

THE THEATRE AS A TEACHER.

The Rev. Cyrus Townsend Brady of the Protestant Episcopal Church, New York City, was present at a meeting of the Women's Press Club last year when the assertion was made by Mr. Corried that the theatre may now, if it has not already taken the place of the Church as the teacher of the community, and that more people gather every Sunday in the theatres of New York than in all the churches of the city. Mr. Corried, who is himself an actor, drew the inference that the theatres do more in the way of educating the people than do the churches.

The Rev. Mr. Brady thereupon determined to test for himself the kind of education which the theatres are giving, and for this purpose attended twenty-one plays during the winter; leaving aside the comic opera and vaudeville which are nearly always very objectionable and low in morality, and in most instances absolutely immoral.

The results of the rev. gentleman's investigations are given in Harper's Bazaar, for July, and are briefly the following:

These twenty-one plays were of the best class exhibited in New York theatres, and from a moral point of view, eight were unobjectionable; but of these eight, four, which is 50 per cent., are described as being "dead dull." Two of these we "twaddle" of the most disgusting character, "having neither originality of plot, brilliancy of dialogue, nor human interest of any sort, save for a few cynical witticisms and some beautiful stage settings, gowns and scenery."

The acting in these was good, but even good acting could not bring them within the catalogue of useful or interesting drama, yet they were popular plays, and were attended by large crowds of people.

Of the dull quartet, the remaining two were melodramas founded upon historical novels of repute. The novels are in themselves good, but their dramatization was so poor as to be "beneath contempt."

Four plays were interesting and unobjectionable and were worthy of being seen and heard. But even in these instances they were certainly not of the kind which would instruct their audiences in the way they should go morally, however instructive they may be in the matter of profane history and human character. One was Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, a noble play, no doubt; two had reference to the American Civil War from the Northern and Southern points of view respectively, and the fourth was a drama of Rome in the Middle Ages, described as "charming."

It thus appears that the theatres afford a minimum of instruction, even when the most popular plays are taken in; a minimum of profane instruction, and an infinitesimal fraction if we regard them from the point of view of pure morals.

But the other thirteen plays were simply abominable in various degrees. Eleven had episodes of unlawful affection, and were of a character which could not be talked over in decent society, and divorces were as common a feature of them as they are in real life in the United States.

Among these plays were two "grand operas," and these were bad like the rest. The only redeeming feature was that they were in a foreign language which most of the people could not understand—and the critic states that even if they had been sung in English, scarcely any one would understand them. But their action could be understood, and that action was evil. But if they had been understood, the lesson was so bad that it could not be worse. The stories told were absolutely wicked.

And this is the intellectual and moral pabulum which Mr. Corried declares to be the instruction which the majority of the people of New York are receiving in the theatres. If the statistics furnished by this gentleman are true, it is not to be wondered at that faith and morals have been brought to a low ebb, not only in that city, but elsewhere throughout the United States where the story would be the same if there were some equally observant critic to make the round of the theatres as Rev. Mr. Brady has done.

There was a time when the drama was used for the purpose of strengthening the faith of the public. This was during the very much abused middle ages, when passion and miracle plays and faith plays were almost entirely the kind in which the people delighted. The obscene dramas of paganism were banished by a purified public sentiment, and only plays which were harmless, or which conveyed some religious or moral lesson were represented on the stage; but nowadays for the most part only the worst passions of the multitude of theatre-frequenterers are pandored to.

One's own good breeding is the best security against other peoples ill manners.

large audiences, and that is what they furnish. They think only of the gain they can procure, and to this end are willing to sacrifice whatever of good the theatre might effect if it were managed in the interest of morality. The abominations of Pagan times are for this reason restored.

It has been well known that in the past the theatre has been conducted in a way to attack the Catholic Church. Theatrical managers do not so often indulge their audiences in this way at the present day, but it cannot be said that there is any improvement in the fact that now Christian morality is ignored, and the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion are frequently held up to ridicule. It needs no small amount of brazen-facedness to suggest that such an institution should be installed as a moral teacher of mankind to take the place of the Church which Christ Himself has established on earth to point out the way of salvation. The fact that the theatre has so deteriorated is one of many evidences to which we might appeal to show that Christ was wise in instituting a sacred order of teachers of His truth who should devote themselves to the work of propagating His own gospel, instead of leaving it to every individual to strike out his own path for the regeneration of mankind, and to teach the human race the way of salvation.

GAMBLING AT EXCURSIONS.

The Newsmen's Union of Montreal had recently a very successful excursion down the river on the steamer St. Lawrence, whereby a balance of \$245 was added to the treasury of the Union after all expenses were paid. The boys complained, at a meeting which took place subsequently, that gambling devices had been brought into use during the excursion by professional gamblers in the form of wheels of fortune and similar schemes for pocketing the spare cash of the youthful excursionists.

Mr. Murphy, the President of the Union, explained that when the steamer was hired, the committee had no idea that gambling schemes would be permitted on the boat, otherwise they would have made it a condition of the agreement that the like should not be tolerated. But when the boat had started, the owners claimed that they always held the right to let out privileges of this kind to outsiders during excursions, without regard to the wishes of the excursionists. Thus the committee had no control in the matter.

Mr. Murphy declared that he was entirely opposed to these gambling schemes, especially when they were forced upon a company of boys. He was loudly cheered by the boys as he thus expressed his views, and one of the boys remarked: "We earn our money too hard to have it fooled out of us," and this expression of opinion was also acquiesced in by the whole gathering.

The use of gambling devices among a crowd of boys who are so industriously inclined as the newsboys of Montreal is to be strongly condemned, and it is a pleasure to notice that the boys were so strong in the same conviction. The occurrence, however, will make their committees more thoughtful in the future so that they may make provision that the like shall not be allowed on their excursions to be held hereafter.

Such gambling devices are bad enough when used for the swindling of grown up people, but they are worse when boys who have earned their little wealth so laboriously are made the victims, the more so as there is greater danger that they ought to be trained in the way they should go hereafter, instead of becoming experts in gambling schemes.

VISITING OUR LORD.

Do you live near a church where our Blessed Lord waits for each of you to call upon Him? He seems to hold out His hand toward you, and His face is so full of love that surely you will enter the church and go up to the altar rail and speak to Him.

Do you ask what you shall say? Have you any trouble? Tell Him about it. Have you any temptation? Confide in Him and ask Him to help you overcome them. Have you some plans of the future. Consult Him; ask His advice; tell Him you want to do only what will please Him.

Remember, dear reader, that He died to save your soul. He dwells in our churches waiting for us to come to Him. Other friends may be kind and loving for a while, but He is always our Friend, ready and willing and anxious to give us graces and blessings.

During this season, when we are trying to live close to His dear Heart, let us go to Him often. Perhaps you live a long distance from the church, or you are in the employ of some one who needs your service many hours in the day, and you are not free to visit our Lord in the tabernacle at any time. Then when your feet cannot take you to Him, let your heart and commune with Him in your heart.

Have you read about St. Gertrude's "Good night, Jesus"? She would bow low and lovingly say, "Good night."

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GRAPHIC PEN-PICTURE OF THE NEW PONTIFF.

A most graphic and interesting pen-picture of the new Pope is given by Rev. Charles Cassidy, rector of St. Peter's Church, New Brighton, Staten Island, N. Y. Father Cassidy visited Cardinal Sarto in Venice in 1901, at which time he was traveling with Archbishop (then Bishop) Farley, of New York, for whom he was acting as secretary. Telling of his visit, Father Cassidy said:

"We visited the Cardinal Patriarch on Wednesday, November 20, 1901, and I think I can best describe to you my impressions of the man by reading an extract from my diary as I wrote it that night after coming from his house."

Father Cassidy then read this extract: "The Bishop and myself having visited the Church in Santa Maria Della Salute, it being the eve of the feast of the Presentation, lingered to look upon the gray crowd chanting the litany. From the vendors at the door we bought two candles, one for myself and one for the Bishop, to burn before the shrine of Our Lady of Health for those we love best of all at home."

"Then crossing the canal in our gondolas, we landed at the Lion of St. Marks and crossed the Piazzetta to visit the living Doge of Venice, Cardinal Sarto."

"We had heard much of the Patriarch from his priests and people at St. Marks, and we were not surprised to find him all that we in our imaginations had pictured, a real Prince of the Church, stately and gracious, and, withal, most kindly. He impressed us as a most lovable man of fascinating personality."

"He received the Bishop and myself most graciously, and was most interested in us as coming from the United States—visitors from the new Republic to visit the living Prince of one of the oldest Republics. His grasp of detail and his knowledge of his diocese and his people first impressed us. All his charitable institutions, the number of inmates and their special work or needs, and particularly the work of the St. Vincent de Paul societies, seemed particularly to interest him."

"The Bishop told him of our schools, and especially about St. Gabriel's, and others in which he was deeply interested. He talked to us much about the United States and spoke of the country so pleasantly because of its great democracy and the progress of the Church here. After a most satisfactory visit we bade him goodbye, kissing his ring and receiving his blessing. He kissed the Bishop as they parted."

"Later," Father Cassidy continued, "we saw him in the great procession, in company with the Mayor and other officials of the city, all of whom seemed to love the man."

"How did he personally impress you?" Father Cassidy was asked.

"In a sense," he replied, "he was very much like Pope Leo, whom I saw shortly after that. He had the same gentle manner. He also put me in mind of St. Vincent de Paul, having that same pastoral look, the real bearing of the father with the child, although I did not know at that time that his life had been passed as a parish priest."

"He is not a large man, as depicted in his pictures, but rather spare, about medium size, with a pleasing but strong voice and the kindest steady blue eyes that seem to search out anything wrong in the thoughts of those he talks with, but without anything like harsh rebuke. He impresses you as a man of great strength, but gentle. The moment we came in his presence he made us feel at home, although we could not help realizing that we were in the presence of a very strong man. Everything about him, his dress, his home surroundings were simple, like his life."

"I notice by the papers that he is reported as showing some nervousness when he first appeared before the great throng in Rome, but I don't think that is to be wondered at. On March 4, 1902, when I saw Pope Leo come out before that great multitude, adjust his glasses and sing his 'Deus in Adjutorium,' I was deeply impressed upon me what a solemn occasion it was, and I do not wonder that this modest priest, suddenly exalted to so high a position, should feel to the extent of considerable nervousness the great weight of the occasion."

Speaking of his general appearance Father Cassidy said he reminded him considerably of Archbishop Farley. "His face at that time was very like Bishop Farley's," he said. "It was a little sharper, but had the same kindly expression in the eyes and the same frank manner, and as soon as the men met there seemed at once to spring up a most congenial feeling between them. He and the Bishop talked as if they had been acquainted for many years."

"Much of their conversation that day was about this country, the condition of the Church here and the wonderful freedom and liberty it was given here. At that time I felt convinced that he was the coming Pope, and Bishop Farley and I talked about it frequently after that. We were three months in Rome and Italy, and during that time we met all the Cardinals, and I do not recall that Sarto was ever spoken of as a possible candidate for Pope Leo's successor by any one save the Bishop and myself. Almost every other Cardinal was spoken of in that sense."

course and sympathetic touch."

Now in all this it will be noted that there is not the slightest hint that the Being the preacher refers to was and is the true God, the Second Person of the Trinity, incarnate. The very contrary of this is implied. For instance:

"Whether then He could foresee how His life history was to work itself out in all its details, no one can tell." Certainly all those of average intelligence who believe that Christ is God and that God is omniscient, can see and must see that He foresaw or knew how His life history, in all its details, was to be worked out.

Again: "Perhaps He did not know at the outset that His mission of bringing God close to men in that way would lead Him over so thorny a path as the one He later followed."

Here again the supposed ignorance of the future is incompatible with the belief that Christ is God. In like manner through the whole piece there is an implied disbelief in the Divinity of Christ.

We once met on a train a minister, a strenuous prohibitionist. In the course of conversation on his favorite subject he said in a tone of pious conviction: "If our Lord had foreseen the evils that liquor has caused I think He would not have made wine one of the elements of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper."

We asked: "Do you believe in the Divinity of our Lord; that is, that He is God?"

"Oh, certainly," he said.

We said no more, gave no indication of our opinion of his intellect. He got off at a little station, and we suppose he believes in the Divinity of our Lord. And doubtless so does Dr. Parkhurst in regard to his belief. — New York Freeman's Journal.



POPE PIUS X.

THE QUESTION-BOX ANSWERS.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED ON MISSIONS TO NON-CATHOLICS.

By Rev. Bertrand L. Conway of the Paulist Fathers.

In his preface to this book Cardinal Gibbons states that it "answers in a brief and popular manner the most important questions actually received by the author during the past five years of missionary activity in all parts of the United States from Boston to Denver." These words of praise are weighty, coming as they do from one who has himself prepared a work of the same nature, long since become one of the most popular books of the nineteenth century. Father Conway gathers under more than sixty titles a multitude of objections received by the Diocesan Missionaries on their apostolic tours here and there in the United States. Not all of them affect immediately the special tenets of Catholicism. The rule of faith, the "notes" of the true Church, politico-ecclesiastical matters, peculiar institutions of Catholicism like celibacy, abstinence, fasting and indulgences, come in for a large need of explanation. The Mass, the Sacraments, the Blessed Virgin and Saints, the life to come, are other sources of ignorance or misunderstanding. It is remarkable to what an extent these average objections of the non-Catholic mind square with the original polemics of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, or when they are new, are nearly all drawn from erroneous views of the great lines of the Church. It needs no profound work like Moehler's Symbolism to grapple with this material—one would think after reading the book that the average American mind had been little touched by the advanced Protestant theological literature of the last two centuries. If these objections really represent the elements of religious doubt and hesitation in the American mind as regards Catholicism, there is reason for believing the assertion of Mr. Henry Sidgwick in a late issue of the Monthly, viz., that there is no longer any insurmountable doctrinal obstacle to the reunion of the Protestant churches with the Roman Church on the basis of heretical teaching.

There are other instructive thoughts suggested by the examination of these curious statistics. This little catechism may rightly hope to become a popular vade mecum. Its place is already marked in the average Catholic home library besides the Faith of Our Fathers and the Catholic Doctrine of Father Bruno, not to speak of older works like Hay's Sincere Christian and Milner's End of Controversy. The style is quite suitable to the scope of the work—direct, clear, and simple. There is a sustained effort to make known frankly and succinctly the elements of Catholic truth and discipline in a dictation that avoids theological phraseology without losing fullness and precision. The writer does not try to say all that might be said, but only what is needed to make clear the immediate vision of his opponent or disciple. Such a book is equipped to take care of itself, to be its own tongue, its own commentary. Its circulation should therefore be an unlimited one. Improvements will no doubt be suggested. Thus, the titles of all books cited are indicated, printed in a special bibliography, but they might be again grouped with others in a logical order, to furnish a course of regular and progressive reading in Catholic theology and history. The titles of chapters ought to be numbered both in the text and in the table of contents, and with this might be combined a progressive numbering of all the paragraphs. Where an index-subject includes several references, it might be well to indicate the practice of indicating in heavier type the page or pages where an objection is most efficiently dealt with. Finally, we cannot help suggesting that a companion volume of "Selected Readings" be issued, drawn, when possible, from eloquent non-Catholic writers, and by cross-references made to furnish a companion or key to certain important lines of objection. We wish Father Conway and his co-laborers an ever-growing measure of success in the immense vineyard that has been allotted to them. Here grow brambles, it is true, and here are the ruins of a rich cultivation—but here also are fertile soil, abundant sap, rays of wild fruit, the traces of former success and comfort, counseling and inspiring evidences of former unity and communion. Only the persistent and ingenious husbandry of charity may hope to reclaim these lost provinces from the moral desolation that has fallen or is impending over them—but it is precisely as Catholicism that the Almighty has planted the inexhaustible reservoir of charity, as wide as the world and human mind, and as inexhaustible as the divine love itself.—Very Rev. Thomas J. Shahan in Catholic University Bulletin.

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HAVE YOU GOT A PEW?

Not infrequently does one hear complaints against pastors because of certain regulations which they have been compelled to adopt with regard to the pews in their churches. It is made to appear that charges are levied for the privilege and duty of hearing Mass, that pastors seek to make a show of poverty by setting aside seats for those who cannot pay for them and similar unwarranted criticisms, but all are without foundation.

It is true that all Catholics have a common interest in their parish churches, providing, however, they contribute to their support. It is also true that they have the right to worship therein, although they do not comply with this imperative duty. This by no means, however, implies that their use and privilege are without limitations. The rights of others are likewise involved, and in order that all may be properly respected certain regulations must be complied with.

Their right and duty to attend service does not extend to the occupation of places for which others pay. When an individual rents and pays for a pew or a portion thereof, that becomes his exclusive property, and he is entitled to its enjoyment whenever he wishes. It is the intruder's business to vacate if such becomes necessary, and this he must do so under the penalty of uncivil conduct or it needs be, ejection. More than that, it is the duty of the pastor to protect the pew-holder in the enjoyment of his rights.

The difficulty, however, could be removed if every family and every single person were to own a pew or a portion of one. There would then be no necessity for the enforcement of rigid regulations. Neither would there be complaints. But there are many other potent reasons why every member of a parish should be a pew-owner. To the younger members of the family it gives a fixed place in the house of God. It impresses upon them an independence and encourages them in the habit of regularity. It keeps them from getting close to the door and often from getting entirely outside the church. But above all, it will teach them their duty to their fellow-worshippers.—Church Progress.

THE "YELLOW" PAPERS REBUKED.

London, Aug. 7.—The Times' correspondent at Rome says: "There is no basis for the old 'misconception,' fostered chiefly by the continental press, concerning the conduct of the Sacred College before and during the deliberations. He recalls that the strange tales of intrigues and counter-intrigues, the private rancors and petty feuds told at the time of the conclave which elected Leo XIII. were afterwards disproved when the true history of the conclave was written, and says that much the same process has been taking place during the conclave just closed. One seemed to be witnessing the reproduction of an old play wherein all the anticipated stage properties were again brought to sight. Stage Cardinals acted as stage Cardinals should—bickered, quarrelled, intrigued and entered upon dark conspiracies for the confusion of their enemies, while in the background stalked mysterious figures, the counterfeit presentments of kings, emperors and potentates. It would be useless, probably, to protest that this was not a true picture, and it must be confessed that the reality was deplorable; in fact, rather dull beside the stirring sensations of the melodrama. Yet behind the scenes, where one could witness the actual manufacture of the puppets who were placed on the stage, one was sometimes amazed at the glibness of their reality. As it is useless to protest, one must be content to state the firm conviction, based on the closest and most careful observation of recent proceedings, that the conduct of the members of the Sacred College before, during and after the conclave was absolutely in accordance with their high office and grave responsibilities, and the dictates of their consciences."

No one who realizes and heartily accepts the unique position of the Catholic Church, founded on the Rock, Peter; no one who hears in mind the promise made by the Divine and venerable lips of God incarnate, that the gates of hell should never prevail against it, can have any misgiving as to the sufficiency of her authority in all that concerns the composition, integrity, inspiration, authenticity and trustworthiness, etc., of the Holy Bible, of which she has ever been the zealous and devoted custodian and the infallible expositor.—Mgr. Vaughan.

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