

...he emphatically declares, 'is the wife's best dowry.'

'And son if thou would have a wife, Take her not for covetise. But wisely inquire of all her life. And take good heed, by mine advice, That she be meek, courteous, and wise; Though she be poor, take thou no heed, She will do thee more good service Than a richer, when thou hast need.'

If she be of this sort she is not to be charged grievously, but to be ruled 'fair and easily,' and 'cherished well for her good deed.' For the exercise of authority, if 'overdone unskillfully,' 'makes grief to grow where 'tis no need.' Better is a homely meal with peace than a hundred dishes.

'With grucching and with much care.' He is to take good care not to call his wife by a bad name; if he does it, no wonder that others should follow suit and do likewise.

'But soft and fair a man may tame Both hart and hind, and buck and doe.' When once settled among his neighbors he is advised to:

'Be not newfangled in no wise Nor hasty for to change ne flit;' or men will say of him 'this foole can nowhere abide.'

The 'whole duty of children' to their fellow-men, according to medieval English notions, might be summed up in the one word 'courtesy.' Courtesy is the showing of due respect to all persons according to their degree, and is the outward expression of humility and charity.

'Be not proud, but meek and lynd (i. e., gentle) And with thy better go thou behind.'

'Child,' says the author of 'the Boke of Curtesy,' 'worship and serve thy father and mother with all thy might.'

The schoolmaster, too, is to be saluted.

'With all reverence Declaring thereby thy duty and obedience.'

And the cap is to be lifted to a 'lord,' to one's 'betters,' and—in the case of a child—'in speaking to any man.' And children should make room for others to pass:

'In going by the way and passing the street, Thy cap put off, salute those ye meet, In giving the way to such as pass by: It is a point of civility.'

QUESTION BOX.

Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

So numerous were the questions placed in the box at the Assumption this week that Father Doyle was compelled to defer a number of the replies until later. He selected for immediate answer those relating particularly to Catholic doctrines. It is probable that owing to lack of time there will be a large number of questions left unanswered at the close of the course of sermons, but application to other priests or to The Catholic Standard and Times will bring forth satisfactory replies. Judging from some of the questions submitted it might be well to suggest that for Catholics the confessional is a good place to have matters that are troubling the conscience explained. With regard to non-Catholic questioners, it is observed that they frequently enter into most trivial details that are based on some text of Scripture privately and often erroneously interpreted, whilst they neglect fundamental principles.

These questions show that the most indefinite ideas and utter disunion of Christianity are the natural results of private interpretation of the Scriptures, just as anarchy would follow the abolition of the courts and the providing of the citizens with codes of law to be applied according to individual views.

'Inquirer' asked: 'If a young Catholic woman is married by a minister and afterwards received a dispensation and the marriage is blessed by a priest, is the marriage legal, the husband never having been baptized? If he obtains a separation, can the woman marry again?'

The dispensation removed all the impediments to the lawfulness of the marriage, and she cannot marry again during his life.

'Catholic' asked: 'Why are cousins forbidden to marry?'

The Church opposes the marriage of cousins because it is contrary to the natural law. Experience proves that such marriages frequently result in defects in the offspring.

'Palladaphian' made several inquiries regarding the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: (1) 'Can one who is about to be executed receive it?' The answer was, 'No, only those in danger of death from sickness.'

'Where was the sacrament instituted?' The questioner was referred to St. James v. 14, 15, which says: 'Is any man sick among you, let him call in the priests of the Church and let them anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.' (3) 'Do children receive it?' They can if they have arrived at the age of reason, that is, if they are capable of making confession.

'A Sincere Christian' wished an explanation of 'Why Catholics call the Virgin Mary the Mother of God the Father.'

It will be noticed that the writer, like many other sincere Christians, does not say the 'Blessed Virgin Mary,' as St. Luke (1, 48) and Catholics do. The Church does not call her the Mother of God the Father, but the Mother of God, and all Christians worthy of the name admit that Christ is God and that Mary was His Mother when He was both God and Man. In calling her the 'Mother of God' Catholics emphasize not only the honor due her, but the divinity of Christ.

'A Sinner' desired to know 'how long a soul would have to stay in purgatory for one mortal sin,' and 'if

God will forgive a sacrilege if one is truly penitent?'

One dying in mortal sin and unre-pentant will go to hell. How long a soul may be detained in purgatory God alone knows. He can and will forgive all sins to the truly penitent. The unpardonable sin is that of final impenitence.

'A Catholic' was told that a crucifix which has a Plenary Indulgence attached to it cannot be used effectively except by the person for whom it was blessed. The same questioner was told that it is not necessary for one in the state of grace to go to confession again before receiving Holy Communion, but that it is advisable for a constant communicant to confess weekly, even though guilty of but venial faults.

'Protestant' inquired: 'Why do Catholics burn candles on the altars? Why do the priests throw water over the people and why is incense burned?'

The blessed candles when lighted are emblematic ornaments of primitive use: the self-consuming of them is an emblem of our faith, which should be lively; of our charity, which should be burning and diffusive; of our devotion, which must not spare sacrifices. The water is blessed and is known as 'holy water.' It was used at least as early as the second century, as testified to by St. Justin the martyr. When used at the opening of the Mass the 'Asperges' is sung from the text Psalms 118, 7. As to incense, it was among the gifts brought by the wise men to Christ. It has Scriptural authority, as shown by Leviticus 11, 1; St. Luke 1, 9; Psalms 141, 2; Apocalypse (or Revelations) v. 8; viii, 3.

The same questioner asked: 'Why do Catholics use the Latin language instead of the English?'

This old objection was put in a way which actually strengthens the reply. The language of the Church is for the most part Latin in the West and Greek in the East, the tongues chiefly used by the Apostles. These languages are dead, that is, not subject to change, hence well calculated to preserve both ritual and doctrine from innovations. Again, the universal use of such a language makes a Catholic at home in a Catholic church in any land. This can have its proof right here in Philadelphia, where the native American Catholic, the German Catholic, the Polish or the Italian Catholic can go to any church in the city and intelligently assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass or at Vespers the same as in his own.

The sermons and instructions, however, and many of the minor devotions are in the language used by the people. Because the Catholic Church is the ancient Church, is apostolic, unchangeable, one and catholic, she has a language with all these characteristics.

'A Devout Catholic' asked: 'Can a priest, under any circumstances, marry a couple when he is aware that one of the parties is unbaptized?'

The answer was that he could, provided a dispensation had been procured, which might under certain circumstances be granted.

'Supposing a person who had never believed in baptism is unconscious and dying, can a baptized person give him the sacrament, and will it be valid? Can parents baptize their own children in danger of death?'

A person who rejects baptism cannot have it forced upon him. Any person, baptized or not, can, with the intention to do so baptize a child in danger of death by pouring water on the head and saying, 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

ENLIGHTENED AMERICAN SUPERSTITION.

With all our boasted smartness, the result of book learning to a certain degree, and unmitigated newspaper-reading, we Americans are the most gullible people on the face of the earth. In what other land do so many smooth-tongued rascals live and thrive as in these United States? This land of freedom is the stamping-ground for innumerable sharpers of the most brazen kind—sharpers who hardly make an attempt to disguise their schemes, and whose attempts upon the pocket-books of their fellows are so obvious that it seems ridiculous to think of their fooling anybody.

Take, for instance, the fellows who make an easy living—a luxurious living—as 'divine healers.' What could be more absurd than their claims to heal all diseases by mail? And yet there are thousands and thousands of our countrymen and women who pay tribute to these frauds, and who give their hard-earned money in exchange for type-written letters of vague advice, and blasphemous bombast about the Deity.

It need hardly be said that the people who are thus ever eager to buy gold bricks are the same who sniff contemptuously whenever the superstitions, or even the religious beliefs, of other people are mentioned. They imagine themselves enlightened, educated, civilized beyond all faith in God—some of them but the first man that comes along with a 'divine handkerchief' or a 'lucky box' makes them his easy victims. This is queer, but its truth must be apparent to everybody.

Oh, yes, we are a very smart people; but why do we patronize fortune-tellers and trance mediums to such a great extent? and why are divine healers and lucky-box vendors clad in white, and over the miserable pallet of rags was thrown a snow white embroidered coverlet. A table had been procured, which was covered with a fine white damask cloth. It bore a crucifix and two candlesticks with tall wax

ridiculous and at the same time gross, superstitions?

Among the mass of stuff that has passed through our hands relative to our new possessions, written by Protestant Americans, there has been continual reference to the 'superstition' prevalent in those countries. But it is very much to be doubted if in the most remote parts of Cuba, Porto Rico or the Philippines there could be found such examples of baseless belief in the efficacy for good or evil of the most absurd things, as we are constantly cognizant of here in this enlightened land of freedom. It is very much to be doubted if a divine healer could make a living even among the least civilized tribes in the Philippines, and we may be sure that a lucky-box vendor in the West Indies would soon go into insolvency.

Many of our Protestant friends have referred to the superstitious practice of the Filipinos in wearing scapulars, medals and other pious articles, and have assumed that they were worn as 'charms.' Of course any Filipino could, and no doubt would, granting a common language, have told them the true religious meaning of such things. But these Protestants in their ignorance were positively shocked at the sight, utterly forgetting that here in our own country the most childish superstitions prevail among people who, no doubt, would be described as of education and refinement.

At least, as yet no Catholic Filipino has been discovered wearing a ninety-nine-cent lucky box as a charm to ward off evil and induce good fortune, and we have read of no fake fortune-tellers, trance mediums, divine healers, or other such birds of prey, among the people of the West Indies.

It may be that with our civilization permeating the pores of the body social these new possessions of ours will, after some little time, become enlightened enough to put their trust in, and contribute to the support of, the frauds that infest American communities. It is part of the white man's burden. They must help to bear it. But up to the present we in America are easily in the lead in this regard.—Sacred Heart Review.

HER GRACE THE DUCHESS.

In the Faubourg St. Marceau, one of the most quiet quarters in Paris and which is justly called 'Misery District,' a priest prepared an old rag picker for death. The dying man, amidst the dirt and degradation of his mean trade and the association of godless companions, had persistently clung to the Catholic faith, and would not close his abject career without receiving the last sacraments.

But when the minister of God on his homeward way reflected on the filthy, forlorn condition of the sick man's tenement, and that he must convey his Divine Master thither, he became perplexed and troubled in his mind. Nor can this be wondered at, for the room, which the dying man most correctly called his 'den,' was devoid of furniture.

Whilst the priest was plunged in his melancholy cogitation he approached a magnificent residence, and it suddenly occurred to him that a pious duchess owned it: the bearer of one of the most illustrious names in France, young, beautiful and in the best of health and adored by her husband and all their relatives. He was aware that the fleeting pleasures of the world had still an attraction for her; at the same time he knew she had a good heart.

An irresistible impulse forced him to seek admittance to her presence, and as he entered the stately mansion and trod the polished floors, the profusion of flowers, the costly carpets and hangings only too clearly reminded him of the difference between the fair and noble mistress of all this wealth and grandeur and the destitute, begrimed peasant.

Nevertheless, on being ushered into Her Grace's presence he stated without hesitation his difficulty.

'Why, of course,' she replied, quite simply, 'it would be utterly impossible to let our dear Saviour enter such a place.'

'Then, as you share my opinion, will you undertake that the room be put in some sort of decent order for the administration of the sacrament?'

'Most gladly! I will see to it myself. Most I take my maid?'

'By all means, for the room must be swept out and cleaned.'

'Yes! but such work must be done voluntarily and cheerfully, and if my maid cleaned it she would deprive me of some of the merit. Now that I think of it, I will take my son. He is eight years old. It is also right that he should become acquainted with the misery of the poor.'

'But, Your Grace, the man is dangerously ill; there is no time to be lost. He is expecting me at 8 in the morning, and his dwelling is a great distance from here. Can you possibly perform so much in the meantime?'

'Have no fear,' she cheerfully replied. 'I shall be there long before you.'

Happily it was spring and the days broke early, and when on the following morning the priest arrived at 8 with the Viaticum, he found the rag-picker's den transformed into a clean and lovely habitation. It involuntarily reminded him of the sepulchre which the plety of the faithful erect in each Catholic church on Maunday Thursday for the Blessed Sacrament. The entire chamber was draped in white, and over the miserable pallet of rags was thrown a snow white embroidered coverlet. A table had been procured, which was covered with a fine white damask cloth. It bore a crucifix and two candlesticks with tall wax

tapers; at the side was a vessel containing holy water and a consecrated sprig of box wood. Nothing had been forgotten.

The young duchess had just completed her labor of love when the priest entered; she had cast aside her hat and wore a large white apron to protect her dress. But immediately at the sight of the Blessed Sacrament and her little son dropped on their knees at the foot of the bed and devoutly recited the confiteor. The aged rag-picker lay on his clean bed the picture of radiant contentment, more especially as Her Grace had carefully combed his hair, a comfort of which he had certainly long been deprived.

When the priest leaning over him began in a few words to prepare him for a devout reception of the Blessed Sacrament, the old man quickly interrupted him, exclaiming with holy glee: 'The good lady kneeling here has told me all that. She and her little boy have been praying with me. I am so happy!'

He received his Saviour with unfeigned plety, and the priest had scarcely ended the prayer of thanksgiving when the duchess took the rag-picker's feeble, horny old hand in her's and laid it gently on her little boy's head, saying:

'Please, my good man, now that you have received Holy Communion and are our dear Lord's friend, to bestow on us your blessing.'

'Oh! my lady,' ejaculated the dying rag-picker, 'a poor old man like me can give you no blessing. The Lord God Almighty must bless you and the lad. Aye, and he will, too; He will bless you in your son!'

So speaking, he wept, and down the cheeks of the priest there silently coursed the sweetest tears he ever shed. He it is who has narrated for us this beautiful incident, and he has done so as an example of that true charity which, not content with the mere bestowal of alms, expands itself for the suffering neighbor.

BIBLE READING.

A reader sends us a leaflet containing Scripture selections prepared by a Protestant for the use of Roman Catholics, and asks us to make some comments on it.

The aim of the leaflet is to call attention of Catholics to some texts which he thinks contradict or condemn certain Catholic doctrines and practices. As it is our duty as Catholics to assume at the start good faith on the part of the leafleteer we have no alternative but to attribute his blunders to ignorance of Catholic doctrine on the one hand or ignorance of the meaning of the Bible on the other.

The leaflet is divided into ten headings and under these are grouped the texts that are supposed to militate against the doctrines and practices of the Church. The first heading or proposition is:

'1. We should all read and study the Bible.'

Comment—There is a fallacy in this. It implies that Catholics are not allowed to read and study the Bible. If the leafleteer knew that Catholics are allowed and exhorted to read and study the Bible he knowingly misrepresented them. If he did not know it he is too ignorant of Catholic belief and practice to discuss them. If Catholics are allowed to read the Bible, as they most certainly are, the above heading and all that goes with it is mere shooting in the air, or carrying coals to Newcastle.

Catholics need not be told by this leafleteer that they should read the Bible; they knew that before they ever heard of him. To show this we quote the words of Pope Pius VI, in a letter blessing the labors of Archbishop Martini, of Florence, who had just completed a new translation of the Bible into Italian. In this letter, written over a hundred years ago—1778—the Pope says:

'Beloved son, health and apostolic benediction. At a time that a vast number of bad books, which grossly attack the Catholic religion, are circulated even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well that the faithful should be excited to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; for these are the most abundant sources, which ought to be left open to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have effected, as you declare, by publishing the Sacred Writings in the language of your country.'

Writing of a new edition of the Douay Bible published in Ireland in 1853, Bishop Denvir, of Down and Connor, said: 'I hereby sanction its circulation among the faithful, feeling convinced that if read with becoming reverence and pious dispositions, its perusal will be attended with great spiritual advantage.'

There are several editions of the Bible issued by Catholic publishers in this country. They are found in all Catholic book stores. They have the sanction of the Church authorities and the faithful are exhorted to read them.

Why, then, should the leafleteer, an obscure outsider, stick his little nee in to tell Catholics of a duty they knew and practiced before he knew it? We might then dismiss his first point as useless and of no application to Catholics. But let us look at some of the texts he quotes to prove that we should read the Scriptures. It will be found that not one of them proves it. Here is the first text:

'John 5:39. Search the Scriptures. Not other books.'

According to this mixture of his own

words with those of the Evangelist the Catholic must not read the leafleteer's own booklet, which must be classified among the 'other books' that a not Scriptures, and therefore not to be read. He gives the Catholic a book to read and in doing so tells him that he must not read it—'Search the Scriptures, not other books.'

But does not the command 'Search the Scriptures' prove that we should read them? It might if any such command was ever given, but it was not, as is clear from the passages from which those words are taken. The best results of modern Protestant scholarship in the way of translation are generally admitted to be found in the revised version of the Bible, published by a company of English Protestant scholars in 1881-85. This revised version does not say, 'Search the Scriptures,' but, 'Ye search the Scriptures,' thus changing the words from a command to the statement of a fact.

Our Lord was speaking to a mob of Jews who sought to slay Him for healing a sick man on the Sabbath day. He said to them, 'Ye search the Scriptures because in them ye think ye have eternal life.'

From these words it appears that those would-be slayers of the Lord were Bible readers. In the same text our Lord told them that the Scriptures testified of Him, but they were private judgment Bible readers and they could not find such testimony. And therefore our Lord continued, 'Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.'

But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.' Thus the text quoted by the leafleteer to prove that we should read the Bible, only proves that those Jews who read, as he does, in the light of their private judgment, were led, not to acknowledge Christ, but to slay Him.

There is another notable thing in the text. Our Lord said, 'Ye read the Scriptures because in them ye think ye have eternal life.' He did not say, 'Ye have eternal life,' but, 'ye think ye have'; just as the leafleteer thinks he has. Our Lord adds, 'but ye will not come to Me.' He said further to those private judgment Bible readers and would-be Christ slayers, 'Ye have not His (the Father's) word abiding in you, for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not'—verse 38.

There is certainly nothing in the first text quoted to prove what the leafleteer quoted it to prove, namely, that we should read the Bible. The next text is: (Matt. 22:29) 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.'

Here our Lord was speaking to the Sadducees, a Jewish sect of private judgment Bible readers of that time, who read the Scriptures and quoted them fluently. They quoted them in their address to our Lord on that very occasion when He said to them, 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures.' These Sadducees came to Him and said, 'Master, Moses said, if a man die having no children, etc.' (verse 24) From this it appears that they could quote the Scriptures as readily as the leafleteer, but their familiarity with texts did not prevent our Lord from telling them 'Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures,' that is, not understanding them.

These Sadducee Bible readers did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They were the Protestants of their day. They protested against the common belief of the Jews regarding the oral law or tradition, and held to the written law. They were book-chapter and verse people, bible-alone people, and yet our Lord accused them of not knowing the very Scriptures they so flippantly quoted to Him. In His words there is a lesson for the modern text-quoting Sadducee; and it is, that repeating a text like a chattering parrot, and as irrelevantly, proves nothing, unless it be the kind of knowledge the old colored woman is said to have had who when asked why she called her son

When a new star floats into the field of vision of some watchful astronomer, the world honors the discoverer, gives the new star a fitting name, and records the addition to the sum of human knowledge gained by this discovery. Yet of what small profit to humanity at large is this discovery? What will those cold star rays do for the sleepless sufferer who coughs and burns the long night through?

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Beelzebub, said she wanted to give him a Scripture name.

There is then nothing in this second text to encourage one to play the Sadducee with flippant texts of Scripture on the end of his tongue and ignorance of scripture in his head.

But enough for the present. The other texts under the first heading are no more to the purpose than those we have seen. But we will look at them and at some other parts of the leaflet again.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

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