

THE ELK ADVOCATE,
A LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWSPAPER,
Published Every Thursday
BY JOHN F. MOORE
Per Year in advance, \$1.50
All subscriptions to be paid in advance. Orders for Job Work respectfully solicited.
Office on Main Street, in the second story of Houk & Gillis Store.

The Elk Advocate.

JOHN G. HALL, Editor.
VOLUME 6—NUMBER 35

RIDGEWAY, PENNA., OCT. 25th, 1866.

J. F. MOORE, Publisher.
TERMS—1.50 Per Year in Advance.

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Correspondence for the Advocate.
Letters to Evangelist.

NUMBER ONE.
SIR:—In the last issue of the *Advocate* appeared an article, signed by you, relating to the prayer of the Irishman lost in the woods, and which was mentioned in the History of Elk County. It should always be a pleasant task to give information, when in one's power, to those asking it, but the task becomes doubly so when the request is couched in language so gentlemanly as yours, and so different from that generally assumed when the same subject is mentioned. Add to this your sincerity and earnestness, which is so evident in every line of your short article, and to supply the information desired becomes not only a pleasure but a duty.

Before proceeding to consider whether the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in Heaven can hear the requests which we make to them, it may be well to mention the manner in which they are regarded by the Catholic Church, which is the only church which pays to them peculiar and especial honor, and which admits their powers of intercession. You are perfectly correct when you say, "I suppose that those who pray to the Virgin Mary and other saints, would say that they only intend by this to ask them to intercede for us just as we ask Christian friends on earth to pray for us." You have exactly stated the position held by Catholics upon the subject of the intercession of saints. But the doctrine of the Catholic Church on this point is almost universally misrepresented by those who dissent from her, but it is so clear and explicit that nothing short of the grossest ignorance or prejudice can excuse those who make use of the common arguments against the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints. The Catholic Church gives to Mary the most exalted place next to God Himself, and pays to her great honor and devotion, and only follows in this the example set by her Divine Son, who always honored her as His mother, and paid to her the greatest respect and obedience. Surely we cannot fail to follow the example which He has given us, and we certainly cannot fail to please Him when we honor her whom He so honored and loved. But the Church does not consider Mary the equal of Almighty God; she does not believe, nor does she teach that she has the power of forgiving sins, and she would severely rebuke any of her children who would pray in that manner to her and thus insult Almighty God, who alone has the power of forgiveness. But the Church both believes and teaches that Mary, on account of her position as Mother of God, does possess great powers of intercession with her Divine Son, and that He will refuse her nothing which she asks of Him. Again, the difference between the adoration which the Church pays to Almighty God and the honor which she offers to Mary, can be seen in all her prayers and devotions: in the Lord's prayer we say to God "forgive us our trespasses," but no prayer can be found in which Mary is asked for pardon and forgiveness. On the contrary, in the Angelical salutation or "Hail Mary," the Church says, "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death," thus asking Mary to pray to God for us that He may forgive us our transgressions. It can also be seen in the following teachings of the Church, "Is it lawful to honor the Virgin Mary?" "Yes; whereas God Himself so much honored her, and the Scripture says, *All nations shall call her blessed.* (Luke, 1 ch. 4 v.) "What honor do we give our Blessed Lady?" "We honor her more than all the other saints, because she is the Mother of God—but we never give her divine or supreme honor which is due to God alone."

The following example shows how nicely the early writers of the church drew the distinction which Catholics now do. St. Epiphanius thus writes of the Blessed Virgin, reproving the errors of the Collyridian heretics, who adored her and offered sacrifice to her: "Thou therefore, she was a chosen Vessel, and adorned with eminent sanctity, still she

was a woman, partaking of our common nature but deserving of the highest honor shown to the saints of God. She stands before them all, on account of the heavenly mystery accomplished in her. But we adore no saint; and as this worship is not given to angels, much less can it be allowed to the daughter of Ann. Let Mary then be honored, but the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost alone be adored; let no one adore Mary." The foregoing is merely intended as a brief exposition of the manner in which the church regards the position of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She neither adores her nor asks her for forgiveness, but Mary being the Mother of God, she believes that she can neither too much honor or praise her. She believes that our Lord Jesus Christ, when dying upon the cross, gave her to us, through the person of St. John, as our Mother, and that she will be our most powerful intercessor at the throne of Grace. In the Gospel according to St. John we read: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."

When Jesus, therefore, saw His mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His mother: woman, behold thy son.

After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. In thus receiving from God Himself His mother to be a mother to us, what is more natural than that we should regard her with the most tender affection; what more beautiful than that, in all our difficulties, we should fly to her in spirit and ask her assistance, her prayers and her intercession. If it should be asked, why not appeal to God Himself without employing any mediator, I would say that God although a God of mercy, is also a God of justice, and that His Divine justice would often demand the punishment of the sinner rather than his forgiveness; but Mary is peculiarly the Queen of Mercy, as she is called by the church; and her does not belong the attribute of justice, but of compassion and of sympathy; her loving heart overflows with pity for the poor sinner for whose redemption the blood of her Divine Son was shed, and rather than that divine sacrifice should be in vain, she begs of her Son his pardon and forgiveness. How beautiful is the idea of the sinner, laden down with crimes and transgressions, trembling with dread before the majesty and the justice of God, and not daring to appear before Him, or to address Him, lest the thunderbolts of His just wrath should be hurled upon him, casting himself at the feet of Mary and begging her to intercede for him, begging her, pure and undefiled, to ask her Son to suspend His justice and allow her to exercise her attribute of mercy. When the sinner has recourse to Mary, she only requires him to have the intention to reform. She does not regard the sins with which he is laden, when he implores his mercy, but only the intention with which he comes. Though he have committed all the sins in the world, she embraces him and intercedes for him, for she is not only called by us the Mother of Mercy, but she is such, and shows herself such by the love and tenderness with which she snuggles us. What has been said of the manner in which the church regards the position of Mary, will also apply to the other saints in heaven. We honor Mary more than we honor them, that is we pay to her a higher honor, because she is the Mother of God; we honor them because, in this life, they were His faithful servants, because they fulfilled His laws and obeyed His commandments, and are, in consequence, now enjoying with Him, the glory of His kingdom. They are now reaping the reward which He has promised to all who faithfully serve Him, and as they honored Him in life, so He now honors them in eternity. As we ask Mary, so we only ask them, for their intercession and prayers. And, in this connection, if I may be allowed to digress for a moment, I would speak of the erroneous ideas entertained by those who differ from us, regarding our use of crucifixes, images, pictures &c. It is said that we adore them and that

we believe they have power to help us. Nothing is more unjust, nothing further from the truth. How could we believe that inanimate wood or stone, carved or fashioned into figures or forms, could have power to help us? The assertion is too preposterous to repeat, were it not that it is so frequently made. We have crucifixes in our houses to remind us of the goodness of God; we have pictures of the saints as examples, constantly before us, to imitate and to follow. They are books in which the most unlettered can read; they are books whose pages teem with lessons the most suggestive. Where is the man whose heart does not overflow with affection when looking upon the picture of a deceased mother or wife; where the woman who is not filled with the tenderest recollections when, with tearful eyes, she views the inanimate likeness of the father of her children, once her devoted protector and husband, now, a lifeless form, returned to his mother Earth? And who, when looking upon the symbol of his redemption, seeing the dying agonies of the Divine face of Him who was forsaken by all even by His heavenly Father, and almost hearing those agonized accents: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" can fail to feel renewed and tenfold love for Him who died to save him. This, then, is why we have images and pictures, not that they inanimate objects, may help us, but that they may inspire us, by the silent lessons they teach, to imitate those whom they represent. Let us now proceed to consider the main part of our subject. You say: "But before I ask departed saints to pray for me, I wish to know whether they can have my request. If they cannot it would be absurd to ask them." You admit that the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints would intercede willingly for us were they aware that we wished them to do so, or in other words: "if they could hear our request." If the saints cannot hear the requests of the faithful upon earth, it is most undoubtedly a work of absurdity to ask their assistance and prayers. That they do hear us, I think can be established without difficulty both from the Bible and from other sources; and that they not only hear us, but grant us their intercession and good offices is equally susceptible of proof.

As God is the essence and the primal source of all knowledge and of all truth, as the Blessed in heaven see and understand Him most intimately, and as the happiness of heaven consists in loving and knowing God, therefore the blessed see in Him the knowledge which He possesses of us and thus understand our wants and our desires. Thus in the first gospel of St. John, 3 chap. 2 verse, we read: "Dear Beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as he is." "But it hath not yet appeared, what we shall be," that is, to what glory or happiness we shall thereby be exalted hereafter, "for neither the eye hath seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 9 chap. 2 verse.) We only know this, that His elect shall be like to Him; because they shall see Him as He is, when they shall enjoy Him in heaven, and being like to Him who knows all things, they shall be cognizant of all things concerning us. It is promised that the saints of God shall be like to Him, and shall see Him and understand Him as He is. Then when the faithful upon earth pray to God for favors for mercy or for pardon, the saints knowing and seeing Him as He is will read in His countenance the prayer which is being made and will add their intercession to it; or, in the same manner, when a prayer is made to a Saint directly, that Saint will read the prayer in the countenance of God, by virtue of the gift which God has given him of seeing and knowing Him as He is, and will immediately add his prayers to it. We must remember, when speaking of the saints hearing us, that they do not hear with mortal ears, see with mortal eyes or speak with mortal tongues, but that

they hear our petitions through Almighty God who is cognizant of all things.

In the book of Tobias—which, what ever you think of its canonicity, was never rejected by Christ who frequently referred the Jews to the scriptures—12 chap. 11 and 12 verses, we read these words of the Archangel Raphael:

"I discover then the truth unto you, and I will not hide the secret from you. When thou didst pray with tears, and didst not bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and didst hide the dead by day in the house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." Here is direct proof of angelic intercession. God undoubtedly heard the prayers of Tobias, and yet the Archangel tells him, that he offered them to the Lord. If there be no need of mediators between the Creator and the creature, why did Raphael interpose his intercession? And if you object that this was the mediation of an Angel and not of a saint, I must tell you that we are elsewhere taught that "the saints of God shall be like His angels." (Mat. 22 chap. 30 verse.) But is there anything in the New Testament which would lead us to believe that our Savior rejected this doctrine? On the contrary He speaks of it as a thing well understood, and on terms far removed from reproach: "Even so," says He, "there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just that need not penance." (Luke 15 chap. 7 and 10 verses.) What is here meant but that the repentance of the sinner is known in heaven to the saints and angels and that they rejoice over it. Christ also tells us: "Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." Here we have not only an instance of angelic protection, but a direct implication, from our Lord Himself, that the angels will resent any injury (spiritual) done to those under their charge. It is also a proof that the Blessed in heaven do know what passes on this earth and that they know it in the supernatural manner before mentioned, for He does not say that their angels in heaven know these things, but that "their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven," that is, they read in the countenance of God what concerns us in this life.

Again in Luke, 16 chap. 9 verse, we read: "And I say to you: Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings." Here is a direct command to make friends of the poor servants of God, because if we relieve them in this life, by our alms, they may hereafter, by their intercession, bring our souls to heaven. And what a beautiful thought is this! What a consolation to the rich man, when the termination of his mortal existence is approaching, to think that he will have as many intercessors before the throne of God, as he has relieved in this life. The rich give to the poor temporal treasures, the latter recompense them by obtaining for them infinite and eternal happiness.

Again in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, same chapter, 22 verse we read: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died; and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torment, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom; and he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his fingers in water, to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time, and like-wise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. In the parable two points are developed, both *apropos* to our subject. We find the rich man, when in torment, *begging the aid of Abraham*, and we find farther that his cries are heard by Abraham, who refuses his request, and gives him the reasons for his refusal.

Turning now to the Apocalypse, 5 chap. 8 verse, we read: "And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints." These harps are the symbols of the praise which good men render to God; and the vials full of odors represent the prayers of the saints. In conformity with this idea, St. John wishes to represent these four and twenty ancients as so many senators who present to the Almighty the prayers and homages of good men on earth. And if you say that "these prayers of the saints" are not those of faithful on earth, and are not offered up for them, I would ask you for whom are they offered up? The saints do not pray for themselves or for each other, for having attained a state of perfect happiness they have nothing more to desire for themselves, consequently the prayers must be for others, and those others must be the faithful in this world.

In Apocalypse, 2 chap. 26 verse, we read: "And he that shall overcome, and keep my works unto the end, to him I will give power over the nations." This shows that the saints, who are with Christ our Lord in heaven, receive power from him to preside over nations and provinces as patrons. Webster defines a patron to be "a protector, a defender, one that specially countenances and supports, or lends aid to advance." If the saints, then, are appointed our protectors and defenders, they must be able to hear our petitions and relieve our wants, by reason of their interest with God, otherwise then appointed as our patrons would be fruitless, but to suppose this is an insult to Almighty God, who never does anything which is unnecessary or a fixed object.

In 1 Corinthians, 13 chap. 12 verse, St. Paul foreshadows the knowledge which the saints possess of terrestrial things: "We see now through a glass in an obscure manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known," that is: Hereafter I shall know others even as I am known by the saints in heaven. The Biblical proof sustaining the invocation of the saints and their intercession for us might be carried much further, and I might multiply texts in proof of what I have asserted. If I have succeeded in convincing you that the Blessed in heaven can hear our petitions, as far as Bible proof is concerned, I shall feel that my time is well spent; but if you still remain unsatisfied, I must only say to you as you often say to us "search the Scriptures," and I assure you you will find proof enough. Next week I hope to be able to continue this subject from another standpoint.

It has been decided to locate a National Military Asylum at Milwaukee. The buildings will be capable of accommodating from 10,000 to 15,000 inmates, and will cost nearly \$1,000,000.

Sixty-two passenger trains now arrive at and depart from Chicago every day, except Sunday. The number of daily freight trains is even larger.

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A lady in San Francisco has been fined and imprisoned for wearing the bloom or costume.

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An Indiana paper tells of the recent killing of a rattlesnake with 110 rattles.

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The corn crop this year will reach one million of bushels.

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What is that which is always invisible and never out of sight? The letter I.

What is the only rain that we make light of? Window-pane.

What workman never turns to the left? A wheel right.

What sort of a throat is best for a singer to reach the high notes? A scart-throat.

Why are balloons in the air like vagrants? Because they have no visible means of support.

WHISKERS AND KISSING.—The editor of the *Lancaster Literary Gazette* says she "would as soon kiss her nose in a rat's nest at Springleton as a man with whiskers to kiss her." We don't believe a word of it. The objections which some ladies pretend to have to whiskers all arise from envy. They don't have any. They would if they could; but the fact is, the continual motion of the lower jaw is fatal to their growth. The ladies—God bless them!—adopt our fashions as far as they can. Look at the deprivations they have committed on our wardrobes the last few years. They have appropriated our short bosoms, gold studs and all. They have unrolled their soft bewitching cheeks in our standing collars and cravats, driving us to fannies and turn-downs. Their innocent little hearts have been palpitating in the inside of our waistcoats, instead of the thumping against the outside, as naturally indeed. They thrust their pretty little feet and ankles through our momentous unthinkabots, and they are skipping a long the streets in our high-heeled boots. Do you hear? We say boots.

NEW USE FOR BELLS.—The woman of Poland have a wonderful way over their daughters, and make them wear little bells on their persons to denote where they are and what they are about.

A divine preached on Sunday morning from the text: "Ye are children of the devil," and in the afternoon by a funny coincidence, "Children obey your parents."

An expert printer will set about 25,000 letters daily, his hand traveling more than nine miles, and in the working days of a year about 2,000.

London contains ninety thousand miles of gas pipe.