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THURSDAY MAY 11, 1893

## Calendar for the Week.

- May 11—Ascension of our Lord (Eolyday of obligation.)  
 12—St. Nereus and his companions, Martyrs  
 13—St. Stanislas, Bishop and Martyr.  
 14—Sunday within Octave of the Ascension, S. Pascal, Pope and Confessor.  
 15—St. Isidore, Laborer, Confessor.  
 16—St. Ubald Bishop and Confessor  
 17—St. John Nepomucene, Martyr.

## Philosophical Talks.

### EXAMINATIONS AND ETHICS.

Educators are discussing the utility of examinations as aids to educational effort, or as tests of intellectual progress. As usual, in such discussions, doctors differ, and if patients do not die, examinations go on, and pupils dread the "passes" to intellectual excellence and postgraduate fame. However, a certain Professor Porter, who speaks by the card for common schools, has some consoling doctrine for timid scholars. Whatever may be said of the value of examinations in other branches of learning, the Professor is quite positive that they should be rigidly excluded from the science and school of Ethics. He is especially severe on the baneful effects of any attempt at an examination of conscience, and he declares his conviction that the moral desolation with which the common schools of New England are made desolate is mainly due to the unamerican habit of Yankee youth examining their consciences! This practice, the Professor says, makes young America "too introspective." The Professor seems to be of the ethical school of the other old lady from New England, who would never consent to give up "the consoling doctrine of universal depravity."

However, the Professor is ready to compromise. He will have some kind of conscience for the common schools, and will even permit it to be examined. He calls this conscience "the responsive respect for public institutions." Now, we have considered many kinds of conscience—the scientific conscience, the commercial conscience, the political conscience, and the society or McAlister conscience—but we find it hard to place Professor Porter's conscience. He would probably call it the common school conscience, from which he has been careful to banish the Creator. Anyhow, this "responsive respect for public institutions" is a manufactured conscience, a mechanical conscience. He tells us that, "the institutions themselves will take care of this conscience afterwards;" but he does not tell us who will take care of this conscience or these institutions now.

We have to tell Professor Porter and all his school that every boy, every rational, moral being, must be "introspective;" which big word means when translated that every

man should look into himself, should see his own heart and examine his own conscience. A more respectable authority than Professor Porter once said: "*Prevaricatores revertimini ad cor.*" "Ye hypocrites and quibblers (and common school Professors) go home to your hearts!" Examine your own consciences before you pretend to profess even common school morality.

The best text-book of Ethics ever written is "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola"; and one of the most important chapters in that admirable book is on the Examination of Conscience. There are two examinations of conscience, the experienced writer says—"particular" and "general." The particular examination looks at the conscience before action. The general examination is a survey of the field when the day is done—a numbering of the deeds, of thought, word and act that are living, or wounded or dead.

Ignatius was a soldier saint. His wonderful book is a programme of battle, a text-book, too, of military tactics, for the direction of conscience in the warfare of life. Napoleon said that the only enemy he feared was *l'imprevu*, the unforeseen. The particular examination of conscience guards against this enemy. "Forewarned, forearmed, is its motto; and its war-cry is: "Watch the weak point," the particular danger, the predominant passion. Watch in the morning, watch at noon, watch at night, says the soul, acting as sentinel in its daily rounds. And in this it only repeats the warning of the divine Leader, whose work was to form soldiers and save souls. "Blessed is the man who shall be found watching"—that is, who shall be found practicing this particular examination of conscience when the Leader comes to give the pupil his prize and the soldier his pay.

The honor and reward will be determined by the general examination of conscience, which measures the quantity and tests the quality of the work that is done. It may have to face defeat or victory. It has grief for the day that is lost, gratitude for the day that is won. As it goes over at eve the field of battle, there is joy for the living, sorrow for the dead, while the wounded are carefully looked to, and are handed over to the particular examination to be carefully watched on the morrow.

*Repetitio est mater studiorum* is an axiom of moral as well as of intellectual progress; and the axiom means, that, in the matter of particular and general examination of conscience, only careful and continual repetition will insure success. Doctors may continue to differ, then, about the value of examinations in other branches of science; but all pupils who wish to graduate in the science of ethics, in the school of moral conduct, and all teachers who wish to be worthy of their holy calling, all fathers and mothers in the Christian home will ever hold in highest esteem the principle and practice of daily examination of conscience.

The Pope received on Tuesday 500 Catholic pilgrims who had come from Germany to testify their devotion to his Holiness. His Holiness has made arrangements to receive eight hundred pilgrims from Malta on May 21.

## Mr. Langtry's Lecture.

On returning to Mr. Langtry's lecture on Presbyterianism we are anxiously looking from day to day for an answer from those directly concerned. Our review of the case must surely not be the only response, for we disclaim all ambition to champion such a cause. Can it be that the Kirk Divines are going to rest in silence under such a blow? If they turn the other cheek in the proper spirit it will be decidedly edifying; but if they are looking to Rome for comfort in this hour of distress they are mistaken. All that Mr. Langtry said about Presbyterianism as a religious system is true, and cannot fail to call forth concurrence from every member of the Catholic clergy. So far as the historical arraignment of the rise and progress of Calvinism goes, and so far as the doctrinal statement of the creed and its tendencies is concerned, the most critical must admire the scholarly labors displayed in the former, and the sound logical objection the lecturer takes against the latter. We have no word but that of praise upon either of these scores. Presbyterianism, whether in the sacking of Antwerp Cathedral in the Netherlands, in the mutilation of the cathedrals and ministers of England, or in the Know-Nothing movement and Protestant Protective Association of America, has always displayed the same spirit of hatred, discord and selfishness. In its history it has shown no pity, in its creed it knows no mercy. It took for its guiding principle the doctrine of individual interpretation, and then condemned to the fires, both of this world and the next, all who differed from it. The blow which it dealt to church art, church music, religious worship and sentiment, knocked the heart and life out of its adherents. Its chapels became simply barns whose rafters echoed with no song of praise, and were scented with no smoke of sacrifice. Much of this may be passing away, so far as religious teaching and practice are concerned, but the old spirit is manifesting itself in other ways. Calvinism in the sixteenth century struck at the churches; Cromwellian Puritanism in the seventeenth century struck at the throne, and Orangeism in the eighteenth and nineteenth century—with its youngest brother of to day P. P. Aism—strikes at politics and society. But as the most important question with a man is his salvation, so the action and effects of Presbyterianism upon other questions are of minor consideration when compared to its results upon Christianity. These results, witnessed in the sceptical and rationalistic spirit of the times, or the still more irreligious and scoffing tone of rising generations, were well presented by Mr. Langtry. Had a Catholic priest put the blame upon Presbyterianism, no one would have thought it strange. But when we consider the source we think that it calls for attention from those to whom it is addressed.

We now put in our own say; and we claim that it calls for the attention of both lecturer and lectured. Both desire a united Christianity. How that can be attained by Presbyterian

principles is incomprehensible. That our Blessed Lord, Wisdom Incarnate, knowing the human heart as He alone knows it, could establish a Church without a teaching authority, that He would merely put the written word into the hands of every one and then expect that Church to live for all time, bears a contradiction on the face of it. Had Christianity been started on that plan it would have crumbled before the downfall of the Roman empire. It has been tried, and, after three centuries, it has given the most striking evidences of its incalculable power. We think with Mr. Langtry that the union of Christianity must be sought elsewhere—in that historic continuity whose unbroken line will carry us back to the day when the apostles sat in council at Jerusalem with Peter at their head. Here comes the inconsistency of the High Church Party. Cut off from all other Protestant societies by their demand for a regularly ordained episcopate, rejecting Rome as fallen and apostate, they hold an isolated position in Christendom very similar to the position which the Donatists held in Africa in the fourth century. But this ideal Church lacks the essential of unity and Catholicity. "The unity must bind together for all ages," there must be a single source of teaching, judging and governing power. Seek it where you will, the Church of Christ is one, and it must be one, must have one head, one shepherd, one supreme bishop, the delegate and vicar of Christ. Say not that that supreme bishop is Christ Himself, because then you take the keystone from the visibility of the Church and are just in the position of Presbyterians. If you say that the oldest See lost its pristine sanctity and fell from its high estate, that it bent the knee to idols and became the slave of immorality, greedy only for political power and looking only to external forms, then throw off the mask and acknowledge that Christianity is a thing of the past, our faith is vain, we are still in our sins. God made an *Ecclesia Docens*—a teaching Church—an infallible teacher and judge in faith and morals for all places and times, so that "*securus judicat totus orbis terrarum*" (the whole world judges safely) was true of the Church when first uttered by St. Augustine against the Donatists; it had the same value when it arrested the attention of John Henry Newman and led him to the only haven of refuge for those who desire a united Christianity.

The historical allusions to Rome contained in the lecture are so old and threadbare that they ill become such a lecture. Too general in their character to be criticized, they lack the intrinsic quality of truth and the extrinsic quality of scholarship—they are calculated only to arouse bigotry and maintain a spirit which otherwise Mr. Langtry has ably attacked. If, in the union of Christians, Rome is to be excluded by such as Mr. Langtry represents; then they are acting a farce, and if it were not for their insignificance, they are making themselves the laughing stock of Christian scholars of the East and West. Amongst the Greeks there never was an idea of unity of East and West in which Rome