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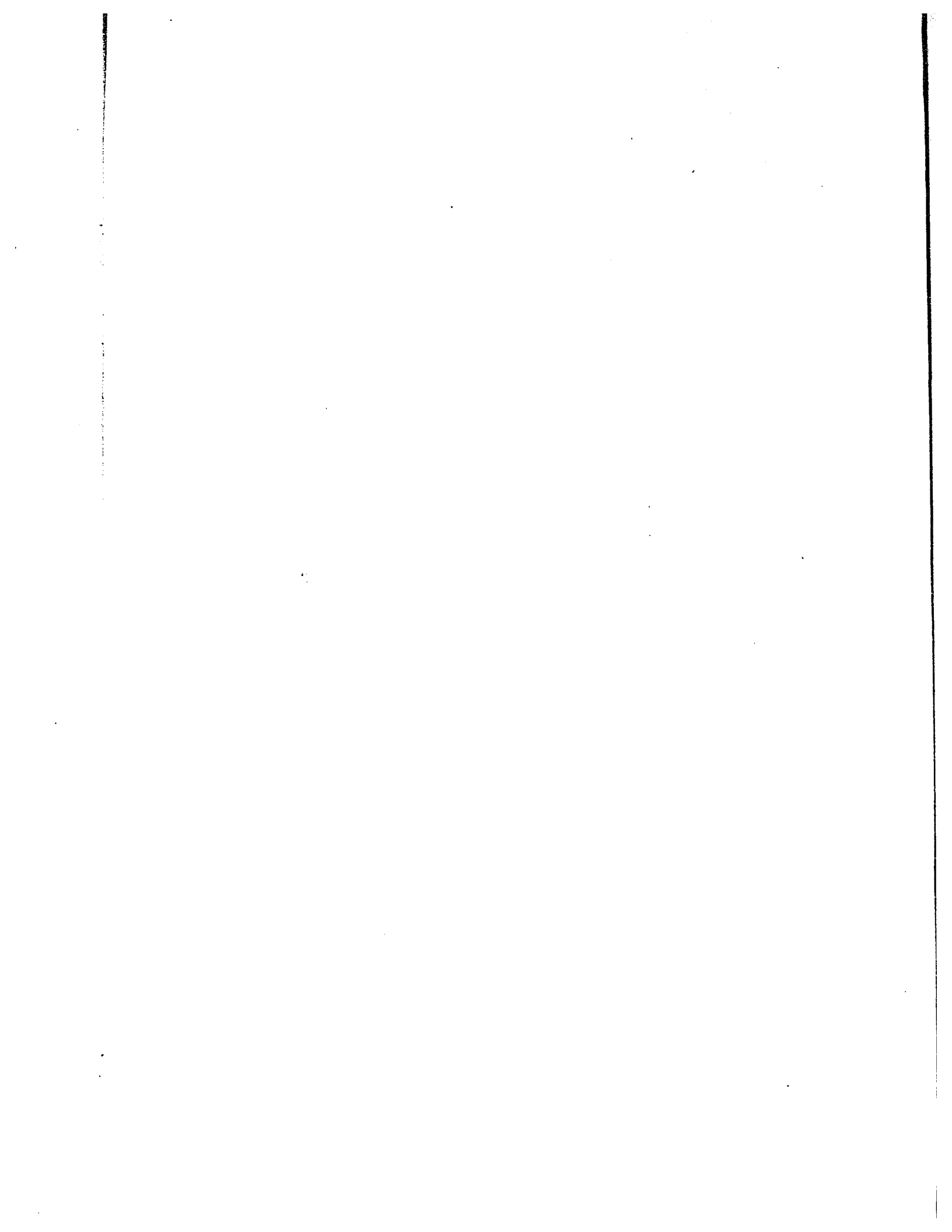
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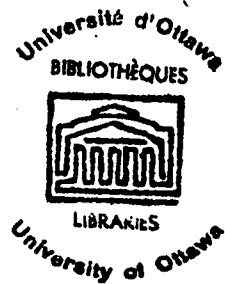
THE

APOSTLES' CREED

IN

SHAKESPEARE

- 1927 -



F. H. BRADLEY

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THE APOSTLES' CREED IN SHAKESPEARE

Cardinal Newman tells us that literature consists in "the enunciations and teachings of those who have a right to speak as representatives of their kind, and in whose words their brethren find an interpretation of their own sentiments, a record of their own experience, and a suggestion of their own judgments". This definition has been repeated in various forms by different authors who have endeavoured more or less successfully to give us an adequate definition of literature which they have called "the expression of life in words of truth and beauty---the written record of man's spirit---the history of the human soul, etc." In fact the fathers of the Renaissance were very happy in their choice of the word Humanities, because great writers have always been representative of their times and have portrayed the ideals and aspirations of their people "in words of truth and beauty".

They have gone beyond the intellectual man and shown us the religious man. They have read and understood what the finger of God has written on the scroll of nature, and they have transmitted to us the results of their reading. Man is a religious animal, as the philosophers say, and all writers, pagan and Christian, have made this clear in their works. They have given us a faithful picture of the spiritual as well as the material life of their people. Hence, O'Hagan's definition of literature---"the expression in letters of the spiritual co-operating with the intellectual man, the former being the dominating co-efficient" ---expresses exactly what the great masters have striven to give us.

Spiritual life in the Christian, being elevated, ennobled and perfected by the supernatural gift of faith, those authors who have a real claim to greatness have been especially careful to stress this element in their writings.

True to this principle, Shakespeare has given us a faithful picture of England during his time. There is scarcely a custom or movement, social, political or religious that is not mentioned in his plays. Above all, he emphasizes the religious life of the century. Not only does he give us the Christian beliefs of the people, but he goes so far as to show us all the myths and superstitions that were prevalent in sixteenth century England. This he does, because all of these things enter into the life of a people.

When he shows us the Christianity of England, he shows us Catholicity. His works are literally saturated with Catholicism. There is hardly one single dogma that cannot be found in them.

In this essay the writer has attempted to show that the life Shakespeare portrayed was Catholic life, that the religion he found in the people was the Catholic religion and that if we had only his plays to enlighten us as to the history of his century we we would never suspect that the Reformation had taken place. The explanation of this fact is to be given in the conclusion.

In order to demonstrate how Catholicity pervades Shakespeare's works, the writer has taken each article of the Apostle's Creed separately and has endeavoured to attach to it passages from the plays, showing that their author was fully conversant with the true doctrine and that he made his characters appear so, likewise. No attempt has been made to compile all the references to any one

article, and this essay is not an exhaustive study of the subject. The writer has simply tried to give a sufficient number of quotations to prove his thesis. Of course, in some cases fewer passages were found, than in others and on some few points there are only one or two references available.

There may be an apparent lack of proportion in the essay, but this can be accounted for by the nature of the work undertaken. For instance, when dealing with the Church, the writer has included the sacraments, so that the article on the forgiveness of sins is necessarily brief. Likewise, heaven is dealt with under the Ascension, so that nothing is said under the last article, i.e., life everlasting.

There seems to be no reference to the Holy Ghost, nor to the sacrament of Confirmation. Of course some passages could be interpreted according to their context and to the general tone of the plays, as undoubtedly referring to these two points of Catholic doctrine, but the writer has preferred to omit them. Furthermore, as this is not a theological essay, the writer has not given a full and complete explanation of each point of the Creed, but has given only such an outline as he deemed necessary to show the meaning and bearing of the passages quoted in support of the thesis.

As the numbering of the lines varies in different editions, especially in those that are intended as class-books, the order followed in this essay is that of the Globe Edition, except in a few cases where the quotations have been taken from Verity, who does not deviate very much from the that arrangement.

First Article:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

In Shakespeare's dramas the idea of God is clearly and unmistakably manifested in many places. Quotations could be made from different plays to show that God is frequently mentioned, and always with the greatest awe and reverence. For instance, in Richard III, the two citizens whose conversation is recorded in Act II, Sc.3, lines 42-45, regard Almighty God as a good father who is ever solicitous for the welfare of his children, and the Second citizen acquiesces to the Third citizen's request; "Leave it all to God"; and they both proceed in all confidence. Earlier in the same scene we find the same citizen (3rd) wishing his fellows God speed.

Hamlet, when the full realization of his uncle's crime and his mother's fickleness penetrates his soul exclaims:

"O that this too too solid flesh would melt!

Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!"

These and other passages from nearly every play show clearly what Shakespeare thought of God. Let me, therefore, marshal a few of these lines and group them under different headings, somewhat in the order in which our catechisms proceed to explain Christian doctrine to boys and girls of the First Communion classes.

God is eternal. Hamlet proclaims this truth by calling him the Everlasting, and Ferdinand, in The Tempest, addressing Alonso, and referring to his daughter Miranda, says:

"She is mortal
But by immortal Providence, she's mine".

clearly showing that he understood the difference between immortality and mortality, between eternity and time.

If we seek references to God's unchangeableness we seek not in vain. In all of these passages where mention is made of the punishment of sin and the reward of virtue, God's constant and immutable will is manifested, as, for example, when he is mentioned as having "fixed his canons 'gainst self-slaughter". In the Second part of Henry VI, Act II, Sc.3, the king sentences Gloucester's wife, even though she is a duchess, and impresses upon her the fact that her guilt is great in sight of God, and calls her sins "Such as by God's book are adjudged to death". He simply refers to the punishment God metes out to such sinners and makes no exception for nobility or wealth, thereby implying that God is always disposed the same way towards all classes of men. Sin, without any reference to where it is found, is an offence, and as such it is punishable.

Omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence are essential attributes of God. Are these mentioned in Shakespeare's writings? Indeed these ideas permeate his entire books and scarcely a play can be found that does not contain more than a sufficient number of quotable lines on these points to establish the contention that their author had the correct Catholic idea on this subject. To quote only a few, let me mention for instance Henry the Fifth's words: "They have no wings to fly from God". Here, the king refers to men who have "defeated the law and outrun native punishment". How can it be said, that they cannot deceive God if the author does not believe him to be omnipresent and omniscient?

With regard to omnipotence, this is sufficiently clear where reference is made to the "King of kings." In the third part of Henry VI, Act II, Sc.5, Edward prays to the "Setter up and plucker down of kings". In Richard III, Act I, Sc.4, there is reference to the king of kings who has given us laws to obey---laws which none can violate with impunity. Clarence's words to the murderer are precise on this point:

"Erroneous vassal! the great King of kings
Hath in the tables of his law cammanded
Thou shalt do no murder: and wilt thou then
Spurn at his edict and fulfil a man's?
Take heed: for he holds vengeance in his hands,
To hurl upon their heads that break his law".

God being the King of kings, the only being crowned with a diadem that none can take from him, raises up kingstoday as he constituted rulers in Israel. He isthe God of battles, the first avenger of evil and of all transgressors. (cf. Henry V, Act IV, Sc.1)

"..... war is his beadle, war is his vengeance;
so that here men are punished for before-
breach of the kings's laws in now the king's
quarrel: where they feared the death, they
have borne life away; and where they would be
safe, they perish: then if they die unprovided,
no more is the king guilty of their damnation
than he was before guilty of those impieties
for the which they are now visited. Every
subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's
soul is his own. Therefore should every
soldier in the wars do as every sick man in
his bed, wash every mote out of his con-
science: and dying so, death isto him advan-
tage; or not dying, the time was blessedly
lost wherein such preparation was gained: and
in him that escapes, it were not sin to think
that, making God so free an offer, He let him
outlive that day to see His greatness and to
teach others how they should prepare."

Besides being sovereign Lord and master---God is the creator of angels and men.

The "Angels and ministers of grace", are pure spirits who were submitted to a trial of their fidelity, and having proved themselves are confirmed in grace. They are the trumpet-tongued intercessors referred to in Macbeth's speech before the murder of Duncan, the helping spirits that the king invokes in Hamlet (Act III, Sc.3, 68), the heavenly guards that Hamlet himself implores to hover over him with their wings. (Act IV, Sc.3)

All of the angels did not prove firm and steadfast in their allegiance. Some rebelled and were cast down into hell with Lucifer, their leader, and are now identified with all that is hideous and dark and perverse. They are the "evil angel, the demon" referred to in Love's Labour Lost (Act I, Sc.2.), the fiend "With eyes like two full moons, a thousand noses, horns whelked and waved like the enridged sea" of which Edgar tells his father in King Lear. They entice men to sin putting on "heavenly shows" as Iago did, who was a very devil in human flesh, the only villain in all Shakespeare's dramas, with no redeeming feature.

A little below the angels is man, the "paragon of animals", lord and master of the world. He is composed of a body and a soul. As to the immortality of the soul, all the characters are of one mind, notwithstanding the diverse interpretations of Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be". He means simply, "shall I continue to live?" or "cease to live"? referring obviously to this life. The whole tenor of his speech proclaims his belief in an after-life and hence in the immortality of the soul. "In that sleep of death, what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us pause."

He may not be very precise in his conception of what will become of him, but he knows that after death we are still in a position to be rewarded or punished by Almighty God. That this was his idea seems evident from the fact that reflection on this very point deterred him from committing suicide. As he says himself:

"Conscience (i.e. reflection) doth make cowards of us all
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their current turn awry
And lose the name of action."

In Measure for Measure (Act III, Sc. 1.) Claudio is a firm believer in the survival of the soul when he seems to argue in favour of a "shamed life" rather than death and eternal damnation.

As to the body, it will return to dust from whence it was taken, as Montjoy says in Henry V, Act. IV, Sc. 3, "They must lie and fester on these fields, whilst make a peaceful and sweet retire", to quote freely, in Romeo and Juliet, Balthaser says:

"Her body sleeps in Capels' Monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives!"

Second and Third Articles

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son Our Lord
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born
of the Virgin Mary

Like the angels, man was given a term of probation, and the story of his fall and redemption is found in Shakespeare's writings where it is referred to in detail in divers places.

Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, lost their preternatural gifts and lost the supernatural gift of grace, and friendship with God. This loss, their descendants must share with them. What else does the Archbishop of Canterbury refer to in Henry V, but the evil effects of original sin when he says concerning the king:

"Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipped the offending Adam out of him."

Aegeon, the Merchant of Syracuse in The Comedy of Errors, refers to "the pleasing punishment that women bear!" The Queen in Richard II addresses the gardener thus:

"Thou, old Adam's likeness, set to dress
this garden,
How dares they harsh rude tongue sound
this displeasing news?
What Eve, what serpent hath suggested thee
To make a second fall of cursed man?
(Act IV, Sc.4)

One single exception there is to the general law by which all are made partakers of Adam's sin. Mary, our Mother was, in view of the merits of her divine Son, redeemed by preservation from the taint of original sin, so that never for one moment was she deprived of the grace of God. Unmistakable reference to this fact is to be found in the Gentleman's speech to King Lear, in Act. IV, Sc.6:

"Thou hast one daughter
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to."

Of course the intention here is not to establish a comparison between Cordelia and the B.V.M. but simply to show that the redemption of mankind through a faultless virgin was an idea familiar to Shakespeare.

As a result of the fall of our first parents, man is subject to the rebellion of the flesh against the spirit. He is placed between God and material good, between which he must choose. Being composed of a body and a soul, he is somewhat like a half-breed, whose savage nature draws him backward towards those practices of paganism that he abandoned when he became civilized. Man has within him the intellectual life of his soul elevated by grace and faith to a supernatural order far beyond the exigencies of his own nature. He still retains his bodily life and all its rebellions tendencies. The body, which should be ruled by the soul, which in its turn should be governed by faith, continually strives to drag down the nobler part of our being into the slime and mud of sin. We are constantly reminded that despite our supernatural destiny we are made of dust. Hamlet expresses this idea of our composite nature in Act II, Sc. 2, where he says:

"What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?"

In Act I, Sc. 2, lines 133-137, Hamlet in his soliloquy after his conversation with the King and his mother, being downcast and disgusted on account of the King's perfidy and his mother's fickleness and duplicity exclaims:

"How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie ou't! O, fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely."

What is this, but the expression of the thought that this world which should be a garden filled with the choicest flowers of virtue is on the contrary possessed by "things rank and gross in nature"---sin? Our life should be orderly and free from all that tends to impede the growth of our charity which should alone find place therein and blossom forth to bear the most exquisite fruit of supernatural acts. No weeds of sin should be allowed to take root and grow and smother what the Great Gardener has planted there at our baptism. Alas! Alas! we have neglected the weeding and as a result the world presents a piteous spectacle that to Hamlet appears "weary, flat, stale and unprofitable".

Why is there such disorder? Men are subject to temptation, and must reject the worldly good that presents itself to them. Otherwise they sin. Many do resist temptation, which is not a sin unless consent be given to it. As Angelo says in Measure for Measure, Act I, Sc.2, lines 18-19:

"'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall."

In the same speech, he goes on to say that men's offences do not always appear on the surface, and that he himself may perhaps some day commit the same crime for which Claudio is to be executed by nine the following morning, according to his orders. He orders his confessor to be brought to him, (i.e. to Claudio) before the execution, implying thereby a belief in the forgiveness of sins through the Sacrament of Penance. Of this, more will be said later. In a long speech at the end

of Scene II of the same act, Angelo speaks of temptation again, calling it most dangerous and describing the enemy as most cunning, who "to catch a saint, with saints does bait his hook," because he is tempted towards a virtuous maid. According to him, temptation is most subtle.

Consent to temptation is sin, which may be either mortal or venial. Mortal sin destroys our supernatural life. As Friar Lawrence says, it is "deadly sin.....a fault our law calls death". Here he refers not only to the laws of the land, but also to divine law. Nearly all of the seven deadly sins are mentioned by Shakespeare's characters in different places. Hamlet in Act. III, Sc. 3, line 89, mentions three of them: gluttony, anger, lust, when he speaks of drunkenness, rage, and incest. Some characters are described as being steeped in all of them. As Malcolm says in Macbeth, Act. IV, Sc. 3, "smacking of every sin that has a name".

The most common of these sins is lust which leads to illegitimate love when young men allow too much liberty to their eyes. This may be found in many passages of Shakespeare, but the characteristics of this vice are most clearly analyzed in Sonnet 129 which I here quote in full:

"The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell."

Here we have lust explained in its workings and in its effects. It is the root and source of perjury, and murder, of savage, extreme, rude, and cruel lives. No sooner has the sinner enjoyed the satisfaction of his lust than he despises it. He seeks it beyond all reason and his detestation of it afterwards is likewise extreme. It is like a poison destined to make its voluntary users mad. While tasting of it, the sinner enjoys himself, and immediately afterwards he suffers cruelly in his mind and soul.

So much for grevous sins. There are also venial sins, or faults which do not cause spiritual death, faults that may be forgiven without recourse to the Sacrament of Penance. Such sins were those that Juliet admitted to the nurse, when she said in Act IV, Sc. 3, line 24:

"I have need of many orisons
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,
Which, well thou knowest, is cross and full of sin."

Of course Juliet's sins may have been more greVIOUS, but she implicitly declared them to be venial, since she counted on obtaining Heaven's smile, through prayers and orisons.

These chains of sin are broken, and we are released by conversion, which is affected through the grace that was merited for us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When the sinner is converted, he is reinstated in his former position as a son of God, a brother of Christ and an heir to the kingdom of heaven. These thoughts are all contained in the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech in Henry V, Act I, Sc. 1, lines 28-35:

"The courses of his youth promised it not.
The breath no sooner left his father's body,
But that his wildness, mortified in him,
Seemed to die too; yea, at that very moment
Consideration, like an angel, came
And whipped the offending Adam out of him,
Leaving his body as a paradise,
To envelop and contain celestial spirits!"

There is no mention of conversion through Christ, but of the change effected in the sinner when he abandons his sin. His body becomes as a paradise to envelop celestial spirits. This is almost as explicit as St. Paul's words: "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of God, and that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you?"

Such was the state of man after his fall. He was subject to temptation. He was deprived of the supernatural life of grace and in constant rebellion against his Creator. Almighty God deals with man most mercifully, and he sent him a Redeemer who took upon himself the sins of humanity and offered up the great Sacrifice to reinstate mankind in its former position and enable us to participate in the glory that had been prepared for us. That Redeemer was Our Lord and Saviour who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.

Concerning these two circumstances of our redemption I must say that very little is to be found explicitly in Shakespeare. That Christ died for us, is mentioned in many many places, but his conception, and the virginity of his holy Mother are only hinted at, though it seems to me that both are clearly indicated in that passage already quoted from King Lear:

"Thou hast one daughter
Who redeems nature from the general curse."

Here is evidently a reference to our Blessed Mother, the co-redeemer of mankind. Now how is the Blessed Virgin the co-

redeemer of men? She deserves this title on account of her cooperation with Almighty God in the work of ransoming us from the slavery of sin. By her "Fiat" she consented to be the mother of Jesus who was to die for us. In the designs of Divine Providence she had been prepared to be an immaculate tabernacle for the Son of God, and when the moment came to assume the burden, she willingly accepted it and at that moment of her acceptance she became the Mother of Jesus---the Mother of God and the Mother of men. She gave birth to Our Lord in the stable at Bethlehem. She watched over his childhood years and followed him up to Calvary, where Jesus publicly and solemnly proclaimed her motherhood of all mankind when he said to her: "Woman, behold thy Son", and to the disciple, "Son, behold thy mother."

Shakespeare was familiar with this doctrine when he referred to Mary as "the daughter who redeems nature from the general curse", and it is deplorable that he did not refer to it more often and more explicitly. However, those who are familiar with his works, knowing the general Catholic tone in which they are written can have no doubt concerning his ideas on the conception and birth of Christ. There is explicit reference to Our Lord's birth, in Hamlet, Act I, Sc.1, where Marcellus speaks of the "season wherein Our Saviour's birth is celebrated", saying that then, "no spirit stirs abroad, the nights are wholesome, no planets strike, no fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm; So hallowed and so gracious is the time." I quote freely here without strict adherence to the text.

Fourth Article:

Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.

With regard to this article there is no lack of references. One has but to scan the pages of Shakespeare's plays to find passage after passage illustrating the death of Christ and the reason thereof.

For instance in Measure for Measure, Isabella pleads with Angelo for her brother saying:

"Alas, Alas!
Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If he which is the top of judgment should
But judge you as you are? A think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made."

Here we have reference to the fact that Almighty God found a remedy for man's transgression, and that the remedy was applied freely, out of pure mercy and goodness.

What was this remedy? It was the "seven vials of his most sacred blood" referred to in Richard II, Act I, Sc. 1. In the same play, Act IV, Carlyle speaks of Norfolk fighting for Christ:

"Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks and Saracens."

There is even reference to the treason of Judas, of this same scene where King Richard exclaims:

"Yet I well remember
The favours of these men: were they not mine?
Did they not sometime cry, 'all hail!' to me?
So Judas did to Christ; but he, in twelve,
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve
Thousand, none."

In Act IV, Sc.1, the following lines mention expressly the suffering of Christ under Pontius Pilate:

"Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here delivered me to my sour cross
And water cannot wash away your sin."

Here indeed is the Roman Governor pretending to be guiltless of Christ's blood, while he deliberately turns him over to his enemies that they may crucify him.

In Richard III, Act I, Sc.4, Clarence says to the murderer:

"I charge you as your hope to have redemption
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins
That you depart and lay no hands on me."

Here again is the belief in our redemption through the blood of Christ. The same thought is expressed by Salisbury in the second part of Henry VI, Act I, Sc.1, where he uses these words: "now by the death of Him that died for all", and in Act III, Sc.2 of the same play we have Warwick's words:

"As surely as your soul intends to live
With that dread King who took our state upon him
To free us from his Father's wrathful curse
I do believe that violent hands were laid
Upon the life of this thrice famed duke."

Truly then may we say that the story of Our Lord's crucifixion and death is clearly told in Shakespeare whose characters all seem well versed in this particular part of Christian doctrine. When King Edward, in Richard III, Act I, Sc.4, speaks of sinners "defacing the precious image of our dear Redeemer" we see that Shakespeare held the traditional doctrine that justification is not merely the remission of sins, but it is grace or charity diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. When we are just, in the scriptural sense of the word, Christ lives within us.

Grace is a gift from God through the merits of Christ-- a supernatural life---a participation in the life of the Blessed Trinity, by which our acts are meritorious and by which we can hope for eternal life which is but the perfection of the life of grace within us. There is no question of coercion. Grace does not come into conflict with the will of man. We remain free, yet we are supernaturally impelled towards virtuous acts though by no means are we forced, nor is our liberty in any way infringed upon.

Launcelot (Merchant of Venice, Act II, Sc. 2) knows the difference between a Jew and a Christian. He gives Bassanio his reason for preferring to enter his service rather than to work for Shylock, saying:

"You have the grace of God, sir!"

In the first part of Henry IV, Act II, Sc. 4, Falstaff speaks of the fire of grace. In Act II, Sc. 1 of Othello, Cassio addressing Desdemona prays:

".....the grace of heaven
Before, behind thee and on everyhand
Enwheel thee round."

Likewise Malcolm referring to popular belief in England that the King could cure a certain disease known as King's Evil, says that James has besides this power, the gift of prophecy and sundry other blessings "that speak him full of grace." This was supposed to be a divine gift, first accorded to Edward the Confessor and transmitted through him to all the other sovereigns of England. The practice died out after Queen Anne's time, the last person to be "touched" in England was Dr. Johnson. Shakespeare has evidently gone out of his way to pay a compliment to

King James, by mentioning this matter in Act IV, Sc. 3, of Macbeth, without any apparent connection with the rest of the play.

Some commentators pretend that this particular incident in Macbeth is un-Shakespearéan but Verity, from whom I have drawn my information on this point maintains that it is authentic.

Actual graces are granted through prayer and there are numerous examples of persons beseeching God to grant them temporal favours notably in the third part of Henry VI, and in Richard III. Prayer procures sanctifying grace. In this connection, the reader is referred to Prospero's words in the Epilogue to The Tempest:

"And my ending is despair
Unless I be relieved by prayer
Which pierces so that it assualts
Mercy itself and frees all faults."

This and other passages, from Henry VI, Richard II, and Othello show us Shakespeare's conception of the power of prayer as the people believed in it. There is a noteworthy soliloquy in Hamlet, which will be quoted elsewhere in this essay exemplifying the necessity of putting our heart into our prayers. It is the King's attempted prayer after witnessing the play wherein his conscience was prodded to remorse.

Fifth Article:

He descended into Hell, the third day
He arose again from the dead

In Henry VIII, Act V, Sc. 4, we find a porter making mention of Limbo Patrum. In Titus Andronicus, there is the expression "As far from help as Limbo is from bliss." (Act III, Sc. 1, line 148)

These references to Limbo and to Limbo Patrum, although they do not give us an explicit statement of Shakespeare's beliefs in a place where souls are detained because they lack sanctifying grace and therefore cannot enter into heaven, nevertheless, implicitly contain the Catholic doctrine on that point. When Titus says "so far from help as Limbo is from bliss", with reference to those works of sympathy that bring no help, he gives us a true idea of Limbo, where souls cannot be helped by our prayers and suffrages, but must abide the consequences of being deprived of that sacramental character which would be their pass-port to heaven. He makes no allusion to punishment, that is to say positive punishment there, but simply says that Limbo is a place removed from bliss.

Now in Henry VIII, in the passage cited above, the porter mentions the youths in Limbo Patrum where they are like to dance three days. This implies that some souls escape from that prison and regain their freedom. The expression Limbo Patrum is always used in Catholic theology to designate a place where the souls of the just who died before Our Lord were detained until the redemption was accomplished and Christ himself announced their deliverance to them. This Limbo Patrum is what is meant by "hell" in the Apostles' Creed. The fact that Shakespeare uses the expression shows clearly that he was familiar with the doctrine and furthermore that the people of his time were sufficiently instructed in that truth for him to make these references without any explanation and with no fear of being misunderstood.

In Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Sc. 1, line 31, Mercutio speaks

of Benvolio's propensity to spy out an occasion to quarrel and tells him he fell out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter. Now this may be considered as a far-fetched reference to the fact that Christ rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, but we must bear in mind that Shakespeare knew his people and was aware of their beliefs and knew what expressions had a meaning for them, and what words were meaningless on account of their mentality. Easter meant to the Elizabethans, what it had always meant to England and what it still means to the Christian world, the feast of Christ's resurrection on the third day after his death on the cross. It is a day of joy and universal jubilation, a day when new garments are worn for the first time in memory of the new life with which Christ clothed us by his life, death and resurrection. This is probably what Shakespeare remotely refers to in Mercutio's words about wearing a new doublet before Easter.

Sixth Article:

He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the
right hand of God the Father Almighty

In King John, Act. V, Sc. 1, line 22, Pandulph speaks of Ascension Day. Now Ascension day means this and this only: the day on which Our Lord ascended body and soul into heaven to occupy therein the highest place, after God the Father.

Heaven, to which Our Lord ascended is an abode of bliss and happiness, eternal, where the just enjoy the beatific vision. There is no mention of the vision of God face to face, but we

find at least three passages explicitly referring to the joys of our heavenly home, not to mention the many places where heaven is spoken of, without anything being said as to its nature.

Friar Lawrence in Romeo and Juliet, Act.IV, Sc.5, lines 66-84, reasons with Lord Capulet who is bewailing the death of his daughter and endeavours to show him that he ought to rejoice rather than to lament because she has gone to her eternal reward and her present state is now far superior to her earthly condition. These are his words:

"Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself
Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,
And all the better part is for the maid;
Your part in her, you could not keep from death.
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
The most you sought was her promotion;
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,
That you run mad, seeing that she is well;
She's not well married that lives married long;
But she's best married that dies married young.
Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse; and as the custom is,
In all her fair array bear her to church:
For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment."

This passage needs no comment to show what Shakespeare's idea of heaven was. In that heaven into which the just are admitted there are degrees of glory, each one enjoying perfect felicity according to his capacity, and that capacity varying with different individuals. Our Lord being God and man, having human nature as well as divine nature, the divine governing and controlling the human, is infinite in his capacity for enjoying the presence of God, and therefore he is the first after God the Father in partaking of the beatific vision. Hence he is said to "sit at the

right hand of God, the Father Almighty". Shakespeare does not express this thought, but his ideas on heaven are so clearly expressed that we must admit he could hardly hold any other opinion, living as he did in a century when Catholic truth still illumined England.

Seventh Article:

From thence, he shall come to judge both
the living and the dead.

The Catholic doctrine concerning death and judgment is found clearly expressed in the dramas of the Bard of Avon. In the first place, death in its multiple forms hovers over all of us. Some of the characters invoke the dire visitor as a welcome opportunity of entering into repose and heavenly bliss; others desire it to put an end to their tortures on account of worldly deceptions and unsuccess. Others still, are sadly resigned; while some few curse it as if it were a hellish brigand ravishing them of their most precious possession. Nevertheless, it is appointed unto men to die. Dust we are and unto dust we will all return. Our life is destined to end, like a dream, to fade away and to pass into a state where we will be face to face with the reality which our soul craves and which we now see, as St. Paul says, as in a mirror. The Clown's song in the second act of Twelfth Night invokes death to come, and asks that he may be laid in sad cypress without a flower on his black coffin.

Rosalind in "As You Like It" says that death comes to all men, but not through disappointed love, though many would welcome it as a delivrance. In Act. IV, Sc. 1, she says:

"The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all

this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicet, in a love cause."

Then she goes on to mention Troilus who had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club, yet he was one of the patterns of love and would fain have died long before. Leander would have welcomed death when Hero turned nun; yet he lived on until by accident as it were, he died while bathing in the Hellespont. Men have died, she says, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

Belarius, in Act IV, Sc. 2 of Cymbeline, says:

"Thersites' body is as good as Ajax,
When neither are alive."

In the same act Guiderius and Arvirgus sing those oft quoted words:

"Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou they worldly task has done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust."

In the same song they warn all those who hold power and sway, who are renowned for learning, and all lovers that they must abandon this life to pass to a state where they will be beyond the frown of the mighty, the tyrant's stroke, the thunder's blasts, the lightning flash, the slander of the world and all earthly ills.

The duke's lengthy speech in Measure for Measure, Act III, Sc. 1, is a veritable treatise on the vanity of human life. If we lose life, we lose a thing that none but fools would keep. Life is but a breath, servile to all the skyey influences that afflict the earth. Man is but death's slave or fool, labouring by the hour to shun him, yet inevitably running towards him. He tells Claudio that he is not valiant since he fears the fork of a poor worm. We

have no real friends in this world, says he, because even our own bodily organs conspire to kill us by offering hospitality to the gout, serpigo and the rheum, and he ends his dissertation with these words:

"Yet in this life
"Lie hid mee thousand deaths; yet death we fear
That makes these odds all even."

Prospero's memorable words in Act IV, Sc.1 of The Tempest:

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

The Queen reminds Hamlet, Act I, Sc.1:

"Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st, 'tis common; all that lives must die
Passing through nature to eternity."

Hamlet's comments on the skull thrown up by the clown (Act V, Sc.1) are also worthy of note and especially his address to Yorick's skull shows the changes that death brings and the ravages it works. Death makes us abhorrent to the living, says Hamlet. Alexander and imperious Caesar both returned to dust. Dust is earth, and earth makes loam. Why then should we not expect to find these great men converted into a plug to stop a bung-hole in a beer barrel?

So much for death. But death never comes alone and in Shakespeare we find that the spirit of the times was drawn from the inspired words of Holy Writ: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death, the judgment." Every man must present his account before the judgment seat of God and receive his reward or punishment from the All-wise, All-knowing, All-just Judge. Thus we hear Othello (Act V, Sc.2) addressing Desdemona's corpse and exclaiming: "When we shall meet at compt, this look of thine will hurl my soul

from heaven, and fiends will snatch at it! Compt means account or reckoning, and therefore judgment where he will be called upon to answer for murdering his wife upon a base slave's word.

King John in Act IV, Sc. 2, answering Hubert who presents him a document with his hand and seal ordering the death of Arthur, thinking the command has been executed exclaims:

"O, when the last account 'twixt heaven earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation!"

King Henry in Henry V, Act IV, Sc. 1, delivers a lengthy speech in which he dwells on the fact that each man is responsible for his own soul and though he can hide his misdeeds from human eyes, he "has no wings to fly from God" and if he dies unprovided, damnation is his lot etc. In Henry VI there is mention of "the dreadful judgment" which will have to be undergone as well as particular judgment. This general judgment will take place when the end of the world comes, when "the great globe itself and all that we inherit shall dissolve", to use Prospero's words. After judgment there is heaven, hell, or purgatory. We have already dealt with Shakespeare's ideas concerning the abode of the blessed. Here let it suffice to mention his views on hell and purgatory.

To Shakespeare's characters, hell is a dire prison of eternal darkness and fire where the damned suffer ineffable tortures with the demons, where like Dives they are tormented in that flame they kindled by their sins.

In Hamlet (Act IV, Sc. 1) Laertes says:

"To hell allegiance! Vows to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit."

Queen Margaret in Richard III (Act I, Sc. 3) wishes Gloucester to be

tormented by a dream of "hell and ugly devils". To Buckingham who rebukes her for her curse she says:

"Have not to do with him, beware of him;
Sin, death and hell have set their works on him,
And all their ministers attend to him."

Falstaff, in Henry IV, (Act III, Sc.3) says to Bordolph:

"I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and
Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes,
burning, burning."

Here is explicit mention of the punishment of hell as it is taught in the Bible.

Many other passages might be cited, but I think these suffice to establish the doctrine concerning hell, as we find it expressed in the works of our great dramatist.

Though souls must be pure and spotless before entering heaven, all stains and blemishes and unpaid debts do not condemn men to eternal damnation. As we have already noted, Shakespeare is familiar with the distinction between mortal sin and venial sin. He is also aware of the fact that temporal punishment due to our transgressions often remains after the offences themselves have been pardoned as to their guilt. The distinction between the reatus culpae and the reatus poenae is not unknown to him. Therefore in his plays he has given us clear evidence of his knowledge of the doctrine of purgatory where souls expiate the unforgiven venial sins and the temporal punishment due to their grievous offences that are already forgiven as to their guilt.

In Act IV, Sc.3 of Othello, Emilia uses the word purgatory itself and evidently considers it as a place of punishment, though she does not say anything to indicate her belief in the doctrine of satisfaction after death.

In Romeo and Juliet (Act. III, Sc. 3) Romeo is not more precise than Emilia. He simply mentions purgatory, but he shows clearly that it is less terrible than hell because he mentions it first in the series of sufferings he will have to undergo when outside Verona's walls:

"Purgatory, torture, hell itself."

The Ghost, in Hamlet, is clearer in his exposition of the pains of his prison house. He speaks of "sulphurous and tormenting flames" and tells Hamlet that could he but reveal the secrets of his prison-house he could "a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up his soul, freeze his young blood". (Act I, Sc. 5) He goes on to say that he is not constantly in purgatory, but is doomed at times to walk the earth. This is according to the popular legends current at the time when the play was written. One point that he clearly expressed is that he must remain in fires until the crimes done in his days of nature are burnt and purged away.

Lastly, there is Limbo, of which we have spoken in connection with Our Lord's descent into hell after his crucifixion.

Eighth Article:

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

There is no definite mention of the Holy Ghost in any of the plays. All that can be gathered from them is that the doctrine concerning the third person of the Blessed Trinity can be assumed to have been familiar to Shakespeare's characters though nothing explicit is said on the point.

In Act I of the Merchant of Venice, when Antonio after hearing Shylock's words concerning Jacob and Laban and their agreement about dividing the sheep, turns to Bassanio and remarks: "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose", there is apparently a reference to the futility of private and unauthorized interpretation of the word of God. This suggests the necessity of an infallible authority, and that infallible authority is the Holy Ghost who abides forever in the Church to preserve it from error. Beyond this, I have been unable to find any passages to illustrate the eighth article of the Creed.

Ninth Article:

The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints..

As to the divine institution of the Church of which we are all members, as it were, component parts of one vast body of which Christ is the head, we find ample reference. Cardinal Pandulph announces to King John that he has come to him from Pope Innocent to ask him why he wilfully spurns against "The Church, our holy mother", and he calls Pope Innocent "our holy father". What could be more Catholic than such words?

In the Second part of Henry VI, Act I, Sc.3, the Queen mentions the Pope with his triple crown, and the college of cardinals.

Bishops and Cardinals are prominent in many of the plays. Several of them were advisers of kings who consulted them as to their rights. In Henry V, Act I, Sc.2, we find the king asking the Archbishop of Canterbury to define his claims to the throne of France, and the Archbishop, in a lengthy speech unfolds to him the whole history of the Salique law, and shows himself to be well

versed in history and well informed on political and international questions. Encouraged by the words of the Archbishop, King Henry decides to urge his claim and to make war on France. Not only have these prelates advised sovereigns, they have also defended them. The Bishop of Carlisle in Richard II, Act IV, Sc. 1, is a good example of loyalty, when he tries to persuade Bolingbroke that he has no right to ascend the throne and pass sentence on the king. As a result he is arrested for treason.

Clerics of inferior rank are not often mentioned, because they play no outstanding part in the great political events of these dramas.

Monastic life is quite well portrayed however. In particular, the Franciscans seem to have impressed Shakespeare. He gives us two striking examples of these holy men, who far from the world with its strife and contention lead a life of prayer and contemplation, emerging from their cells only to comfort and console those who need their advice and direction.

Friar Lawrence in Romeo and Juliet is a director of conscience who, though he has abandoned the world yet knows how to sympathize with those who are distressed with mundane griefs.

The Duke of Vienna, disguised as a friar, gives Claudio excellent spiritual advice and prepares him for death (Measure for Measure, Act III, Sc. 1). Here Shakespeare shows his full appreciation of monks, for he clothes the duke in all the virtues and qualities of a veritable man of God who teaches the real value of human life, which is but a means of earning eternal glory, a journey at the end of which we shall be unloaded of all

our earthly treasures which are useless to us. He who carries worldly wealth and honours is "like an ass whose back with ingots bows." They will be removed at the end of the journey and he will have but the fatigue of having borne them..

We are all members of the Church. Why does that Church exist? What is its mission? The Church was instituted to carry on Christ's work, to sanctify mankind. For that reason, Our Lord instituted seven Sacraments which he committed to his Church to be used as so many mysterious channels through which grace flows into our souls.

The first of these is Baptism; by which we receive sanctifying grace, and thereby become children of God and of the Church and heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven by virtue of our incorporation with Christ. Baptism is a pledge of salvation provided the grace received therein be not lost by any grievous offence.

In Henry V, Act.II,Sc.3, the hostess assures Pistol that Falstaff is not in hell because he made a fine end, i.e. died a happy death, like a "Christom Child." Now a Christom Child in Shakespeare's time meant a child who had died while young, and therefore who still wore his "Christom" or baptismal robe. It was the custom in England to clothe children in white robes after baptism.

In Richard III,Act I,Sc.1, Gloucester addressing Clarence says:

"O belike his majesty hath some intent
That you should be new-christened in the Tower."

Iago in Othello, Act II,Sc.3, speaks of "baptism and all

seals and symbols of redeemed sin".

From these quotations we can see what is believed concerning this first sacrament. No reference to Confirmation can be found, but the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is well known to the people of Shakespeare's times. In King John, Act. V, Sc. 2, line 6, we find Lewis speaking of having taken "the sacrament". Likewise the Duke of Norfolk, in Richard II, Act. I, Sc. 1, line 139 says:

"Ere I last received the sacrament
I did confess it and exactly begged
Your grace's pardon, and I hope I had it."

This is of course the Eucharist, the "holy bread" that is referred to by Rosalind in As You Like It, Act III, Sc. 1, line 14. A similar expression is found in the Second Part of Henry VI, Act V, Sc. 1, where Richard says:

".....Speak not in spite
For you shall sup with Christ tonight."

So far as the Eucharist as a sacrifice is concerned, Shakespeare, for some inconceivable reason makes but indirect reference to it. Probably he had in mind the differences of opinion that were prevalent among the Anglicans of his time, concerning the nature of the Mass, and he preferred to avoid any reference to a subject that might rouse discontent and perhaps turn people away from his theatre. That he knew all about the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Sacrifice is beyond doubt. His use of the word "unhouseled" in Hamlet is incontestable proof of this. This word comes from "housel" or Anglo-Saxon "husel" meaning the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Verity explains unhouseled, as not having received the Eucharist, but his glossary explains the real

meaning of the word and its reference to the sacrifice.

When he mentions an evening Mass, in *Romeo and Juliet*, he makes no mistake because in Venice and Verona, it was customary to celebrate mass at three o'clock in the afternoon during Lent and on the vigils of the more solemn feasts, according to Cardinal Bona. Furthermore, the word "Mass" was used formerly, for any office that was held in a church. Consequently Shakespeare cannot be taxed with error on account of the expression "evening Mass".

Then there is the Sacrament of Penance by which sins are forgiven. Good Christians have recourse to this sacrament frequently, especially before receiving communion if they are in the state of mortal sin, before marriage or any other sacrament, before beginning a dangerous undertaking and above all, at the hour of death.

Remission of sins in confession is what Shakespeare means by shrift or shriving. Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Lent, when Catholics of the Sixteenth Century used to confess their sins in order to begin the holy season of penance in good dispositions.

The Duke, in Act V, Sc. 2 of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, seeking his daughter says:

"Besides, she did intend confession
At Patrick's cell this even."

Witness also, Friar Lawrence's words to Romeo: "Riddling confession makes but riddling shift." (Act II, Sc. 3) Buckingham's words to Hastings in *Richard III*, Act III, Sc. 2, mean nothing unless confession; Let me quote them:

"What, talking with a priest, Lord Chamberlain?
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;
Your honour hath no shriving work in hand."

Hamlet's scheme to revenge himself on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who were sent with him to England, to have him beheaded shows us that he was aware of the benefits of confession, for in the letter that he substituted he appealed to the King of England to put the bearers to death without even allowing them "shriving time".

In Act V, Sc.1 of The Winter's Tale, Cleomenes addresses Leontes thus:

"Sir, you have done enough, and have performed
A saint like sorrow: no fault could you work
Which you have not redeemed; indeed paid down
More penitence than done trespass: at the last,
Do as the heavens have done, forget your evil;
With them, forgive yourself."

Although there is no mention of confession here, we find in this speech all the elements of the Sacrament of Penance: repentance, satisfaction, absolution full and complete. Now all of these suppose the avowal of sin in confession. If Cleomenes did not mean that, then her speech means nothing.

In Measure for Measure, Act II, Sc.3, the Duke, disguised as a friar, hears Juliet's confession. She avows her sin saying:

"I do confess it and repent it, father."

He then exhorts her to perfect contrition saying:

"Tis meet so, daughter: but lest you do repent,
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it
But as we stand in fear,--"

Juliet answers:

"I do repent it as an evil
And take the shame with joy."

Then he says: "Grace be with you, Benedicite." This is not the sacramental formula, but it has the same meaning, because it indicates the effects of absolution, i.e. sanctifying grace.

The "Benedicite" is the "God bless you" of the good father confessor.

So here, we have a real picture of confession: declaration of sin, contrition, satisfaction, for she accepted the shame with joy, and finally absolution. The Duke's exhortation to perfect contrition is an explanation of the difference between contrition and attrition.

Hamlet's answer to his mother, in Act III, Sc.4, tells of the necessity of a firm purpose of amendment as well as of repentance

"Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;"

Shakespeare even goes so far in dealing with this sacrament, in his plays that he seems to have been imbued with an opinion of his times, which however had no theological basis, that in absence of the priest, confession might be made to a lay-man. For instance, Othello, in Act V, Sc.2, bids Desdemona to solicit pardon at once, for any crime she may have committed. However, some might interpret this in two other different ways. Othello may have wanted her to avow her faults to him as an act of fidelity, as a kind of consolation to himself, or he may have wanted her to repent before God in order to obtain pardon. Nevertheless, some commentators have found in these words a remote reference to the opinion mentioned above.

Another sacrament mentioned is Extreme Unction. This is what is meant by the Ghost when he tells Hamlet that he was sent to death "unaneled". To aneale means to give the last anointing.

Shakespeare tells us nothing of the Sacrament of Holy Orders as such, but he tells us a great deal about priests and shows a

clear knowledge of their nature and functions. The passages where he refers to them are far too numerous to quote. All the bishops, priests and religious in these plays are celibates. Shakespeare nowhere hints at a married clergy. They are in a class by themselves and he calls them holy men, on account of their supernatural mission. We have already told of their mission of forgiving sins, directing consciences, etc. The passages quoted suffice to show what the priest was considered to be when these dramas were written.

Finally there is the Sacrament of Matrimony. This sacrament is often preceded by a solemn engagement. In Measure for Measure, we can build up a complete treatise "de sponsalibus". There in Act III, Sc. 1, we learn that Angelo was espoused to Mariana, had given her a ring as a pledge of his faith. Later on he wants to be freed from her, alleging different reasons, but they are considered valueless and they are considered as validly engaged and not free to abandon each other.

Marriage itself is a solemn and sacred rite, a sacrament indeed. Many passages from Romeo and Juliet, from the First Part of Henry VI, and elsewhere might be cited here. To my mind Prospero's words to Ferdinand, Miranda's future husband, are the most fitting to show clearly the Catholic teaching concerning marriage:

"Then as my gift and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter: but
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be ministered,
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow". etc.

Here the sacred character of marriage is made clear--it is

a sacrament conferring grace and without the rites and ceremonies prescribed, no blessing will be given to the couple by Almighty God.

Indissolubility is an essential property of marriage contracts. Adriana tells Antipholus in the Comedy of Errors that she is undividable from him, incorporate with him, and in the same speech she explains how faithful she is to him as all good wives should be.

Here then we have the sacraments all, with one exception, explained and clearly shown to be confided to the Church as means of bringing grace to men and thereby as means of continuing Christ's work of sanctification.

The Communion of Saints, the second part of this article of the Creed, needs no special development. That it was commonly held as a belief appears from the numerous passages where the invocation of the Saints is mentioned as well as from the doctrine of purgatory.

Tenth Article:

The forgiveness of sins.

This article has been dealt with under the Sacrament of Penance. However, Act III, Sc.3 of Hamlet contains two fairly lengthy passages bearing upon this doctrine. Claudius after witnessing the play is struck with remorse and seemsto feel some regret for his crime, but not sufficient to prompt him to acts of restitution so far as the kingdom is concerned. He still possesses, as he says, his crown, his ambition and his queen and he asks "May one be pardoned and retain the offence?" i.e. and

retain the thing acquired by the offence? It is so in earthly courts, but not before the Tribunal of God where no deceit can be of avail to us. With these thoughts in his mind he tries to pray saying:

"What form of prayer can serve my turn?
'Forgive me my foul murder'
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder."

Hamlet entering, sees him at prayer and hears his words. That he is convinced Claudius may obtain forgiveness, appears from his speech (lines 73-94) wherein he announces that he prefers not to kill him now, because if he does so, Claudius will go to heaven, and that will be poor revenge on him who murdered his father without giving him an opportunity to repent of his sins. Hamlet prefers to wait until he finds the king "about some act that has no relish of salvation in it."

Eleventh Article:

The resurrection of the body.

No passage bearing directly upon this point has been found by the writer. There is no doubt concerning Shakespeare's belief on the subject however since he speaks of heaven as an abode of perfect bliss where we shall enjoy the reward of our faithful service. That the body should participate in the recompense or in the punishment of the soul is too common a Catholic doctrine for Shakespeare to have ignored, especially in view of the Catholic tone of his writings.

The passages already quoted in reference to the General judgment also throw light on the matter. What is the General judgment

but the judgment of all men after the resurrection of the body on the last day?

Twelfth Article:

Life everlasting.

This article has been dealt with when the writer explained the Ascension of Our Lord and heaven. Also under Article 1, where reference is made to Balthasar's words concerning Juliet:

"Her immortal part with angels lives."

CONCLUSION

From this survey of the works of the "Bard of Avon" we see that he sang an anthem to Catholicism, rather than a hymn in praise of Protestantism. His plays are a profession of faith. Are they an expression of his personal belief, or are they not? That is a debatable question. Both contentions have been ably supported by notable scholars, who have delved deeply into the matter and have arrived at different conclusions. I incline towards the negative.

I shall not enter into the question of Shakespeare's personal religion because that is not the purpose of my essay. Nevertheless, it might not be amiss to say that the absence of Protestantism in his plays is a very strong indication that he was not a Protestant. Had he been an adherent of that religion, he would have sung its praises in his dramas. On the other hand the prevalence of Catholicism in his writings is not a proof that he was a Catholic, because it can be explained otherwise. Of course, the advocates of the affirmative in this controversy argue very cleverly from the fact that Catholic doctrine may be found not only in the tragedies but also in the comedies, where reference to religion could easily have been omitted. Nevertheless their thesis has not been convincingly proven so far.

One thing can be definitely concluded, and that is that Shakespeare even though not a Catholic rose above the political turmoil of his times and being a real dramatist, he showed us English life as it was. Pardon me for using this hackneyed quotation, but he "held the mirror up to nature" and in his dramas, poems and sonnets we see English life during the sixteenth century---all English life, the inner spirituality as well as the racial and political aspects.

The England that Shakespeare portrayed was Catholic England.

The explanation of this is not hard to find. The sixteenth century grew out of the Renaissance which grew out of the middle-ages. I think it is Stopford Brooke who said: "The outburst of a flower seems sudden, but the whole growth of the plant has caused it, and the flowering of Elizabethan literature was the slow result of the growth of the previous literature and the influences that bore upon it." This is said of Elizabethan literature in all its aspects, but it is especially true of the religious spirit of this period.

England, like all European countries had been a Catholic nation for years. When Henry VIII, yielding to his lust broke away from Rome and began what has been gilded over with the name of the Reformation, he did not give the country a new religion. In 1534 he began the schism by declaring himself head of the Church in England and casting off the authority of Rome. This act brought about the schism of the sixteenth century. It was later on, in Edward VI's reign that this schism became definitely a heresy by the promulgation of the forty-two articles, which were later reduced to thirty-nine, under Elizabeth in 1563.

Now, Shakespeare wrote his first play, Pericles, Prince of Tyre about 1590, just fifty-six years after Henry VIII, had made the first move that brought about the Reformation, and just twenty-seven years after the final adoption of the Thirty-Nine Articles. England had not changed to any great extent as a consequence of these events. The work of centuries was not undone in the short space of fifty-six years. During this period there had been a rise and fall of Catholicism in the country. Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church

in England--Edward VI published his forty-two articles, which were heretical--later on, under Mary, Parliament voted reunion with Rome, and finally Elizabeth proclaimed herself supreme spiritual and temporal head of the Church. As a consequence the people were in a spiritual turmoil. They saw the old faith being cast aside and nothing new substituted for it. Protestantism gave them no new doctrine. It simply denied some old truths that were found embarrassing. Apart from declaring the Sovereign of England supreme head of the Church it added nothing to the religious tenets of the times, but rather deprived the people of cherished beliefs.

The result was that many fell away from the practice of religion altogether, and what religion did remain in their souls was the religion of their forefathers. Those who became Anglicans, still had Catholicism engraven on their hearts, and unconsciously manifested that Catholicism in their daily lives. Their ceremonies were not greatly modified, and their prayers were but selections from the Roman Missal and Breviary, that had been translated into English, so that everything effecting the spirit of the times was still Catholic.

Shakespeare found his people in these circumstances and he presented them to his audiences just as he found them. He was clever--he was an artist, and he neglected nothing that could contribute to the perfection of his works.

The conclusion to be drawn is that Shakespeare and his century are products of Catholicism. Professor Long tells us that we owe all that is best in English literature to the monks who came over from Ireland under Aidan and settled in Northumbria. To my mind Shakespeare, whether a Catholic or not, belongs to that illustrious line of writers,

Bede, Caedman, Cynewulf, Alfred the Great, Layamon, Langland, Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Mandeville, Malory and More, who all grew out of the Northumbrian school.