

As a consequence of such fatalistic ideas many make no serious effort to avoid Purgatory or even to lessen the term they may have to pass there.

Thank God all do not hold such gloomy views.

We shall strive in the following pages to show

a) How all can notably shorten their period of expiation in Purgatory;

b) And how they may even avoid Purgatory altogether.

These pages are well worth reading and re-reading. The fact is that a great number of souls go to Purgatory and remain there for long years simply because they have never been told how they could avoid it.

The means we suggest are easy, practical and within the reach of all. Moreover, far from being irksome, the use of these means will only serve to make our lives on this Earth holier and happier and will take away the exaggerated fear of death which terrifies so many.

We ask you, dear Reader, to put this little booklet in the hands of all your friends. You cannot do them a greater service.

How can we avoid Purgatory.

The reason why we have to pass through Purgatory after death is because we have committed sins and have not made satisfaction for them.

Every individual sin must be expiated in this life or the next. Not even the slightest shadow of sin or evil can enter the all holy presence of God.

The graver, the more frequent the sins the longer will be the period of expiation and the more intense the pain.

It is not God's fault nor God's wish that we go to Purgatory. The fault is *all* our own.

We have sinned and have not made satisfaction.

Even after our sin God, in His infinite goodness, places at our disposal many *easy* and *efficacious* means by which we may considerably lessen our term of expiation, or even entirely cancel it.

Most Christians, with incomprehensible rashness, neglect these means and so have to pay their debts in the dreadful prison house of Purgatory.

We will briefly enumerate some of the principal means by which we can avoid Purgatory, or at least, lessen its severity and duration.

The first means of avoiding Purgatory is manifestly to remove the cause, which is sin.

It may not be easy to refrain from all, even the smaller sins, but every ordinary Christian can, by the frequent use of the Sacraments, easily abstain from mortal sin.

Secondly, we can all avoid *deliberate* and grave venial sin. It is an awful thing to offend the good God *deliberately*. Deliberation intensifies enormously the malice of sin and offends God much more than faults of weakness, or sins committed when we are off our guard.

Lastly, we must use our best endeavours to break off bad habits. Habits, like deliberation, add seriously to the malice of sin.

A *deliberate* falsehood is very much worse than a hasty lie of excuse and a lie resulting from the *inveterate habit* of lying is very much worse than a casual lie.

A lady once told us how she had, when younger, the habit of constantly speaking ill of her neighbours.

Having heard a sermon on the subject she took a strong resolution never to do so again, and kept it.

That simple, strong resolution changed the whole trend of her life and saved her from thousands of sins and most surely from a long and painful Purgatory.

Who cannot make a like resolution and keep it?

If a Christian avoids, as he easily can, these three classes of sin, viz, mortal sins, deliberate and grave venial sins, and habits of sin, it will be relatively easy for him to atone for faults of frailty as we shall presently see.

Resolution.

We would be well advised to pronounce with special emphasis and fervour every time we say the Our Father the words:

«Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us».

These are the very words of God Himself and repeated frequently and fervently will certainly obtain for us pardon of our sins.

The second means of satisfying for our sins in this life is by doing penance. «Do penance or you shall all likewise perish». Do penance, or you will burn long years in Purgatory is a fact that there is no getting away from.

This is a terrifying thought and one that makes the bravest man shudder. Which of us does not tremble when we think of those who have been burnt to death in a slow fire? What fear would not be ours if we had to face a similar death? Yet their suffering was relatively of short duration. The incomparably fiercer fire of Purgatory, which we may have to face, may last 20, or 50, or 100 *years!*

Many people have such a horror of penance that they never even dream of practising it. It is like the fear that children have of ghosts, a very great but a very unfounded fear.

Their idea is that penance is something *awful!* They think, perhaps, of the severe penances of the great saints and, of course, are afraid to attempt any thing of a like kind.

God does not ask us, as a rule, to do what is heroic. When He does He gives us all the strength necessary, as in the case of the saints. He asks each one to do a little. If we are afraid, and it is only natural that some should be, of doing much, let us do a little. No one but a coward is afraid to do a little especially if he gets much in exchange.

The easy road to Heaven of Little Saint Teresa is to do many little things.

God was infinitely pleased with the widow's mite, He will be equally pleased with our little penances.

As a result of *little* mortifications we can deliver ourselves from the *awful* fires of Purgatory and amass rich merits for Heaven.

To go further into the matter, there is not much difficulty about mortification or penance, notwithstanding the absurd fear that people have of it.

Penance is not only easy, it is useful and necessary and it will bring us very great happiness. Not to do penance is the greatest penance of all.

As a matter of fact every man of the world naturally, spontaneously mortifies himself.

The first principle, for instance, of politeness and good breeding is to sacrifice our whims and tastes for the sake of others. The selfish man is a bore, the generous man is the idol of all.

Again the only way of securing good health is to eschew the most appetising viands when they do us harm and to make use of plain foods, when they do us good. Over eating is the cause of the vast majority of sickness and premature deaths.

To take another example. The secret of success is strenuous, methodical, regular work.

Now generosity, self denial, method, regularity are other forms of very genuine but practical mortification. Yet no man can get on without them. To insist on our own likes and dislikes, to do only as we please is to lead a life bristling with difficulties, in which every duty is a burden, every good act an effort and a labour.

Boy scouts and girl guides are bound to do a kind act every day, even though it costs them a big effort. Christians should surely do more. Daily acts of self restraint, of patience with others, of kindness to others, the exact fulfilment of duty are splendid penances and a great aid to happiness.

Resolution.

If we are afraid to do much let us do many little things.

The Third means by which we can avoid Purgatory is very easy. It consists in making a virtue of necessity, by bearing patiently what we cannot avoid, *all the more as suffering, born patiently, becomes easy and light*. Suffering if accepted with calmness and for God's sake loses all its sting. If received badly, in the spirit of revolt and with repugnance it is intensified a hundredfold, and becomes almost intolerable.

Every one in this Vale of tears has to face sorrows innumerable and infinite in variety. Crosses light and crosses heavy are the lot of us all. Strange as it may seem these sorrows, which most of us would gladly dispense with, are in truth God's greatest graces. They are the little share He offers us of His Passion and which He asks us to bear for love of Him and as penance for our sins.

Borne in this spirit they will lessen considerably our time in Purgatory and very possibly **completely remove** it with this difference that Purgatory — even a Purgatory of 50 or 100 years — will in no wise increase our merits in Heaven whereas every pain, and sorrow and disappointment in this life will lessen our suffering in Purgatory and **also** bring us more happiness and glory in Heaven.

How sad it is that so many Christians for want of thought make their sufferings a thousand times worse than they are and lose all the immense merits that they could so easily gain.

Resolution.

Let us suffer with calmness and serenity for the love of God. We shall thus save ourselves from Purgatory.

The Fourth means by which we can lessen our time in Purgatory, or avoid it altogether, is by frequent Confession, Communion and daily assistance at Mass.

Confession applies to our souls the Precious Blood of Christ, wipes out our sins, gives us light to see their malice, fills us with horror of sin and, above all, it gives us strength to avoid it.

In Holy Communion we receive the God of infinite mercy and love, the God of all sanctity, who comes expressly to pardon our sins and help us to sin no more.

He visited the house of Zaccheus once, and in that *one* visit Zaccheus obtained complete pardon of all his sins.

How is it possible, that the same God of goodness and sweetness can come, not into our houses, but into our very hearts in Holy Communion and not give us the same and even greater graces. He visited Zaccheus once, He visits us every day if we allow Him.

Many alas never feel, never grasp the immense joys and consolations of Holy Communion.

The Mass is identical with the Sacrifice of Calvary, in its essence, in its value, in the graces it bestows. The Sacrifice of Calvary saved all the world, millions and millions of souls, and was sufficient to save countless other sinful worlds had they existed. By assisting at Mass we can apply all these oceans of graces to *our own souls*, and that not once but every day.

Resolution.

Let us go to Mass and Holy Communion every day. We can do **nothing** better. One day with Mass and Communion is worth a 100 days without them.

The Fifth way of avoiding Purgatory.

Some wise Catholics have a really great, if simple, secret which is well worth learning and using for our own benefit.

God promises us in the most solemn and deliberate way, (and He cannot fail to do what he promises,) that He will give us everything we ask in prayer, if it is good for us.

Now two conditions, especially, make prayer infallible, namely perseverance and faith. God cannot refuse such a prayer.

These Catholics, we speak of, pray **expressly every day of their lives** that God will free them from Purgatory. In every single prayer they say, in every Mass they hear, in every good act they perform they have the **express** intention of asking God first of all and with all their hearts to deliver them from Purgatory.

How? That is for God to decide.

It is not easy to see how God can possibly refuse such constant, unceasing prayer? The fact that they are said daily and many times in the day for 20, 30, 50 years shows that they are said with undoubting faith and magnificent perseverance.

We exhort all our readers to adopt this practise. The more they know and think on Purgatory the more fervently will they make this prayer.

Resolution.

Every time we say the Hail Mary let us say with all the fervour of our hearts the words: «Pray for us sinners now and *at the hour of our death*. Amen.

Some great Saints give us a sixth method of avoiding Purgatory. They say that when a sick person becomes aware that he is dying and offers to God his death with perfect resignation it is very likely that he will go *straight* to Heaven.

Death is the awful punishment of sin and when we accept it, as of course we ought to do, with submission and resignation our act pleases God so much that it may satisfy perfectly for all sins.

The idea of Pope Pius X was the same when he granted a plenary indulgence at the hour of death to those who say at least after one Holy Communion the following prayer:

«Eternal Father from this day forward I accept with a joyful and resigned heart the death it will please you to send me with all its pains and sufferings».

It will be better still to say this prayer after *every* Holy Communion we receive.

It is for our best interest to accept God's will in everything that happens to us in life and in death.

Nothing can be easier when we remember that God always wishes what is best for us. If we do what God does not will we shall **surely** suffer.

Resolution.

Let us say with special fervour each time we repeat the Our Father the words: *Thy will be done*. In all our troubles, small and great, let us do likewise. Thus everything is a merit.

By this simple act we change sorrow into joy, the worries of life into gold for Heaven.

The Seventh means of avoiding Purgatory.

God Himself has given us a Sacrament the end of which is to take us directly to Heaven. This Sacrament is Extreme Unction, which according to St. Thomas and St. Albert was instituted especially to obtain for us the grace of a holy and happy death and to prepare us for *immediate* entrance into Heaven.

Many Catholics do not understand this most consoling doctrine and, because they do not understand it, they prepare themselves insufficiently for the reception of Extreme Unction and so lose many of its great graces.

Every Sacrament properly received produces its effect. Baptism cleanses us from Original sin and any other actual sins that may have been committed by adults before receiving the Sacrament.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders gives a priest all his tremendous powers. Matrimony makes man and woman husband and wife. In the same way Extreme Unction, if devoutly received, prepares the dying Christian for immediate entrance into Heaven, thus delivering him from Purgatory.

How foolish, it is, therefore, to put off receiving this Sacrament until very late when the dying person is too exhausted to receive it with full knowledge of what he is doing and with due fervour and devotion. The moment of death is the *supreme* moment in our lives. It is the moment which decides our fate for all Eternity.

Resolution.

Let us use *every* means in our power to secure a happy and holy death, *especially* by receiving most devoutly and, as soon as possible, Extreme Unction.

Indulgences and Purgatory.

God in His infinite mercy and compassion offers us a most wonderful and easy means for lessening or cancelling our Purgatory.

Fully aware of our weakness and knowing, too, how fearful many are of penance, He opens wide the treasury of His Goodness and offers us most abundant Indulgences in exchange for some small act of devotion.

For one recitation of short ejaculatory prayers, He grants 100 or 300 or more days of Indulgence. These we may say hundreds of times in the day.

Those who say the little ejaculation: «Sacred Heart of Jesus I place my trust in Thee» one hundred times a day gain 30.000 days Indulgence. Those who say it 1.000 times, as many do, gain 300.000 days Indulgence, each day.

Nothing can be easier than to acquire the habit of saying this little prayer all day long, countless times each day.

Then for **each Hail Mary** of the Rosary one gains more than 2.000 days Indulgence!

Besides an immense number of partial Indulgences there are very many **plenary** indulgences which may be gained during life and at the hour of death.

These are **specially** given by the Church to enable us to avoid Purgatory.

These Indulgences can be applied to our own souls and we thus directly make satisfaction for our sins. Or, we may apply them to the souls in Purgatory who will see to it that we do not lose by our generosity.

Resolution.

Let us strive to gain all possible Indulgences.

The Third Orders.

Among the extraordinary graces which Catholics gain by becoming members of a Third Order are a share in many Masses and prayers.

To mention, for instance, the Third Order of Saint Dominic of which Benedict XV, himself a Tertiary, says: «One of the *easiest* and most effectual ways of reaching a high degree of sanctity is by becoming a Dominican Tertiary».

The members of this order receive during life a share *every day* in thousands of Masses and prayers, and after death, when alas! so many are neglected by their relatives, those who are members of this Third Order have a share daily in other thousands of Masses and prayers, this for as long as they remain in Purgatory.

Among the many beautiful characteristics of the Order of St. Dominic is its intense devotion and love for the Holy Souls, especially for the souls of its members, friends and benefactors. So true is this that a young Italian nobleman who consulted the Pope as to which Religious Order he would do well to enter received for answer: «My dear son, you may with much profit join any of the Orders for in each you will find abundant means of becoming a Saint. After death, however, be a Dominican». The Holy Father meant to imply that the suffrages given after death to their deceased members are, indeed, most abundant in the Dominican Order.

The conditions of becoming a member of this order are so easy and the advantages so many that half the world would become Dominican Tertiaries did they know these advantages.

Write to any Dominican Father for information.

Those who earnestly help the Holy Souls may well hope to avoid Purgatory.

The Holy Souls whom we relieve or release by our Masses and good works pray for us with such indescribable fervour that God cannot refuse to hear their prayers. One of the principal graces they ask for their friends is that these shall have little or no Purgatory. No one knows better than they the awful intensity of the Purgatorial flames, no one, therefore, can pray for us as they do.

Let us remember that:

a) God thanks as done to Himself what we do to others. When we relieve or release any of the Holy Souls, we relieve or release, as it were, God Himself. How ready, therefore, will He not be to hear the prayers offered by these souls for us.

b) Our Blessed Lord lays down clearly the great law: «By that measure by which you measure it will be measured to you again». In proportion, consequently to our generosity towards the Holy Souls will be God's mercy and generosity towards us. Those who work heart and soul for the relief of the Holy Souls may thus well hope that their Purgatory will be entirely remitted, or, notably lessened. On the other hand those who neglect the Holy Souls may justly fear a severe judgment and a long Purgatory.

Resolution.

Let everyone without fail join the Association of the Holy Souls. All the members of the family should do so. The conditions are very easy. If the Association is not established in your Parish write to 134 Rua Eugénio dos Santos, Lisbon, Portugal, one of the centres of the devotion.

St. James, the Apostle gives another very effectual method of avoiding or lessening our stay in Purgatory. He says: «He who saves a soul saves his own and satisfies for a multitude of sins».

If some one were fortunate enough to save the life of a King's only son, the heir to his throne, from a horrible death what reward might he not expect to receive from the grateful monarch? No King, however, could be as grateful to and anxious to reward the person who saved his son as God is grateful and ready to reward the person who saves one soul from Hell.

All of us may, in a thousand different ways, save not one but many souls from Hell. For instance:

1.st We can do so by praying earnestly for them. How often does not a mother save her son's soul by her fervent prayers. We can save souls by giving good advice and also by our good example. How many boys owe their sterling qualities to the wise counsels of a good Father or friend!

2.nd The most efficacious method of saving souls is by **propaganda** viz: **Catholic Action**.

The incredible ignorance, apathy and indifference of Catholics is **the** evil of the day.

It is the bounden duty of Catholics to spread about thousands and thousands of pamphlets of all kinds, full of life, vigour and burning interest, crisp, incisive, clear and strong. **Otherwise these are useless.**

Each pamphlet or leaflet must carry a message straight to the heart of the reader, rousing him, convincing him, galvanising him into action.

To avoid Purgatory do as follows?

I. In every prayer you say, every Mass you hear, every Communion you receive, every good work you perform have the *express* intention of imploring God to grant you a holy and happy death and no Purgatory. Surely God will hear a prayer said with such confidence and perseverance.

II. Always wish to do God's will. It is in every sense the best for you. When you do or seek anything that is not God's will you are sure to suffer.

Say, therefore, fervently each time you recite the Our Father: **Thy will be done.**

III. Accept all the sufferings, sorrows, pains and disappointments of life, be they great or small, ill health, loss of goods, the death of your dear ones, heat or cold, rain or sunshine as coming from God. Bear them calmly and patiently for love of Him and in penance for your sins. Of course one may use all his efforts to ward off trouble and pain, but when one cannot avoid it let him bear it manfully.

Impatience and revolt make sufferings vastly greater and more difficult to bear.

IV. Christ's life and actions are so many lessons for us to imitate.

The greatest act in His life was His Passion. As He had a Passion so each one of us has a Passion. Our Passion consists in the sufferings and labours of every day. The penance God imposed on man for sin was to gain his bread with the sweat of his brow. Therefore let us do our work, accept its disappointments and hardships and bear our pains in union with the Passion of Christ. We gain more merit by a little pain than by years of pleasure.