

The Charlottetown Herald.

NEW SERIES.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1903

Vol. XXXII, No. 10

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PASTORAL LETTER

—OF THE—

Archbishop of Halifax.

CORNELIUS, by the Grace of God and favor of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Halifax:

To the Clergy, Religious Orders, and Laity of the Diocese, Health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED:

It is not uncommon in our day to find the various practices of piety and devotion of Catholics, even their habit of going to Church, and their generosity in building costly temples to the Almighty, derided as "superstitions" or "unscriptural," or, at the best, as unnecessary to salvation, and not warranted by Scripture. Nor is it always men who are corrupt of heart who do this. Very often well-meaning individuals, who misrepresent the teachings of Christ because they read their own ideas into His words, criticize and condemn actions which are the only logical outcome of a realizing belief in the eternal truth of our Lord's solemn warning—"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. XVI, 26) Others there are who appear to think that failure in some one of the learned professions, is a sure indication of their ability to expound the Sacred Scriptures, and that they have been mysteriously anointed, and sent, to uproot, not merely the belief of centuries, but even the most firmly fixed and innate convictions of the human mind. Being as shallow as they are vain, they have all the secularist's contempt for logic, accuracy of deduction, and correctness of expression. Hence, a society is judged by the conduct of one of its members, a doctrine is rejected, because one who professed it became a scoundrel; a pious practice which runs counter to animism is dubbed "superstitions." This is a much-prized word, with the secularist. It is long; it is pretentious; it is redolent of war on the supernatural; it is, above all, delightfully vague and uncertain in its popular application.

Not the least among the many evils inflicted on humanity by the revolt of the sixteenth century, was the fierce dislike for logic which engendered in the hearts of its followers. From this seed of intellectual decadence we are now reaping the sad harvest in the innumerable vague, aimless, unprofitable speculations, so rife in books, magazines and newspapers. One ray of hope there is found, however, a pathetic yearning for some firm set principle—a need, rather felt than acknowledged, of an unerring teacher—a struggle of noble souls seeking to pierce the darkness that envelops them, and to reach a haven of intellectual rest, in assured truth, which they feel must exist, are frequently discernible in these otherwise disheartening publications. The rust of unbelief is in the intelligence, the dry rot of material pleasures is in the heart, and the pride of life fills the soul of what we call modern civilization. God was banished years ago from the schools; later on from public life; still later from the home; and now some are surprised that He is being rapidly thrust out from the "fashionable churches." Within these buildings there is no longer an echo of Christ's parables, nor of His warning words—"Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish." (Luke XIII, 3.) The comfortable doctrine is proclaimed that penance is "superstition"; prayer a vain imagining; self-denial, the insanity of gloomy asceticism; and the only fitting goal of man's ambition and energies are the good things of the world, its honors, riches and pleasures. In effect the words of our Saviour are reversed and made to read—"What shall it profit a man to save his soul, if he lose the pleasures of self-indulgence?" When the sense of the enormity of sin, of our personal responsibility and accountability for transgressions of the moral law, is blunted, or destroyed, prayer and penance, or, at the best, a reason for existence, and a heart which is not over-mastered by pride of intellect, even though steeped in sin, dimly recognizes the beauty of these virtues. For, after all, the human heart has been made for God; its waywardness leads it from Him, though its instincts cry out against the folly of the course.

To-day, as ever, the one cure for the ills of the world, the one source of light for the intelligence, and peace for the soul, is the Gospel of Christ applied in our daily lives; not, however, according to the irresponsible interpretations of self-constituted teachers, who have neither

the gifts, nor the training to grasp its harmonious proportions. In view of the innumerable contradictions arising from private interpretation, in matters of great import, say, in essentials, which have so far abounded, that now the authority of the Gospel itself is impugned, or denied, it should not be necessary to insist with men of good will, that the theory of personal interpretation stands condemned, and hopelessly discredited. For centuries it has been asperingly applied by the learned, and the unlearned; by men of pious heart and reverent intelligence, and by mountebanks, masquerading as preachers, of platform and in pulpit. No other theory, so far as history goes, has ever had such a long and general application. Moreover, it has been applied in a matter, which the vast majority of those making use of it, have believed to be one of supreme moment. And now the net result is, endless division, unutterable confusion, and denial, or, at least, unconvincing doubt of the divine origin of the Gospel. This theory has done what neither the racks and tortures of the first centuries of Christianity, nor the wild incursions of the northern hordes were capable of effecting. It has shaken, and even destroyed, the belief of millions of nominal Christians in the divine message; and indeed a material spirit, and a moral darkness, far beyond that of the darkest hour in the mis-called "dark-ages."

If you, Dearly Beloved, have been mercifully saved from the doubts, anxieties and mental struggles of so many noble souls who are "tossed to and fro" and "carried about with every wind of doctrine," (Eph. IV, 14), longing for rest and security; or from the unreflecting indifference bred of a habitual ignoring of the supernatural, which is spreading spiritual desolation around, it is because you have held fast to the faith "once delivered to the Saints," (Jude 7, 3), and constantly taught by Holy Church. In her maternal bosom the Gospels were born; within her fold they were first promulgated; to her loving care their guardianship and exposition were committed. She is the only competent witness to their authenticity, and the only qualified expounder of their truths. For, as a living corporate Society, she assisted at the Last Supper, stood at the foot of the Cross on Calvary, viewed the empty sepulchre on the first Easter morn, received the instructions of the risen Saviour during forty days, witnessed His glorious Ascension, and on Pentecost was endowed with the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, who, according to the promise of the Redeemer, "should teach all truth," and abide in His Church forever. Thus, since the church was anterior to the written Gospels, she attests their authenticity; whilst they, being a summary of the words and acts of her divine Founder, contain her charter, and make known her power and privileges. The New Testament, in its entirety, shows us the church at work among nations, in the same manner as we see her to-day. A divine Institution, whose members are human, she must ever seem a mystery, perhaps even a contradiction to the unreflecting observer. Despised, opposed, persecuted, she goes on her way, changing her tactics, it may be, but never her principle; frequently, to human seeming, worsted, yet ever triumphing and extending her bounds. The Mother of holiness, yet bearing in her patient bosom sin-seared souls whom she faint would wash in the blood of the Lamb. The teacher and guardian of eternal truth, nevertheless there go forth from amongst her children, because they were not of them, (1 John II, 19), the authors of heresy and mischief. The loyal spouse of Christ, yet from Judas downward to our day there have been traitors in the sanctuary, as well as in the auditorium. Whilst all this is said, it should not cause surprise, much less should it impair our Faith. It is now, as it was in the first days of Christianity, due to the abuse, by individuals, of free will, and of the graces so abundantly supplied in the Church. The wrestling between the spirit and the flesh which St. Paul experienced, is going on in the Church; we see the few who are vanquished by the flesh; but we take no note, for we cannot, of the myriads who are victorious. Hence the human element is more conspicuous in the conduct of individuals than the divine, whilst in the corporate life, and action, and onward march of the Church, this latter element is clearly manifested. Only the divinity which lodges her around about could have saved her when fore would, and traitors within, were striving to compress her ruin.

Thus, Dearly Beloved, the very misfortunes of the Church, and deplorable scandals within her, should strengthen, not weaken, our faith in her divine origin. They should

also make us look more scrutinizingly into our souls to discover if, perchance, the materialism of the day has found lodgment therein; if the false axioms of commerce have obscured our sense of justice; if the prevalent false notions of morality have dimmed the gold of the Catholic purity of thought, word and action. For it was some, or all of these, or similar things, neglected too long, that eventually sapped the spiritual life of the castaways who mark the path of the Church down the ages. They should, moreover, make us more docile to the warnings of that Church which repeats with a solemnity born of her two thousand years of experience: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. XVI, 26.) Were we fully penetrated with the awful import of these words, how vain and childish should appear the shadows of wealth or honor, or pleasure, which we pursue; how wise the decision of St. Paul: "I do all things for the Gospel's sake; that I may be made partaker thereof." (1 Cor. IX, 23.) Yes, it is highest wisdom to deny ourselves, to bear, and to suffer, not only with patience, but with joy, the ills of life, poverty, contempt, persecutions—all that seems hardest to flesh and blood, in order to be made a "partaker" of the Gospel promises. Let no one be deceived by the seductive maxims of worldlings, or misled by one's own proneness towards pleasures. The world may preach, as it really does by deeds, if not by words, the old, old doctrine so dear to the animal man—"let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die," (Isa. XXII, 13); but Jesus Christ proclaims: "If any man shall come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me," (Matt. XVI, 24). The road to heaven is the road of Calvary, not the one trodden by the rich man who was clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously (Luke XVI.) We must share the humiliations of the Cross, if we would be partakers in its triumph; we must press closely in the footsteps of Him who "conquered the world," (John XVI, 33) if we would share His glory, and not daily in the flowery gardens of ease and self-indulgence. Their pleasures may appear, at first, quite innocent and legitimate; but once out of sight of the pale, sad face, and the torn and wounded body of the Crucified, one readily passes from harmless amusement to criminal waste of time and opportunities and then to unlicensed dissipation and moral death.

Nor should we allow our inclinations, our material part, to overcome the spirit. If we live according to the flesh we shall die, as the Apostle assures us; but if we mortify by the spirit the deeds of the flesh, we shall live (Rom. VIII, 13). The same great Apostle teaches us by word and example how this is to be done: "But I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. IX, 27). St. Paul well knew the terribly seductive nature of the dangers which surrounded him, and like a wise, brave man adopted, unhesitatingly, the necessary measures of protection, much though the flesh rebelled against them. He was in earnest in desiring to be made a "partaker" of the Gospel,—to attain to its rewards. With his great talents, gift of oratory, and ardent ambition, he could easily have taken a leading part in the public life of the great Roman Empire of which he was a citizen, and have acquired a full share of the riches and worldly pleasures of the age. But the words of Christ had sunk deeply into the fibre of his being,—"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. XVI, 26). The Society of that day was singularly like our own. It was materialistic, sceptical, pleasure-loving, corrupt, and lettered. The great Apostle, who lets us know for our comfort and encouragement, that although he had been rebuffed a glimpse of the third heaven, and had heard deep words of mystery unspeakable by human lips, yet was there given him "A sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me," (2 Cor. XII, 7), mistrusted his own strength, and prayed,—"For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me" (8). Therefore he both chastised his body by mortification and sought strength for his soul by prayer. The Apostle though he was, successful though his ministry had been, he was not sure of himself. The fate of Judas might be his, unless he brought his body into subjection by rigorous self-denial and discipline, and obtained supernatural aid for his soul by fervent prayer.

Shall we, dearly B loved, presume where St. Paul was diffident. Is

there no "Angel of Satan" to buffet us? No "sting of the flesh" to worry our peace, or to goad us on to sin? Let us not be deceived; we are as much subject to infirmity as was St. Paul; but we are less crafty, less watchful. Perchance, in our case, the "Angel of Satan" transforms himself into an Angel of Light; in our blind conceit, and through our lack of watchfulness, we fail to detect the fraud until he has laid us only "buffeted" us, but has laid us low in sin. How frequently the "Angel of Satan" may be detected by the circumspicious Catholic in some prevalent custom of the world, or fashion of Society, or popular book, which to the unreflecting seems an Angel of Light, until through it, guilt has entered the soul. And the "sting of the flesh," may appear shorn of all grossness, and even present itself under the guise of a duty. It may say in effect: your health requires this certain indulgence; your position demands this conformity with the customs of the world; prudence dictates that you should seek to increase your store of earthly goods. All these, and many similar "stings of the flesh" will be broken, until the power of will is broken by enervating indulgence; the moral sense blunted by familiarity with vice in one's associates, on the stage, and in books; and the heart hardened against generous giving by the spirit of avarice. O, G! If the awakening from this state be not until after death, how fearful shall it be! How agonizing then, the realization of the truth spoken by our Saviour, "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

Wait! we have time, daily beloved, let us imitate St. Paul, and beseech the Lord to give us light to know His will, grace and strength to do it. Pardon for sin is conditional on sincere repentance and purpose of amendment. For this end grace from God is necessary. To obtain grace, prayer, not merely of the lips, but from the heart, is a most efficacious means. This truth is more fully and distinctly taught throughout the Scriptures, than any other. A very conclusive indication of lack of knowledge of, or disbelief in the New Testament, is the fact that so many deny the necessity and even the efficacy of prayer. The stock argument against it may be reduced to this: The Almighty knows my needs, why then lay them before him? Moreover the world is governed by fixed laws, whose effects cannot be turned aside by prayer. This, in a nutshell, is the so-called scientific argument against prayer, spread over weary and dreary pages of what passes for philosophic and exceedingly learned productions. How illogical and silly it all is, a few words on demonstration, yet each succeeding generation of graduates from High Schools and "Universities," will repeat it as an accomplished fact, as though it were a new, and unanswerable proof of the uselessness of prayer, lately deduced from that unique specimen of mental confusion and contradiction called "Modern Science." Because I know the needs of my neighbor does it follow that I shall supply them unasked? Free will and the power to pray have been given us, not to teach the Almighty, but to acknowledge His sovereign power over us, and our total dependence on His mercy for our corporal and spiritual necessities. And how pitifully shallow must be the training that thinks it finds a scientific basis for its denial of the efficacy of prayer, in the action, and interaction, of created forces, which we call natural law. The qualities of these forces are, indeed, unobscurable, but their results are not inevitable; they are conditionally so, if you will. That is, they will certainly produce a specific effect, provided another determining force does not intervene. For example, the ball sent up into the air should go upward forever if the attraction of the earth, and resistance of the atmosphere did not otherwise modify and determine its course; both these causes should have inevitably brought it down to the ground, if that active small boy had not interfered, and caught it in his hands ere it had reached mother

(Continued on third page.)

Itching Skin

Distress by day and night— That's the complaint of those who are so unfortunate as to be afflicted with Eczema or Salt Rheum—and outward applications do not cure. They can't. The source of the trouble is in the blood—make that pure and this itching, burning, itching skin disease will disappear. "I was taken with an itching on my arms which proved very disagreeable. I concluded it was salt rheum and bought a bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla. In two days after I began taking it I felt better and it was not long before I was cured. Have never had any skin disease since." Mrs. I. E. WASH, Care Point, Md.

Hood's Sarsaparilla

rids the blood of all impurities and cures all eruptions.