

testant prayers, and for some time there was a difficulty with the Lady Superintendent and myself on that point. I spoke to a clergyman (an Oratorian), who wrote me a letter to show the Lady Superintendent, in which he states the duty of Catholics and explains the reason why a Catholic should not join in prayers that are not Catholic. It is a long letter, and if you would be kind enough to publish it, I and other Catholic readers of the *Record* would be most grateful to you.

I went to London purposely some time ago to speak to Miss Wood on the subject, so that if a Holiday Home is established for Nurses, Catholics might be exempt from attending prayers. I did not see Miss Wood, but I saw a lady (Miss Hope), who seemed to think there would be no difficulty in the matter.

Some years ago I went to the Sanatorium at Weston-super-Mare, where the Lady Superintendent not only waived the difficulty, but took the trouble to find out the times of the services at the Catholic church, and on the Sunday directed me the way I was to go.

I have looked back to the three weeks I spent there, at a payment of ten shillings per week, as a most happy holiday. While I was there, a lady, the mother of a Dissenting Minister, was taken worse, and as there was only one Nurse at the establishment, I was pleased to be useful in the afternoon while the Nurse rested. The lady died just before I left the Sanatorium.

On leaving I was presented with a nice letter from the Committee, speaking of the little I had done, and offering me re-admittance when I felt to require it. The same year a fellow-Nurse and an old school-fellow of my own had a severe attack of typhoid fever. When convalescent she was sent to a sanatorium near Bromsgrove. She was very weak and tired upon her arrival there. Being a Catholic she mentioned her objection about prayers, when she was haughtily informed she must conform to the rules or return by the next train. She could not do that, but after a few days or a week she left when equal to the fatigue of the journey.—I remain, Sir, yours truly, M. B. N. A.

“I should be sorry if a difficulty should arise about your going to family prayers. If this is decided to be an indispensable rule, of course it will be an indication to you that it is not God's will that you should have the advantage you had set your heart upon, of the training in that Institution. You know very well that to any good and consistent Catholic such a rule must be an absolute bar; and I am sure you would not have even a temptation to wish to overleap it. If there are any Catholics who disregard it, they are simply bad and hollow Catholics, who either have no hold of their faith, or are sinning against their conscience.

“It surprises me that the lady, who seems to me to have some knowledge of Catholics and of Catholic matters, should not be able to understand the principle on which we act in this prohibition. St. Paul says, ‘Mark them which cause division (schisms) among you and avoid them;’ and our Lord Himself has said before him, ‘If any man hear not the Church, let him be as a heathen or publican,’ and every Catholic believes (he could not be a Catholic at all if he doubted) that there is ‘One holy Catholic Church,’ and one only, of which our Lord spoke when He said,

‘On this rock (Peter) I will build My Church.’ Not many Churches, but one Church, My Church, and by our Lord's word as well as His Apostle's we are bound to separate ourselves from all who cause schisms, or do not hear and obey that one Church. In worldly matters and the kind and social office of man to man, we are not required to avoid them, and St. Paul himself expressly guards against this as a thing impracticable, even in the case of the heathen; but in prayers and in the worship of God and all sacred things we are to have no communion with those who are out of the Church. We may, we are bound to, pray for them, to help them in their necessities, to live at peace with them, and to win them to the truth if God give us that grace, at least by letting our light shine before them in good example. Neither do we judge them, nor need we be without a good hope of their final salvation individually. ‘Them that are without’ (out of the Church), St. Paul says again, ‘God judges’; it is not for us, it is not for the Church, even for an apostle, to judge them. We may hope of this or that Non-Catholic that is in invincible ignorance of the full Catholic truth and duty, that he is living up to the light God has given him, and that God will make up to him the want of the Sacrament of Christ, or whatever may be deficient in him, in His own Divine but uncovenanted way. But to join with them in sacred things, or in any act of Divine worship, would be to make light of schism, to disown the unity of the Church of Christ, to allow the banefulness of saying: ‘I am of Paul, I of Cephas and I of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? says the Apostle. ‘No!’ When He suffered He fulfilled the prophecy and type in that ‘a bone of Him was not broken,’ and they cast lots upon His vesture, because it was not to be rent. And this which He set forth in His own person, He laid down as the condition of existence, and has fulfilled in His Church and by His own promise, He will fulfil it to the end. ‘There is one Body, and one Spirit, as ye are called, and one hope of your calling, one faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all.’

“Could a Church of England person (a believer I suppose in our Lord's Divinity) join in prayer with a Unitarian, or a Jew, or a Mahometan? They might easily have a form of prayers, in which no one could find fault, the acknowledgment and worship of the one Holy and True God, the Creator whom all alike acknowledge; yet would not this lady, or any consistent Church of England person, see that it would be inconsistent in them to join in prayer at all with such unbelievers? In like manner the Catholic Church allows not her children to join in prayers (however good in themselves) with those who do not receive the full Catholic truth, or who are in a state of schism (whether by their own fault or not), and in doing so they would be sinning not only against the sovereignty of God's truth, but against charity to the souls of others, to whom we are bound to bear our witness that there is only one ark of salvation in which God has promised a refuge from the flood. It would be absurd for Baptists or Methodists to make such an objection, because they do not in any way recognise the visible unity of the Church. I have written at great length, but as it has come before you in a practical matter, I thought it well you should have clearly before you the grounds on which the duty of Catholics rests.”

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)