

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.
CCCLX.

Our friends of the Presbyterian Witness do themselves honor by denouncing the present Government policy of France as an "odious persecution." However, their diagnosis of the cause appears decidedly faulty. They say that this persecution is "only possible because of the persecutions of past centuries, so flagrant, so pitiless, and at times so popular."

Now the only way of deriving the present policy of M. Combes from former persecutions is to assume that he and his accomplices are moved by hereditary resentment over severities inflicted by the Catholics on their forefathers. This explanation will not hold. Some of Combes' allies are Protestants, and more are Jews, but the great body of them are, like himself, Catholics born and bred, and still Catholics in family connection. These have no hereditary grievances, for, at least in popular remembrance, it was their ancestors who persecuted the Huguenots, not the Huguenots who persecuted their ancestors. Innocent the Eleventh's solemn protests against the Dragonnades appear to have produced scarcely any echo in the Catholic France, infatuated as it was with the tyrant Lewis, and certainly have transmitted no indignant remembrance to posterity. Indeed, the present persecutors, I notice, prudently avoid any references to former persecutions. Such reminiscences would be exceedingly awkward for them just now.

In 1793 Jansenist resentment which had degenerated into angry irreligion in some of the least sincere, had a distinguishable share in promoting the Reign of Terror. Since then Jansenism seems to have evaporated completely as a living force. I see nowhere the faintest reference to it as any way concerned in present events, not to say that the Jansenists were devotedly attached to monastic education. Their great opponents, the Jesuits, cordially praise their faithfulness to the eremitic ideal of life. If there are any of them left, (and I believe there are a few) they certainly are not found on the side of Emil Combes.

As to the Protestants, I have read various late numbers of one of their chief organs, the *Revue Chretienne*. Some of these dissent from the present policy; some give it a halting support; none approve it with any warmth. It is plain that it has not sprung out of any brooding displeasure that has come down in their veins. The elder Protestants long since warmed to the malignant irreligiosity was leading it.

Walden - Rousseau's and Combes policy, as we know, is enthusiastically urged forward, and indeed has been in large measure developed, by the Freemasons. Now among these the Jews are very active, and not least active as persecutors. Yet it can hardly be angry remembrances of ancestral sufferings in France that incite them. They would have to go back six hundred and fifty years to find much to complain of, as special to France, and then the two decrees of banishment were soon revoked.

Moreover, as the Jewish born Neander reminds us, the two great protectors of the Jews were the Order of Cistercian monks, headed by St. Bernard, and the Holy See, especially as represented in Innocent III., and in Gregory IX. It is the former Pope who has made it excommunication for a Catholic to outrage or despoil the Jews, or to molest their worship. It is the latter, the founder of the Inquisition, who came forward in defence of the Jews against their fanatical murderers with singular benignity of eloquence.

Was a Jew brought before the Holy Office? If the tribunal found that he was unbaptized, its immediate answer was, as pointed out by Henry C. Lea: "We have nothing to do with him. He is free of the jurisdiction of the Church." Did Catholics, more zealous than considerate, take away the children of Jews to bring them up Christians? The Canon Law intervened, forbidding the act, "as contrary to natural justice and parental right." Suppression of baptism was sometimes resorted to, but such baptisms were condemned alike by the Bishops and by Rome, and denounced with especial energy by the inquisitorial order of Dominic.

Nor have the Jews been unkind of their obligations. A rabbi of the time extols the Abbot of Clairvaux in language that almost puts him on a level with Jehovah Himself, a eulogy equally applicable to Gregory IX. in the next century. Neander, the Jewish descendant, has set forth the good offices of Rome and of Clairvaux towards his people in affectionate detail. The Grand Sanhedrin of 1801 made explicit expression of its gratitude towards the Holy See, in language which has since been re-echoed by other Jewish organs. There are Jews, and too many of them, who would be glad to destroy Christianity. But the great body of those who, with Emil Combes, deplore "the recrudescence of religious faith," and with M. Viviani, declare: "Not Clericalism but God is the enemy," are neither Jews nor Protestants, but apostate Catholics, headed by an apostate cleric. No explanation of the present persecution as proceeding from hereditary horror of former persecutions can possibly be accommodated to them.

We need not go back to the Abbigliarian crusades, seven hundred years ago. All possibility of hereditary transmission of these memories disappeared with the extinction of the last remains of this Manichaean heresy, more than six hundred years back. The only persecutions in France that still live in hereditary memory are, besides the Dragonnades, against which the Pope and Cardinals, and the Catholic society of Rome, protested so energetically, the massacres of the sixteenth century, of the Huguenots by the Huguenots. The latter were far more atrociously cruel, and, relatively to Protestant

numbers, more destructive, but as, of course, their absolute havoc was comparatively small, they fell more quickly than would have been expected, even out of Catholic memory, and of course were gladly and quickly forgotten by the Huguenots.

It is curious how the Protestants were allowed to have their own way, or rather, how they were encouraged by the Catholics, in the remorse of these over St. Bartholomew's, to exaggerate the number of their martyrs. Their own statistics, naturally resting on the most intimate knowledge, computed the victims of the Massacre at 14,000. However, the Catholic historian De Thou insisted on counting them at 20,000. Other Catholics again would not suffer the number to be less than 30,000. Others again, partly to mark their abhorrence of the deed, partly in the popular love of accumulated horrors, insisted on reckoning the victims at 70,000, and this suited the general taste so well that it was commonly accepted. Finally Archbishop Perrier, a good-hearted but rather headstrong Catholic historian, De Thou insisted on counting them at 20,000. Other Catholics again would not suffer the number to be less than 30,000. Others again, partly to mark their abhorrence of the deed, partly in the popular love of accumulated horrors, insisted on reckoning the victims at 70,000, and this suited the general taste so well that it was commonly accepted. Finally Archbishop Perrier, a good-hearted but rather headstrong Catholic historian, De Thou insisted on counting them at 20,000. Other Catholics again would not suffer the number to be less than 30,000. Others again, partly to mark their abhorrence of the deed, partly in the popular love of accumulated horrors, insisted on reckoning the victims at 70,000, and this suited the general taste so well that it was commonly accepted.

We see then how the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's, exaggerated six or seven fold, partly by remorse, and partly by the vulgar love of horrors, has almost entirely extinguished the memory of other Catholic murders of the Huguenots, and completely extinguished the memory of the Huguenot massacres of the Catholics, although these were proportionately of wider sweep, and far more atrocious in their forms of lingering cruelty, besides their accompaniments of sacrilegious outrage, from the destruction of cathedrals and abbeys to the shocking insults offered to the bones of the illustrious dead. All these hideous memories have long since been swallowed up by the memory of St. Bartholomew's, magnified six fold.

It is plain, then, that it is not resentment of former persecutions inflicted on their ancestors which has stirred up these renegade Catholics to the present persecution. They are guided by the same instinct which led Professor Haxley to desire the extermination of Roman Catholicism, not on account of its specific character, but as being in his estimation, not only the most ancient and most numerous, but most logically coherent form of Christianity, which, once rooted out, would leave only *dissecta membra*, easy to be dealt with. I notice that a supporter of M. Combes remarks that while Protestantism is somewhat less offensive to Freethinkers, its offensiveness is of the same kind. The programme of destruction is this: First, the monks; next, the priests; next, the laity; next, the Protestants; next, as it explicitly avowed by the *Extreme Left*, all who manifest the religious temper, in any form, or in any degree.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK.
Andover, Mass.

THE SIXTH PRECEPT.

The sixth and last commandment of the Church is one of grave importance. Prevailing practices prove it to be one also which our young people too frequently ignore. It contains the law touching the solemnization of marriage; the impediments which render it null and void and those which, though they do not invalidate it, still make it a sin of disobedience.

Hence it is a law concerning which a wider knowledge and a more rigid observance is much to be commended in these days of sentimentality and disregard of parental injunction. If the children of the Church were properly versed in its provisions and possessed due appreciation of its merits scandal in this particular would become less common.

Few steps in life have associated with them more responsibilities than matrimony. The importance, therefore, of proceeding with all possible caution is at once apparent. Moreover, being a sacrament, it should be received only after proper preparation. Knowing best how those called to this holy union may correspond with God's designs the Church in her great and unchangeable wisdom has promulgated this law with that purpose in view.

As is readily perceived from the statement of the law there are times when the Church prohibits the solemnization of marriage. Likewise does she under certain conditions absolutely forbid certain persons to marry. And to such an extent that should they even go through the form, the marriage is notwithstanding, null and void. For the one case the marriage is valid, but tainted with the sin of disobedience; in the other it is the solemnity of the sacrament which is involved; in the latter its very essence. We shall consider each in detail hereafter.—Church Progress.

The Precious Blood.

Every drop of the Precious Blood of the Sacred Heart was shed for each individual child of Adam. What riches do we not lose for want of not through His Heart, should receive them abundantly. O Jesus, Thy Sacred Heart, and Thy Heart itself was opened only that we might dwell there in liberty and peace. Let us draw near to the Heart of Jesus, that loving fountain of which He gives us gratuitously the saving waters, inviting us thereto Himself. "Let him who thirsts come to Me." Who is more worthy than thou, O Mary, to speak for us to the Heart of Jesus Christ? Thou wilt speak to Him O sovereign, because all that thou askest of Him thou wilt obtain, for thou art His Mother.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.
SYMPATHY FOR SINNERS.

O God I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or such as this publication. (St. Luke xviii. 11)

Did you never notice that pride and hardness of heart go together? That miserable Pharisee could not enjoy his self-glorification without condemning his neighbor, a person, as it happened, far more deserving than himself. Indeed, the worst vices seem to love each other's company as if they were blind relatives. Coveting our neighbor's goods, for example, goes along with stinginess of our own; gluttony and lust are twins. Almost the same may be said of opposing others and disobeying lawful authority; and in this hateful Pharisee we behold the union of pride in one's self and contempt for one's neighbor. The sinner seems to be bound with a chain every link of which is double.

Now, brethren, this is a fault often found in far better souls than this haughty Pharisee. Many of us have too little sympathy for persons whom we know to be in mortal sin. To be sure, it is no harm to rejoice that we are at friendship with heaven. But the worst of it is that some of us are never really happy at the thought of our own virtues till we are quite miserable over our neighbor's wickedness; and when we say with our lips, "I have sinned against God," our heart whispers, "And how good I am!"

The spirit of correction possesses many good people—a spirit commonly the sign of hidden pride. No sooner do we take the first steps in amendment of life than we are divided between rejoicing in our own goodness and lamenting over other folk's vice. I know not what we good people should do for something to talk about were it not for our neighbor's shortcomings.

Brethren, this vanity is very foolish and very dangerous. Who dares say that he has nothing to fear from the judgments of God? Who can count himself safe so much as one day from his own natural feebleness, or from the wiles of Satan, or from human respect? And if we do rightly trust in God's favor, how can we forget that progress in virtue is a necessary condition of our remaining safe at all? Now this progress means simply a right knowledge of our remaining defects and a solid purpose to overcome them—something with which the vice of the Pharisee is quite incompatible. Nothing so binds us to our own little faults as too much regard for our neighbor's big ones. Doubtless it would have been just as difficult for the Pharisee to correct his harshness of voice, or his lofty bearing, or his patronizing tone as to overcome his great sin of pride itself; and such is the case with many of us. The beam in our neighbor's eye looks so shocking that we quite forget that we have quite a squint in our own eye from various little moles in it.

Be certain, therefore, brethren, that, if you find hard feelings in your heart towards sinners, you have no long journey to make before you discover the capital sin of pride in your own. Why can we not leave judgment to God, and treat poor sinners after our Lord's example, praying and suffering for them? I do not mean to say that we should forget to mention to them the awful chastisements of God; indeed, a truer friend does not exist than one who warns us of our future destruction, and some, such as parents, are in duty bound to give such admonition. But in the treatment of moral maladies we should bear in mind that bitter words and harsh looks spoil good medicine. And especially should we bear in mind that we have had our own wicked days.

Let us, therefore, regard sinners with much tenderness, dropping out of our view while we deal with them our own darling selves. Let us realize that we ourselves are poor souls, quite capable, but for God's singular favor, of falling into the worst state of sinfulness.

FATHER AND SON.

How rare it is to see a father and a son who are chums; yet how beautiful is the sight of such a friendship!

Most fathers do not want to have their boys near them in their leisure hours, and most young men are glad to get away from the neighborhood of "the old man" to spend their evenings.

Of course it depends chiefly on the father whether or not his growing son is to find delight in his companionship. If he cultivates the affection of his boy, if he seeks his society, if he tries to mould him without breaking his will or denying him the rights of a human being, with a reason, a will, and a disposition of his own, he will be apt, if the young fellow is made of the right stuff, to win his heart and to become his hero. For love begets love. But if he is harsh and distant to the boy in the days of the latter's youth, if he exacts obedience without explanation, if he expects an old head on young shoulders, if he makes no effort to gain his confidence, if he does not seek his regard, he need not be surprised if his son grows up a stranger to him and desires in his young manhood other company.

Happy is the father whose boy is his friend, his associate, his admirer, his right hand in business enterprises, his consolation and his staff in old age!—Catholic Columbian.

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"An important piece of news—the most important of its class made public for many a day," is the phrase which the London Daily News uses to describe the announcement that Archbishop Bourne of Westminster has become a total abstainer. "The Archbishop," the News continues, "would be the last person to claim any credit for the sacrifice involved by the renunciation of wine as such; but, like Cardinal Manning, Archbishop Bourne has recognized the havoc made among his flock by drunkenness, and, as he must preach total abstinence to those who need it, he has decided to practice what he has to preach. The example wins for him immediately an increase in the loyalty the Catholic laity has, from the first, ungrudgingly yielded him."—Sacred Heart Review.

THE HEART'S PRAYER.

SILENT MEDITATION THE BEST MEDIUM OF SUPPLICATING DIVINE AID.

Those who cannot conceive how the heart can pray alone and without any distinct acts, are equally unable to understand how a simple, general prayer virtually contains all particular prayers. I except vocal prayers of obligation, and were I not to specify this exception it would be sufficiently understood of itself. In these people, I treat with God as they do with men, thinking they are not understood unless they go into detailed explanation of the things they require. They carefully get ready their intention, they have express forms for each and every act, they name separately each person they wish to pray for, and if the least detail escapes their memory they do not think that God can supply it.

Souls of little faith, and who know not God, your intentions are present to him before you open your mouth! He sees them as soon as they are formed in your heart; what need have you to torment yourself in explaining them to Him? You desire all spiritual blessings as much for yourselves as for those in whom you take an interest. Is He ignorant of this, since He Himself inspires you with these desires?

Do not, then, have any anxiety concerning this matter. If you tell drawn to the simple and general prayer of which I speak, do not give it up under the pretext that it aims at no particular object, that you come from it without having asked for anything. Here again you are deceiving yourself; you have asked for everything you need for yourself and for those belonging to you, far better than if you had specified each want of which the multiplicity would only have wearied you and hindered the action of God which is working to keep you in a holy calm in His presence.

O my blessed Saviour! How greatly I need instruction on prayer! How could I have been ignorant of the fact that it is an entirely supernatural act, and that Thy grace alone could produce it in hearts that are well disposed. I thought that it was sufficient to repeat the prayers taught me in my childhood, adding thereto certain forms found in books, and that in repeating or reading these I was fulfilling, in every particular, the first of all my duties. How greatly was I mistaken! I never dreamt that words are the mere raw material of prayer, that the heart alone prays, and that to converse with Thee in any other language but that of the heart is useless. O my Divine Master! teach me this silent language that says so much!—ANNE GROUT, S.J.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the Source, as well as the Channel of all celestial gifts.

It is most important to know that the Heart of Jesus perfectly understands this cold love of ours, and is very content to receive it. Oftentimes those who feel they have no love, and spend their time in bawling, and asking for it, give Him more pleasure than those who are swimming in fervent affection.—Father Dignam, S.J.

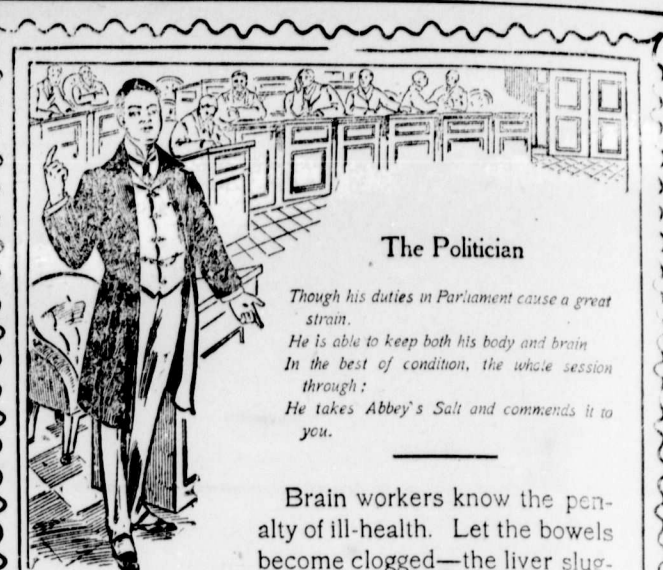
The Heart of Christ may well indeed be adored, for it suffered more than all Christ's other members. Down His noble forehead, and blinding eyes that the ignominy of Calvary robbed not of their mild majesty, came blood from His torn temples. His feet were pinioned so that the great God "could not turn in His anguish." His hands, 'tis true, were pierced, and the poor palms felt not in agony, the soft touch of sympathy, but the hard cold iron of cruelty. All this was awful! All this was too terrible to think upon! But it was His Heart, so delicate, hence so sensitive, that intensified the pains of the head and hand and foot. It was His Heart multiplied its own dolors, until nature could bear no more; and the great Heart Divine—mighty in its sorrows, infinite in its loves—broke in the side of Christ.

O Grand Heart of Christ, from the abundance of which His mouth spoke such kindly Gospel! O devoted Heart sacrificing rest in Nazareth to weariness in Jerusalem! O liberal Heart, shedding blood for us whose hearts are as hard as the rocks of Golgotha, purpled with deicide! O constant Heart, loving us still, though here you found nothing but a chilly cradle and a thorny deathbed! O immense Heart, full of the love that thrills from pole to pole in eternity. O Heart of my God, which, though drained of Thy blood, could never be emptied of Thy Divinity!—Rev. James H. Cotter.

The judgment of Catholics will be more severe than that of Protestants, for we have more light and more grace. Therefore more will be expected of us.

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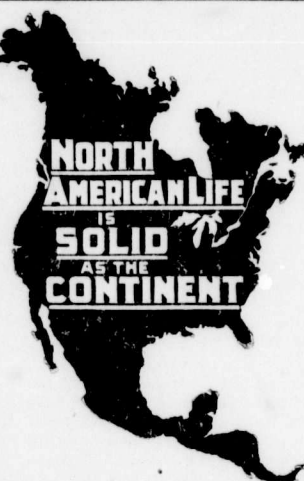
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