

PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

LXXV.

Philip Melancthon was of a more placable disposition than Luther, and better inclined to conciliatory explanations. It is a pity that he seems to have been more utterly cold-hearted towards the condition of the common people than even Luther.

Unhappily this was not the advice which he received from the two chief German Reformers, although I think it is likely he would have received it from Bucer. Bucer, although far more fanatically cruel in his theories than either Luther or Melancthon, seems, apart from that, to have been more affectionately mindful of the condition of the people.

"Your Lordship," says Melancthon, "should make no alteration in the old feudal services and your contentment should be entirely at rest. Such regulations in bodily things are acceptable to God, even though they are unequal, and even though they are somewhat too hard, and Your Lordship will do well to mark Paul's sentence in Romans 13, that secular regulations are God's ordinance."

Observe now the sophism with which this opinion begins. Paul is speaking only of government, considered as an institute established for the public weal. Now, in his general administration, was mild and equitable, especially in the earlier part of his principate, and at the time when St. Paul wrote could with perfect truth be described as "a minister of God for good."

It never enters Paul's mind to dispute the right of the senate to set the Emperor aside if he should cease to be the minister of God for good and become the minister of Lucifer for evil. The whole chapter, instead of being what I once heard the late William Lloyd Garrison maliciously call it, "Tas Gibraltar of despotism," is simply an admonition to the Christians not to imagine that their new spiritual dignity and enfranchisement set them free from the obligation of obeying a heathen magistrate when he uses his legitimate authority for legitimate ends, for the encouragement of good and the discouragement of evil.

How utterly different the case of Baron Ennselad! Had he been, what he probably was not, a lord "immediate of the Empire," responsible for the government of his dominions, he would of course have felt perfectly free to lay such taxes as were needed for this end.

His scruples show that he was asking himself another question, namely, Why am I requiring, over and above a fair rent, all sorts of services and payments from my people, purely for my own advantage, and by no other title than that of hereditary compulsion? It is not in the least a matter of the public weal that is here in question, but of selfish private advantage. The Reformation, turning this nobleman's attention to serious questions, had sired up his conscience concerning his dependants. Here was a grand opportunity for Luther and Philip to show him that, however much they might diverge from Catholic doctrine, they were fully minded to maintain the Catholic tradition of beneficence and care for the people.

Unhappily Melancthon does no such thing, but, with wretched sophistry, which can hardly have failed to be transparent to his clear mind, turns to the encouragement of private selfishness and tyrannical arguments which St. Paul uses only for the public advantage.

INGS OF POVERTY.

Why then does he not exemplify them by becoming a poor man now? I believe he means to die poor. As God has provided that he shall, whether he will or not, we own him small thanks for that. What wretched balderdash such talk is, whether it comes from the Carnegies and the Rockefellers, or from the Luthers and Melancthons! Luther, too, said that the peasants took the kernel and left the husk. He knew he was lying when he said so. Germany was full of idle, greedy, ostentatious nobles, whose growing prodies were veritable daughters of the horse-leech, crying ever more loudly, "Give! give!" robbing the peasants by exactions which had no other ground than that their forefathers had been plundering the forefathers of the peasants from time out of mind, robbing the merchants by highwaymanship practiced as a branch of knighthood, filling the land with all the unspeakable outrages and plunderings of private war. They thought they were very merciful (and Luther backs them up in this shamelessness of tyranny) if they only took half their subjects' cattle. There is no doubt of the severity of their tolls, but with the most of them these tolls were directed towards the filling of their treasure houses, and towards making themselves a terror to mankind. The mild-tempered of them, it is true, were content to make themselves simply a burden to mankind, with out making themselves also a terror. Yet, burden or terror, Luther and Melancthon are immeasurably mendacious in telling the wretched peasants, with mocking insolence, that "they have the kernel and the prince the husk." Still, this falsehood is so scandalously plain, that I doubt whether we can really call it falsehood. It should be called an impudent bravado of the apologists of tyranny. Melancthon in general is far from being an impudent man, but for once he has fairly caught an inspiration from his great principal.

Melancthon, however, allows that he is not altogether contented with the state of things between the lords and the subjects. The reason, as he explains, is that he thinks "the burdens and punishments are far too light." Therefore he takes comfort in thinking, that there is such a happy variety of extra imposition and taxation as in some measure makes good the unreasonableness of the regular punishments and public burdens. Otherwise he is sure the world would go all to pieces. My readers may think I am caricaturing, but, except the term "reasonableness," I am copying him almost literally.

He and Luther are both fond of the amiable comparison, and he brings it in here, "To the ass his fodder, his load and his whip, so to the servant his bread, his work and his flogging." As Melancthon does not hold Ecclesiasticus canonical, he cannot plead religious necessity for the quotation, while it is certain that the Catholic Church would remind her children that the Old Testament is not to give law to the New, and that the German nobles were the Christian servants, servants entitled to demand equitable wages, and not rightfully subject to corporal chastisement. All this is of no account to Melancthon.

He justifies the hardness of the German nobles, by declaring that Joseph's government in Egypt was "much harder." Of this there is no evidence, but if it were true I should like to know where we are told that Joseph's civil government was a revelation from God. Joseph was inspired, and so was David, but was David's despotism a revelation from God? If Joseph and Daniel paid more regard (like their countryman Dsrail after them) to the monarch than to the people, is that any reason why, since the coming of the Son of Man, monarchs and nobles are still to be exalted at the cost of the people? Luther and Melancthon seem to believe this, but such a doctrine, like the doctrine of polygamy, is far enough removed from Christianity.

This matter ought to be pursued farther, to illustrate the real relation of original Lutheranism to freedom.

Charles C. Starbuck. 12 Moacham street, North Cambridge, Mass.

AN AGREEMENT IN UNBELIEF.

From the New York Sun.

On Tuesday, the seventh anniversary of the death of Phillips Brooks, a building erected as a memorial of that distinguished Episcopal clergyman and Bishop, was dedicated at Harvard University, Episcopalians and Unitarians joining in the exercises and speaking from the same platform. The Brooks House is to be for the accommodation of all the religious societies of Harvard, whatever their creed, and it will represent, therefore, a spirit of religious unity or toleration which is now manifested very extensively and is likely to have a profound influence on the course of denominationalism for the twentieth century has far advanced. In questionably the barriers between the different branches of Protestantism are beginning to be broken down, but is not the hammer with which the work of destruction is done rather agreement in unbelief than belief? For orthodox and heterodoxy to dwell together in unity, obviously it is necessary that one side or the other should surrender the principle for which it has been fighting. In order that negation may be conciliated, affirmation must defer to it very politely. When there is peace between faith and infidelity, it is the sort of peace which exists between the lion and the lamb when the lamb is inside

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Second Sunday of Lent.

LONG, AND LABOR FOR HEAVEN.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here, let us make here three tabernacles." (Matt. 17, 5.)

So great was the joy felt by the apostles on seeing their divine Master in His glory that they had no other desire than to build habitations on Mount Thabor, and there dwell forever with Jesus. This, however, was a futile desire, for shortly after wards they were compelled to descend from the mountain, where they had seen so much glory and experienced so great a happiness, and were necessitated to continue on the thorn strewn path of life. They were again obliged to engage in the hard battle of life, and after many years of trials and persecutions, they were to end their sufferings by the death of martyrdom.

There are thousands of Christians who act similarly to the apostles. They permit their hearts to be chained to the trifling and worthless pleasures of this world, and expect to find in Heaven. They do not consider the words of the royal prophet, "Man is like vanity, his days pass away like a shadow." (Ps. 143, 4) They will not understand that all earthly happiness is vain and fleeting; that it is like a delightful dream, which is soon followed by an awakening to a sad reality; that it is like a bubble, one moment reflecting the beautiful colors of the rainbow, and another, bursting and vanishing into nothing.

How earnestly does not our Lord warn us against such indifference! How solemnly does He not admonish us in the gospel, when He says: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal," but "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice: and all the things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6, 19 and 33) How unremittently does not our Lord warn us to be prepared, for the Son of Man will come like a thief in the night, when He is least expected. Hence, let us not say with St. Peter, "It is good for us to be here, let us here make our tabernacles." What we build on earth has no stable foundation. A whirlwind arises, and behold, in a moment the edifice of happiness which we erected, and which we considered so strong, so indestructible, lies in a heap of ruins, nothing remains but the memory of our former bliss, and the deep sorrow over the vanished happiness. "Here we have no lasting home, but we must seek one that is to come." Yes, that home above the clouds we should seek, for that we should strive, that true eternal home, where every tear of sorrow is dried and every moan of grief has an end, where, in the midst of the heavenly choirs we shall see the glory of God and partake of the happiness, "which neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor which hath entered into the heart of man," "Hearing the words of divine inspiration," says Pope St. Gregory, "your hearts should be inflamed with an ardent desire to be in possession of that home where you hope to find eternal happiness."

It is not sufficient, my dear brethren, merely to long and desire for Heaven, you must labor, battle, make the sacrifices which God demands, for "the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away." (Matt. 11, 12) and St. Paul tells us that he who has fought the good fight will be crowned. This important truth our Lord wished to inculcate in the minds of His disciples when He did not immediately lead them from Caesarea Philippi to Mount Thabor, but only after a laborious journey of six days. During a whole week, they had to undergo fatigue, suffer the heat and other inconveniences of the journey before they were permitted to obtain a glimpse of the glorified body of our Lord, a shadow of the glories of Heaven. In a similar manner, we, too, must, during the week of our earthly career traverse the thorny path of life, until, at last, on the seventh day, on the eternal Sabbath, we shall see what God has prepared for those that love Him.

Hence our longing for an eternal crown will be vain, our desires for the beautiful celestial home will be useless, if we allow our heart to rest idly, and presumptuously think, God is merciful and will reserve a place for us in His mansions. No, we must strive, labor, battle. We must overcome our bad habits, root out our vices, and carefully avoid all dangers and proximate occasions of sin. We must, prompted by the love of God, faithfully perform the duties of our state of life, bear their ills patiently, pardon all offenses, and forgive our enemies from the bottom of our hearts; in a word, we must follow in the footsteps of our Lord, deny ourselves daily, take up our cross and follow Him. Thus the saints have acted, and thus they lived, and now they look down upon this valley of tears from their

heavenly abode, and encouragingly say to us, it is good for us to be here, our recompense is great: our reward, glorious; our tears are dried; our sorrows are at an end; our labors are over, and all is eternal peace. Oh! imitate our example, fight the good fight; remain faithful to God; persevere unto the end, and you will ascend unto Zion, the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem, to the company of thousands of angels and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament." (Heb. 12, 23) Thus the saints speak to us from the heavenly Mount Thabor. Let us listen to their voice, my dear brethren, and follow their counsel. No sacrifice will be too great, no labor too difficult, no suffering too painful, where our eternal happiness is at stake. Bless, O Lord, our good resolutions, and through the intercession of the saints, grant us the grace to achieve what we have begun! Amen.

WHAT THE SAINTS TEACH US.

What I assert, is that the saints, as a class, did few things. Their lives were by no means crammed with works, even with works of mercy. They made a point of keeping considerable reserves of time for themselves and for the affairs of their own souls. Their activity was far more contemplative than we in these days are inclined to suspect. They were men who were not overwhelmed by publicity. They were men whose devotional practices were few in number and remarkably simple in method. On the whole, their lives seem very empty of facts, disappointingly empty. I am almost afraid to press on to anything else, lest you should not have time to master this statement as I should wish. It will take us years to realize the importance of it.

But I proceed. Many saints have been made saints by one thing. The sanctity of many has been consummated in its very beginning. To these, conversion has been the same thing as perseverance. St. Anthony of the Desert and St. Francis of Assisi are examples of this class of saints. Hence it was that the great feature of their holiness was its extreme simplicity. St. Francis's manner of prayer by repetitions may be quoted as an instance of this characteristic simplicity. Think again, of what St. Alphonsus and others say of a single communion, that it is enough of itself to make a saint, or what the Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice says of gaining Indulgences, that that one practice is a certain road to sanctity. We are too much given to swallowing our graces without chewing them. We do not extract from them one-half the sweetness, one-half the nourishment, one-half the medicinal virtue, which God has deposited in them. We are too quick with them, too impetuous in the use of them. We do not develop them. I believe the clear knowledge of what grace is, its nature, its habits, and its possibilities, would destroy half the lukewarmness in the world; for I suppose that in a few actions, if we could give an equally great momentum to a great number of actions, so much the better. But the fact is that we cannot. We must choose between the two; and there can be no hesitation in our choice. One stone that we can throw into heaven is worth a thousand that fall short of it and tumble into homeless space.—Father Faber.

TRUE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

We are told that we should bear one another's burdens. How shall the rich and the educated and the refined bear the burdens of the poor, the ignorant and the uncultivated, if they have no personal acquaintance with them? How shall they enter into their lives if they are separated by any chasm from the lives of the poor or of the toilers of the world? We cannot, by giving a small alms, or even a large amount of money, bring about that Christian brotherhood which we ought. There must be personal communication—the society must be one which the rich and the poor, the workman and the employer—all classes, in a word—shall get to know each other, and live with one another, taking part in each other's lives and each one contributing that which he can contribute toward the raising and purifying and beautifying of it all around him. We have, in a word, to bear one another's burdens. The rich man has to carry not only the burden of his own responsibilities, and of his own immediate family and surroundings, but he ought to carry the burden of those who have not had the advantages which he has had. In other words, we ought to communicate largely and generously with those that are in any way in need.

Our Blessed Lord himself had made the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy the test of a good and holy life, and at the Last Judgment we have to account to Him for the actions of our life. He declares to us that whatever has been done to us, that is to say, whatever has been done to His little ones, He takes it as having been done to Himself, because Christ is not only our brother, but He lives, in a sense in each one of us. Each one of us represents Him after being baptized and being partakers of His divine grace, so Christ in a certain way is to be found in the soul of every Christian, and what is done to that soul Christ takes as being done to Him self.

Personal service is that which is needed. It is not sufficient that we should say to ourselves that our home are respectable and we ourselves want for nothing. We must look to our brethren, and we must ask are they treated by us as brothers, whether we are sharing our lives with them, and whether we are ready to give our services and our time to them.—Cardinal Vaughan.

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OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Children's Lent.

Even our boys and girls should lead to deny themselves and begin in Lent to conquer sensuality. It will not let them to give up the use of sugar, cake and candy throughout this holy season. If they are faithful in these little acts of self denial it will train them to master their body, with God's help, Christ's sake. And when the bright and joyous Easter-tide will come it will likewise be for them a season of triumph.

Lieut. Vaughan.

The youngest officer, in point of army seniority, to be ordered to front, is Second Lieutenant Charles Vaughan, who is a nephew of the Cardinal, and whose commission in the Seventh Dragon Guards, about to bark for the Cape, is gazetted of this week. Lieutenant Vaughan is captain in the Munmouthshire Royal gineers Militia, a regiment in which his father is colonel, as also his grandfather, who as volunteer, served country with distinction in the Crimea at the time of national distress.

The Highest Pleasures.

To our boys and girls we would say the highest, the best, the most pleasant pleasures of youth (and also of life) are those which are not sought but which come from the faithful fulfillment of life's "little things" which devolve upon each of us in the shape of every day duties and obligations. Every direction is always fruitless, any direction is always fruitless, which implies a condition of mind which enduring happiness is a strain. Selfish laziness and perfect contentment may dwell together for a season, but the latter will soon win away under the absorbing influence of the former, leaving the unfortunate possessor a wreck both in mind and body.

Eskimo Youth.

Some children might imagine the queer little Eskimos of whom they sometimes read had life dull, now that the weather is so sunshiny and the weather is so away up there in the northland. A visit among them assures us, however, they seem to be perfectly contented with their round little huts with conical and one narrow doorway. Their strange garments made of sealskin the skin of reindeer, bears, foxes, even dogs. Beneath their outer they wear more fur cloths, with hair turned inside and stocking dogskin or reindeer skin. So they are quite comfortable. The girls look almost exactly as they do at this time of the year they may be a place is set apart for the use of the children. There no one may disturb them, and after they have dressed their dolls, which are made of wood and cloth in a story-telling time begins. Each takes a turn. When the time of the first story teller takes of his turns his face to the wall and mences. And so the play goes each has told a story.

A Good Samaritan.

In the Zoological Garden at Paris a notable occurrence took place the day Professor A. Milne Edwards eminent naturalist, witnessed it made it the subject of an article which has just appeared in a French scientific journal. Two so-called swallows have been for a good while in the aviary in the garden. These are popularly known as Japanese nightingales, though they are found in Japan, and their song way resembles that of the nightingale. They have red bills, orange and yellow wings. There have been Iodda and in China. The two Paris fared comfortably until one day a gray cardinal got into their and at once picked a quarrel. The sun birds lost almost all its feathers and was grievously wounded. The poor creature found itself unable to sit on the Furthermore, its feathers being it suffered greatly from cold. Mous now was the sympathy manifested by its companion. Every evening gathered moss and hay, with made a warm bed for the bird. Every night it perched beside the sufferer on the cold floor, being spread out to warm its self as much as possible. For nights it played the part of Samaritan. All its efforts availing, and the wounded bird, thereupon died literally to death. It refused to eat, maimed crouching in the cage had joined its companion.

Books Make People Think.

The boy or girl who reads good is not likely to remain uneducated. The study of books will put you in possession of knowledge which notes her happiness and usefulness. Knowledge will give them the charging the duties of an executive poses. Many a person has had an inspiration from a book lifted her to a higher position. There is no more potent teacher, says the Philadelphia T. This is no more potent teacher than the words of a good and women as recorded in the books. Books make people think the thoughtful person that reads educated. Books are a means ment and culture. The young who wishes to have a clear well stored mind and a strong heart will be helped in his

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