

Sacred Heart Review. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCXL.

On p. 209 Lansing rests upon that unspacious background, the Irishman Edgar. Edgar, however, was a thoroughly educated man. It is true, the prurency which defiles his work from beginning to end, growing more sickening as he goes on, makes it absolutely astounding that he should have dared to dedicate it to the Protestant Primate of all Ireland, the Anglican Archbishop of Armagh. In point of knowledge, however, he was entitled to dedicate it to anybody whatever.

Wicked as Lansing's attitude and temper are towards the Roman Catholic Church, his guilt is incomparably less than that of Edgar. Edgar, so far as concerns his subject, knows everything. Lansing knows nothing. He gives no evidence anywhere of having ever read ten pages of Milman, or Creighton, or Neander, or Bryce, or Fisher, or any high Protestant authority. He repeats Edgar's infamies with little more intelligence than a parrot, and let us hope with not much more subjective glee. I am glad to say that he has not besmirched himself with any of Edgar's unutterable indecencies.

Of course, the Popes whom he calumniate are not realities to him, as they are not realities to Protestants generally. They are nothing but names and shadows. Protestants generally know the Popes, from an interrupted series of evil men. If Lansing does not follow a leading Lutheran divine of the sixteenth century in giving us a succession of twenty-two Popes who were all magicians, and a number of whom were carried off bodily by the devil, it is only because our age discredits witchcraft, substituting hypnotism. When great Protestant historians and encyclopedists portray the eminent excellence and piety of one medieval Pope and another, all this matters nothing to Lansing, as it is very doubtful whether he has ever heard one of their names. If he has, it is only to apprehend them vaguely, after the instructions of Calvin and Knox, as so many incarnations of anti-Christ. I will warrant, for instance, that the name of Gregory V., the noble-minded German Bruno, is as unfamiliar to him as if it had been taken out of a catalogue of the Incas of Peru.

Mr. Froude somewhere heartily scolds Protestants for not having kept up better the hands of the old fashion of always styling the Pope anti-Christ, and the Man of Sin, and the patron of the Scarlet Woman. However, he might have taken comfort in the Landings and Christians and Townsends, and in some of the recent lights of English non-Conformity. It is true that perhaps the latter just now, in view of the Education Act, are rather disposed to find an anti-Christ in Lambeth than at Rome. The Plymouth Brethren, again, find anti-Christ or Babylon wherever there is a Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Congregational church. I wonder if we could not some time hold a convention and agree to stop this diabolical merry-go-round for good and all?

Thirty-five or forty years ago Dr. Henry Boynton Smith was, after Charles Hodge, the chief Protestant divine of America, and more learned even than Hodge. He had also been Moderator of the General Assembly, the highest honor which a Presbyterian clergyman can receive. In one of his eloquent passages (I do not now remember the precise tenor) he appeals against some deprivation of Christian doctrine to the experience of all believers, to the testimony of all great divines, to the voice of holy Bishops and Popes. If now a man like Lansing had listened to this great leader of his own denomination, we can imagine how he would have stared stupidly at him, not knowing what it all meant. And afterwards he would have gone on just as before. Let this man no doubt means, in a vague and dull way, to be a Christian. Surely there must be a purgatory for stupidity as well as for wickedness. Stupidity, when it is not mere natural fatuity, is, indeed, a sort of wickedness.

Lansing, on p. 209, after having virtually represented protestantism as the medieval Popes as the devil of the devil, goes on, in Edgar's words, to say: "Gregory the Great seems to have led the way in his career of villainy. This well-known Pontiff has been characterized as worse than his predecessors, and better than his successors; or, in other terms, as the last good and the first bad Pope."

Here, we see, it is not pretty much all the Popes from Gregory down whom he represents as evil, but absolutely all. According to him this man no doubt means, in a vague and dull way, to be a Christian. Surely there must be a purgatory for stupidity as well as for wickedness. Stupidity, when it is not mere natural fatuity, is, indeed, a sort of wickedness.

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been an honest man, he might easily have turned out another Froude. Milman, then, portrays Gregory, who was of an ancient and wealthy patrician family of Rome, as having, from the time when, in early manhood, he abandoned civil life and became a Benedictine monk, been marked by an abstinence from which he was afterwards obliged, by sheer necessity, to recede somewhat; by a purity of life beyond reprehension; and by a disinterestedness so absolute that he could not endure the thought that he himself or one of his brethren should be supposed to lay up the smallest sum for himself.

Even when, as Pope, he was compelled to hold the title of the vast domains of the Roman Church, throughout Italy, in Sicily and Sardinia, in Africa, in Egypt, and no doubt in Gaul, and Spain, his great thought was, how he might best secure the peasants of these enormous estates from all possibility of extortionate exactions.

These vast revenues he applied to everybody's necessities except his own. He hardly made provision even for necessary state. He once half-humorously complains to his steward, who had sent him some horses and some asses: "I really have nothing to ride, I can't use the asses, because they are asses. I can't use the horses, because they are such sorry nags." With all his boundless benevolences, he long bore bitter remorse, expressed in sharp penance, because once, in a busy moment, he had repulsed a needy man. It was not merely his own people for whom he cared. He, like his medieval successors, was an energetic defender of the rights of the Jews.

While Gregory maintained unflinchingly the prerogatives of the Apostolic See, he showed a large carelessness over questions of ritual uniformity. Says he to St. Augustine of Canterbury: "Don't be too precise about following Roman use. Whatever you find good in any of the Gallic churches, incorporate it in your new ritual, if you think wise." So also he freely left all the Italian sees the choice of their own Bishops, although he promptly deposed any Bishop found unworthy.

Of course so large a character was not without large faults. Courteously servility of speech to kings and emperors meant little more than "Your obedient servant" now. Yet even his profound admirer Count Montalembert will not defend him from the charge of having, out of policy, carried obsequiousness of speech towards the infamous Emperor Phocas and the yet more infamous Queen Brunehild beyond all excusable bounds. The story of his destroying the libraries is understood to be a fable. Yet undoubtedly he used language about the classics which has given a handle to obscurantism, although classical study in his time meant little more than the dregs of Latin rhetoric. As Abbot he once or twice carried the rigor of the monastic discipline to the extent, not of physical, but of moral cruelty. He was also, really against Catholic principles, harshly compulsory against the remaining heathens of Sardinia.

When we have said these few things, we have summed up virtually the whole of Gregory's noticeable faults.

Yet his relations to the following Church, as set forth by Milman, are so profoundly important, that we must reserve them to another paper.

CHARLES C. STARRBUCK, Andover, Mass.

THOUGHTS ON OUR LADY.

This is our Lady's month, the fairest one of the whole year.

Let us love much the Blessed Virgin. That love distills balm, it radiates happiness, it brings peace. God grant that our love may always go on increasing towards our good Mother, who loves us all in Jesus Christ her Son.

The life of the Blessed Virgin is represented to us as very simple and ordinary in its outward aspects. Jesus and Joseph live by the work of their hands with her. See the daily bread of the Holy Family! What appears to sight in their lives is like that which happens to the rest of mankind; but faith discovers therein nothing less than God, performing very great things.

In this relation The Messenger of the Sacred Heart says: Devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, implies devotion to Jesus Himself. A true estimate of her graces and prerogatives enables us to form some conception of His divine and human nature. By His birth from her we know He is man like ourselves by her singular exaltation over all other women we are helped to believe that He is God, to be Mother of whom she was endowed with fullness of grace and blessed forever among women. This is why it is important that our devotion to her should be simple as that of children, but solidly based on the Scriptural revelation of her sanctity and mission. No doubt, to help us to discern and appreciate her sanctity, there is so very little said of her in Scripture in order that we may meditate it thoroughly, and not be distracted by many details of her life which could in no way add to her title, Hail, Full of Grace!

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The following, marked "Stolen," is published in a Missouri paper: "How dear to my heart is the steady subscriber, who pays in advance at the birth of the year; who lays down his money, and does it quite gladly, and casts round the office a halo of cheer. He never says 'Stop it, I cannot afford it,' nor 'I'm getting more papers now than I can read,' but always says, 'Send it, the family likes it; in fact, we all think it a real household need. How welcome he is when he steps in the sanctum, how he makes our hearts throbb, how he makes our hearts dance. We outwardly thank him, we inwardly bless him, the steady subscriber who pays in advance.'"

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FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

THE THREE STEPS TO HEAVEN.

"Blessed is the man whose help is from thee: in his heart he has discerned to ascend by a step." (Psalm lxxxviii, 1).

Next Thursday the Church will celebrate the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord; the day on which His sojourn in this vale of tears came to an end, when He entered upon the possession of that glory which He had won by His obedience in this world. In the Collect which is said at Mass on this feast we ask "that we who believe that Thy only Son, our Redeemer, ascended this day into heaven may also have our hearts fixed on heavenly things." In order that we may be better able to enter into the spirit of the approaching feast, and even in this life raise ourselves up above its transitory interests, I propose to point out how our religion necessarily elevates the minds and thoughts of those who practise it, how it places them even now in the enjoyment of heavenly treasures, and how, therefore, our minds should even now learn to rest upon things which are above.

We hear a great deal of talk nowadays about the dignity of man, and there are some few people who maintain that we ought to make humanity the supreme object of our care and worship. And newspaper scribes sometimes assert that the doctrines and discipline of the Catholic Church unduly depress mankind, and turn his care and attention into less desirable channels. Now, no man sure, will find fault with those for striving to assist and help their fellow-man by every means in their power; on the contrary, the Church has always fostered and encouraged all such efforts. But when it comes to the worship of humanity, we are unable to acknowledge the rightfulness of such a claim; and if such refusal makes us the enemies of progress and enlightenment, we must plead guilty.

But so far from depressing and lowering man and his dignity, I venture to say that the doctrines and teaching of the Church raise him to a higher level, and place before him a higher motive and a loftier end than it has ever entered into the mind of the most advanced thinkers of this or any other time to conceive. This, I say, has been done by the Christian religion and by its distinctive teaching, as distinguished from natural religion and what it tells us. Natural religion tells us, and tells us truly, that there is one Maker and Lord of this world, that we are His creatures, that we must be subject to Him, and that punishment awaits us if we are not so subject. Catholic teaching takes all this for granted, confirms it, builds upon it, and raises us above it. And how?

The first step in the Christian life is Faith. And what is faith? What does faith do for us? Faith is that virtue by which we accept as true those things which God has revealed. Faith, then, brings us face to face with God Himself and His divine veracity. For the truths of faith we have God Himself as the voucher. Is not this an elevation of the mind of man far greater than that to which the loftiest philosophies can lay claim? They can at best give us opinions and guesses; faith places us at once in the possession of eternal and immutable truth.

The second distinctively Christian virtue is Hope. And what is hope? To what does it raise us? The light of reason teaches us, as I said before, that we are God's creatures and must be subject to Him, and if so subject will receive from Him a fitting recompense. But Christian hope makes us look upon God not as our Maker, but as our Friend; not as a Master, but as a Father; and makes us look forward to the possession not merely of His gifts and rewards, but of Himself for all eternity.

With reference to the third great Christian virtue—Charity—I have time only to mention that it makes us look upon God for Himself because He is what He is. For, before concluding, I wish to point out the greatest elevation to which we are raised. Take a man who is in the grace of God; what is his position? What does the possession of God's grace make him? I should not have dared to answer had it not been revealed by God that we have entered into the mind of man to guess; for that which man in the grace of God possesses is nothing less than a participation of the divine nature; to use the words of grave theologians, man's very being is placed in a divine state.

If these things are so, and they are elementary Christian truths, that we need no reason enough to have our hearts fixed even in this life, on heavenly things?

MARY'S MONTH.

In glorifying the virtues and dignity of Our Lady, the Church simply follows the example of her Divine Spouse. Christ bestowed upon His Divine Mother the highest possible distinction, even within the gift of divinity. He made her the vehicle of His humanity and a necessary factor in the achievement of human redemption. He elevated her by this act, immeasurably above the race and placed her in a position of power and glory second only to that of Deity. To deny this is to question His omnipotence. Hence it is clear that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is not only justified by all the circumstances of her relation to God, but is demanded as an inseparable attribute of our love for our Divine Son. It is impossible to please our Blessed Redeemer without paying the tribute of our affection and gratitude to His Mother. Nothing

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could be more reasonable than Catholic teaching on this point, nothing more logical than Catholic devotion based upon that teaching. During Mary's month, therefore, we should unite earnestly in the special devotions prescribed for the occasion. Admitting her position and title to our devout veneration, the efficiency of intercession on behalf of faithful clients goes without saying. Even human sons do not refuse the petitions of the mother they love. Infinitely greater are the grounds for confidence in divine favor through the intervention of such a medatrix as Mary.—Church Progress.

LESSON OF SCIENCE.

EDISON'S QUIET REBUKE TO AN UNBELIEVER.

The Catholic Church has always taught that scientific research, properly applied, will prove without doubt the existence of a personal God. Weight is given to this assertion by the fact that even in our days some of the greatest astronomers and physicists have been devout priests of the Church. In our own land we have had examples of this in the Jesuit Fathers Curley, Sestini, Secchi, Haagen and Richards, and in the Paulist Father Searle. In England, Father Perry, the eminent Jesuit astronomer, whose death at Demerara, while in charge of the royal party of observation, is still deeply mourned, held the highest rank in his chosen science. The annals of the Harvard Observatory tell many a tale of important discoveries made by humble priests in every land. Nor have the Catholic laymen been behind their brethren in scientific excellence, as witness Hedrick, Thomson and Taate. Nevertheless, it has become the thing for those superficial savants who delight to pose as the court of last resort in regard to mooted points of science to scoff at the existence of God. They forget that when they attempt to gauge the infinite by a finite scale they destroy their claim to consideration.

They have pretty terms to apply to atomcity, they prate of molecular motion, of the compensating power of nature and of the innate properties of matter, but because they cannot see the first cause they deny there is any. They forget they cannot see an atom, nor handle a molecule; but that does not matter; it is only against the existence of God that they hold out.

It is only the superficial "scientists" who do this. The deeper observers of the beautiful symmetry and wonderful economy of nature all bow in deference, if not in reverence, to a first and supreme cause—God. How will the little great men take this declaration of Edison, the greatest electrician that ever lived, who said the other day, in speaking of the properties of atoms, "Finally they combine in man, who represents the total intelligence of all the atoms." "But where does this intelligence come from originally?" "From some power greater than ourselves." "Do you believe, then, in an intelligent Creator, a personal God?" "Certainly," said Mr. Edison. "The existence of such a God can, to my mind, almost be proved from chemistry."

Mr. Edison has given to the world ample proof of his ability to speak for science.

WHEN THE BIBLE WAS A VERY EXPENSIVE LUXURY.

Mr. Canon J. S. Vaughan in the London Catholic Times.

To transplant ourselves in spirit to what Protestants commonly call "the Dark Ages," but which we, with juster reasoning, describe as "the Ages of Faith," is to transplant ourselves to a period of the world's history when neither the art of printing nor the art of paper-making had been invented. At the present day the entire Bible may be purchased for a few shillings, the New Testament for a few pence. But in the good old days, when England was a Catholic country, and in full communion with Rome, and when her Archbishops, one by one, as they were consecrated, publicly swore obedience to the Pope, the Bible was a very expensive luxury. This may be easily realized by a little calculation. Thus: the whole of the Inspired Writings contain 35,877 verses; these run into 12,781 folios. Supposing the scribe to write on both sides, he would fill 427 sheets of parchment. Now, it has been calculated by L. Buchingham that the parchment, properly prepared, could not be purchased even at the present day for much under £85, and that the copying, in the usual engraving hand, would come to about £135, making a total of £220 for a single copy of the Bible. Try and realize that; and then ask yourselves: How many Protestants, at the present day, would possess a copy if they had to spend over £200 in the purchase of one? People do not take these circumstances into account when they talk so glibly about the "Romish Church keeping the Bible from the laity, in the ages of faith. Their ignorance of history deceives them. It was not the Church; no, it was their enormous and prohibitive price that interfered so seriously with the more general circulation of the Scriptures. Considering the cost of production, the wonder is rather that the Catholic Church was able to extend as widely as she did the knowledge of the Written Word!

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IMITATION OF CHRIST. OF FOUR THINGS WHICH BRING MUCH PEACE.

I will now teach thee, son, the way of peace and true liberty. Disciple, Do, Lord, I beseech Thee, as Thou sayest, for I shall be very glad to hear it. Christ, Endeavor, my son, rather to do the will of another than thine own. Ever choose rather to have less than more. Always seek the lowest place and to be inferior to every one. Always wish and pray that the will of God may be peacefully fulfilled in thee. Behold, such a man as this entreaty upon the coasts of peace and rest. Disciple, Lord, this Thy short speech contains much perfection. It is short in words, but full in sense and plentiful in its fruit. For if I could faithfully observe it, I should not be so easily troubled. For, as often as I find myself disquieted and disturbed, I am sensible that I have strayed from this doctrine. But do Thou, O Lord, who canst do all things, and always lovest the progress of the soul, increase in me Thy grace, that I may accomplish these Thy words and perfect my salvation.

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Who does not a sweet-temper does not make your will carry able. Follow after day, and the result.

It is as precious as gold. I money-wealth serene life,—a ocean of truth yond the reser- neral calm!

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