

The Catholic Record

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as the other. Has not each man a soul? He not only will be a spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible fact; he believes it, sees it; is the Poet of it in virtue of that. Sincerity, I say again, is the saving merit, now as always.

How medieval! How impossible to the "modern mind" and to the modern pulp! Again: "For rigour, earnestness and depth, he is not to be paralleled in the modern world; to seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible, and live with the antique Prophets there."

Because Dante's Faith was the Faith of the Hebrew Prophets; theirs in the Promise, his in the Fulfillment. The modern world has no such poet as Dante because the modern world has not Dante's Faith. The spirit of the modern world is the spirit of Pilate when he scoffingly asked: What is Truth? and disdained to wait for the answer from Him who was the Way, the Truth and the Life.

"Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, are a symbol withal, an emblematic representation of his belief about this Universe:—some Critic in a future age, like those Scandinavian ones the other day, who has ceased altogether to think as Dante did, may find this, too, all an Allegory, perhaps an idle Allegory! It is a sublime embodiment, our sublimest, of the soul of Christianity. It expresses, as in huge world-wide architectural emblems, how the Christian Dante felt Good and Evil to be the two polar elements of this Creation, on which it all turns; that these two differ not by preferability of one to the other, but by incomparability absolute and infinite; that the one is excellent and high as light and Heaven, the other hideous, black as Gehenna and the pit of Hell! Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, with everlasting Pity,—all Christianity, as Dante and the Middle Ages had it, is emblemized here. Emblemized, and yet, as I urged the other day, with what entire truth of purpose; how unconscious of any emblemizing! Hell, Purgatory, Paradise; these things were not fashioned as emblems; was there, in our Modern European Mind, any thought at all of their being emblems? Were they not indubitable, awful facts, the whole heart of man taking them for practically true, all Nature everywhere confirming them? So is it always in these things. Men do not believe an allegory."

Here Carlyle grasps the very soul of that Christianity which Dante bodies forth in immortal song, the tremendous reality of Good and Evil, their incomparability absolute and infinite. And the principles of Right and Wrong—eternal, Nationalism and State supremacy in matters of conscience gave us the Reformation with its principle of Private Judgment, a principle subversive first of all authority in matters of Faith, and now, as was inevitable in the long run, subversive of all authority in Morals.

Again Carlyle notes that Francesca's father was Dante's friend; "Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child." The story of illicit love is "woven as out of rain-bow, on a ground of eternal black;" "a small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts." And still the inevitable, irrevocable punishment in Hell. "Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigour of the law; it is so Nature is made." It is so, too, with the eternal laws of the justice of Nature's God.

Contrast this conception of the immutability of the moral law with the sickly problem plays and problem novels which reflect the "modern mind" in its feeble wrestling with the tremendous fact of Good and Evil; or with the State morality logically developed in Germany.

But Dante lived by the Faith once delivered to the saints and never thought of doubting that revealed truth was eternally true. "And so in this Dante, as we said, had ten silent centuries, in a very strange way, found a voice. The Divina Commedia is of Dante's writing; yet in truth it belongs to ten Christian centuries, only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always. The craftsman there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods,—with the low little of all he does is properly his work! All past inventive men work there with him;—as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of the Middle Ages; and the Thought they lived by stands here, in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his, terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the Christian Meditation of all the good men who had gone before him. Precious they; but also is not he precious? Much, had not he spoken, would have been dumb; not dead, yet living voiceless."

Here again is a pregnant truth which so-called history, polemically written, not only ignores but denies.

And just as it is true that Dante is the product as well as the spokesman of the ages preceding him, so the Hohenzollern and the great War are the product and expression of the principles of the Reformation, of Nationalism, of State Supremacy and of Private Judgment which disrupted Christian Unity, weakened Christian Faith, sapped the very foundations of Christian Morality, and enabled a hideous Caesarism to substitute Might for the eternal and unchanging principles of Right.

THE IRISH BISHOPS

The action of the Irish bishops in taking their stand with the Irish people in opposition to conscription has called forth some curious newspaper comment. The Toronto Saturday Night, which usually gives an impressionistic reflection of the mental attitude of the man in the street—the Toronto man in the Toronto street—without troubling much about investigating facts or reconciling principles, quotes the Irish pledge against conscription: "Denying the right of the British Government to enforce compulsory service in this country, we pledge ourself solely to one another to resist conscription by the most effective means in our power."

Commenting on this it says: "By the most effective means in our power" is a clear incitement to armed resistance, although armed resistance against constituted authority in a matter where the rights of religion are not involved is, we have been frequently told, directly contrary to Roman Catholic teaching."

This assumes that armed resistance is the most effective means of resisting conscription which is an absurdity on the face of it, and is precisely what the Irish bishops by intelligent organization wish to avert. The other half of the comment assumes what the Irish bishops and people deny—the right of the British Government to impose conscription on the Irish people without their consent.

Again Saturday Night: "The offence of the Irish hierarchy is all the more reprehensible, because in the question of Irish conscription religion is in no way involved."

Purely political it is; if it involved religious differences the Protestants of Ulster would not be at one with their Catholic fellow-countrymen on this issue.

But is it not a strange thing that violently anti-papal Protestants become ultra-papist when the action of the Pope might turn to their political advantage? Protestants who used to vociferate that Home Rule meant Rome Rule, and consider that a good and sufficient reason for subverting the Constitution if necessary in order to prevent Home Rule, now complain bitterly that the Pope does not interfere in purely political matters in Ireland. There are many good reasons why the Pope does not so interfere. One is that the Irish people distinguish quite clearly between religion and politics, and they are none the less loyal Catholics when they quote O'Connell's famous dictum that he would take his religion from Rome but not his politics. In 1888 a meeting at which some forty Catholic members of Parliament were present passed the resolution that "Irish Catholics can recognize no right in the Holy See to interfere with the Irish people in the management of their own political affairs."

This political attitude of Irish Catholics ought to be intensely gratifying to those Protestants who profess to be in perpetual dread of the political influence of Rome; but, on the contrary, they loudly demand that Rome shall interfere in Irish political affairs. There have been times when this glaring inconsistency of Protestants with regard to the Pope has found shamed acknowledgment. When the Irish people were fiercely fighting and winning the Land War—credit for which is now coolly given to the British Government—the latter sought the assistance of Rome in putting down the "immoral" Plan of Campaign. In the House of Commons the radical member for Newcastle, in a spirit that did credit to his manhood, said: "If we want to hold Ireland by force let us do it ourselves: let us not call in the Pope, whom we are always attacking to help us."

"It is quite true, as Saturday Night claims, that the Pope cannot condemn in Austria-Hungary what he permits in Ireland; but it is equally true that he cannot condemn in Ireland what he permits in Austria-Hungary. If there is any truth in the despatch referred to

about the Archbishop of Ljubach it can be nothing more than permission to proceed against him; a like permission would be as readily given to the British Government if it desired to proceed against the Bishop of Limerick.

It may seem strange, nevertheless, to Catholics as well as to Protestants, that Catholic bishops should counsel opposition to a law enacted by lawfully constituted authority.

In the first place conscription in Ireland is not yet enacted into law. As we showed last week by quotations from ex-Premier Asquith's speech the clause relating to Ireland is merely an empowering clause. It empowers the Government to bring it into effect by order-in-council, which order-in-council is to be debated and passed upon by the House before conscription is the law in Ireland. And the correspondent of the New York Times under date May 8th, writes: "Many believe that there is no real majority for Irish conscription in the Commons." Now it is a fundamental right, often a bounden duty, for loyal subjects to oppose strenuously a proposed law deemed unwise or harmful; and this though there is no question of the competence of the authority to enact the law.

With regard to the proposed law in this case hear not an Irish bishop but a staunch English Protestant—Robert Donald, editor of the London Chronicle, and consistent supporter of the Government:

"In the long catalogue of mistakes and misdeeds which blacken the course of British policy in regard to Ireland nothing has been so startlingly short-sighted and mischievous as the mess which the Lloyd George Government has created, one would almost think deliberately, if we did not know that the Cabinet think their policy is a wise and subtle combination to solve the political problem and meet the military emergency."

There is another and not less serious danger. Ulstermen do not want conscription, without Home Rule; still less would they accept Home Rule with conscription. Their hostility will not take the form of armed revolt, as planned by Carson before the War. They have a more powerful weapon. They will down tools; workmen of Belfast will proclaim a general strike led not by leaders of Labor and trades unions who are in favor of Home Rule, but by Orangemen and political friends of Ulster."

But the Irish people, including the bishops, deny the right of the British Parliament to impose compulsory military service on Ireland against the will of the people. The whole allied world hailed President Wilson as its spokesman when he proclaimed as the foundation principle of democracy that governments derive all their just rights from the consent of the governed. Ireland enjoys that inalienable right as well as Belgium or Poland or France or England. More, she won it through long years of struggle within the limits of constitutional action; but the British Parliament abdicated its functions, and confessed its impotence; Carsonism was substituted for the British Constitution in Ireland.

The Irish people, their bishops with them, demand that Carsonism be overthrown and constitutional government restored before they will submit to conscription.

"Diverse weights and diverse measures, both are abominable before God."

Captain Redmond from his father's seat in the House of Commons maintained Ireland's right to say whether Irishmen should be conscripted or not. And is there a shadow of doubt that his great father would have taken his stand unalterably on the same ground?

"In 1914, said Capt. Redmond, Ireland was almost ablaze with enthusiasm on the side of the allies, but the sentiment of the Irish people had since changed toward the War, owing to the distrust of the British Government and in the word of British Ministers."

And Irish bishops helped to create that enthusiasm. But Carsonism is still reigned; constitutionalism was derided and finally discredited.

The Irish people now demand that the foundation principle of democracy be applied to Ireland before a Carson-ridden Ireland be compelled to fight to make the rest of the world safe for democracy.

The charge of pro-Germanism is silly; Prussian junkerism has its Irish counterpart in Carsonism. Liberty like justice and charity must begin at home. The Irish bishops recognize the justice of this contention of the Irish people.

Many who concede the justice of Ireland's claim think they should do their part in the War now, leaving

the question of self government in the abeyance. They tried that. Ireland has taken a part in the War proportionately greater than has Canada.

MENTAL LABOR AND ORIGINAL SIN

The only excuse we offer for frequently referring to original sin is the same that a celebrated lecturer made for mentioning so often a place in the nether regions. "I do so," said he, "because so many people nowadays refuse to admit its existence or act as if it did not exist." "Original sin," says Chesterton, "is hard to explain but it makes easy the explanation of almost everything else." Those who admit the necessity of Baptism implicitly admit the existence of original sin. The fact "that darkness of the understanding, weakness of the will and a propensity to evil" are so manifest in the world to-day is due in large measure to the neglect of this sacrament. If these evil effects of the primal fall remain in a measure after the sin has been washed away, it is evident that they will be found in a much aggravated form among those who have never been freed from the thralldom of sin.

In the spiritual life people recognize in the temptations that beset them the baneful effects of our first parents' disobedience. Likewise, in the material sphere, the many obstacles that tend to nullify the fruits of man's toil are traced to the primeval curse that God, in punishment of sin, inflicted upon all nature. Few, however, it seems to us, avert to the fact that the arduous labor entailed in the acquisition of knowledge is due also to this cause. The darkness of the understanding which remains even after original sin is forgiven is an obstacle alike to the learning of Christian doctrine and the mastering of the profane sciences. Two corollaries that follow from the foregoing are, firstly, that baptized persons have an advantage over those who have not been baptized, even in the secular fields of mental competition; and, secondly, that learning cannot be attained, nor intellectual laurels won, without persevering labor.

This latter may seem a commonplace, yet it is a commonplace that is lost sight of in our day. To illustrate this let us recall some fundamental principles. The adequate object of the intellect is truth, whether it be religious truth, scientific truth or historical truth. Any result of mental labor, or supposed mental labor, that lacks the element of truth is not of enduring worth. The only lasting treasure is truth. This applies alike to an answer to a mathematical problem, a religious treatise, a scientific or historical essay, a word picture, a play or an editorial. If there is little of value in much of the literature of today it is because it is lacking in the element of truth. It is not true to fact, or it is not true to nature, or it is not true to right standards of judgment. Of course, much of it may gain the applause of the multitude, for error has a special fascination for tainted nature; an error coincides with the prejudices of the crowd. To find out what the truth is, and then to set forth that truth in a manner conformable to approved literary canons, means labor. The devil does not like the truth, and he can be counted upon to give no assistance in arriving at it; but he does delight in lies, and one would imagine that he had bestowed a special inspiration upon some writers. Take, for example, this statement which appeared in a recent book: "At this time (1917) the influence of the priests had become very great in Mexico. . . . They had once again risen to power and were doubtless a strong ally for the Kaiser, in Mexico as elsewhere. . . . The Kaiser had found them useful in Ireland where priests and Jesuits had done much to foment the rebellion, and in Russia where revolution was brought about through the intrigues of Rasputin, a German Jesuit." Now, it does not entail any great mental labor to write such stuff as that. The bigger dose of original sin the person has the better is he or she qualified for such work. Yet that is a fair sample of the literature that is provided in books, magazines and newspapers for the reading public of today.

We pity the man whose sole mental pabulum is the daily paper, and the woman who gets a new book out of the Carnegie Library every week. The wonder is that they do not become demented. As a matter of fact most of them suffer from illusions which are the symptoms that precede delusions. We have

read so many pharisaical, lying editorials in the daily press this week, and so much invertebrate matter from the pens of Catholics that we rejoiced in the privilege of being able to take our fishing tackle and hie us to the green bank where the mind finds, in the running brook, a book that does not lie. But even in this sequestered spot the printed falsehood stared us in the face. "No Fishing Here" read the sign. We proved that it was a lie, for we caught half a dozen speckled beauties.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE PORTRAYAL of the Orange Order on the floor of Parliament as a "loyal and tolerant organization," and coming especially from an editor who above all others has excelled in mendacity and scurrility in his onslaughts upon Catholic institutions, is one of the richest incidents of the present session. "Indeed he doth protest too much!"

THE THIRD anniversary of the sinking of the Lusitania, and the manner in which it was observed in many English churches, and at the Queens-town cemetery where so many victims of the disaster lie buried, brought into strong relief the progress which belief in the efficacy of prayer for the dead has made among Protestants since the outbreak of the War. More than one such service was announced in the daily papers as a service of prayer "for the dead," not a mere memorial of their departure as such celebrations have hitherto been characterized. The change is a commendable one, and may be the means of effecting others ere many years have flown.

CATHOLICS who are disposed to depression or discouragement over the present-day hostility to their Faith should bear in mind that the Church is but passing through one of those periodical emanations of persecution bequeathed to her as her lot in this world by her Divine Founder. The new Auxiliary of Edinburgh, Bishop Graham, took occasion to remind his flock of this a few weeks ago in the course of a sermon in St. Patrick's church, Edinburgh, and his words may well be read and pondered on by Catholics far beyond the limits of that diocese.

AS THE CHURCH is the mystical body of Christ, invested with a Divine character manifested throughout all the centuries, it is not surprising, said the Bishop, that those outside the Church could not refrain from persecuting her. They had persecuted her Divine Founder, and all down through the centuries His true followers had come in for that portion of their inheritance. Why, it may be asked, should this be so? Catholics have respect for law and order, and in their relations with others are governed by the highest maxims of the gospel. Why, then, should they be continually subjected to suspicion and obloquy, even to active hostility at the hands of those outside the Church? The world does not rail or scoff at any sect of Protestants, even those of the most outlandish and fantastic description, nor at Jews, as such, or even Mohammedans. They do not impugn their loyalty or trustworthiness. But this is continually the lot of Catholics, and, as Bishop Graham affirms, it will be so until the end of the world.

THE REASON why adherents of the systems mentioned are not the special object of the world's animosity is, as the bishop reminds us, because there is nothing in them antagonistic to the world's maxims, and so she shakes hands with them. There will, on the contrary, always be war against the Catholic Church, for the reason that her maxims are entirely opposed to the maxims of the world. "Marvel not that the world hate you," was the solemn injunction of Christ to His followers. This is perhaps a commonplace of Catholic teaching, but it is very essential that we be reminded of it from time to time. Persecution does not necessarily mean a crusade of fire and sword as has characterized past ages of the world, although it is by no means inconceivable that the like may occur again. But the spirit of persecution finds an outlet no less through the more insidious and scarcely less cruel medium of imputation and insinuation, and that is what Catholics have specially to contend with today.

THE LAUNCHING of the merchant ship "Tuckahoe" at the Camden yard of the New York Ship Building Com-

pany, in the record-breaking time of twenty-seven days after the laying of the keel, and the promise of completion and readiness for sea service in fifteen days more, comes as promise of speedy solution of the Allies transportation problems, and of successful termination of the War. Apparently the ship building programme of the United States is now well under way, and with more than half a million workers now in her ship yards and accessory plants, and the machinery of administration of this vast organization working smoothly, we may look for immediate developments of a very interesting and momentous character.

THE ENTHUSIASTIC words of Mr. Schwab, to whom has been entrusted the organization and carrying-out of the United States' ship building programme, may be accepted as embodying the spirit of the nation at this juncture of the great conflict: "God has endowed this nation with more material resources, and its people with greater enthusiasm and energy than any other nation on God's green earth, and we are going to make our mark in history. Now is the time. The United States has never been defeated in a war and we are not going to be defeated now!"

Those inclined to think this exclamation somewhat perfervid will not be disposed to carp at it if the promise of the bud is fulfilled in the fruit. And we are of those who have faith that it will be.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

GRAVE TIMES AHEAD

Earl Curzon on May 10th said: "The present is not a moment for prophecy. It is a moment for grappling with hard facts, because the military menace is greater than at any time during the last four years. It may be truthfully said that the enemy is at our gates and the hour of destiny is with us at this very moment."

"Grave times are ahead," he continued, "and British soldiers may have to give ground. Encouragement is to be found, however, in the unity of command, in America's effort, and in the resolute, indomitable spirit of the British people."

THE SINKING of the *Vindictive* in the harbor of Ostend has not effectively blocked the channel, according to late information, but serves a very useful purpose. A partial and very serious blockade has been achieved, and under the conditions of tide and silt it is believed that the obstruction will tend to increase. The *Vindictive* was sunk early on Friday morning, under the protection of a fog. Several British vessels, according to the German account of the action, forced their way into the harbor, but were driven off by the fire of German coast batteries. The *Vindictive* was full of concrete, and the first Admiralty report stated that it had been sunk between the piers across the entrance to the harbor. Britain has plenty of obsolete cruisers that could not be used to better purpose. Should Ostend be completely blocked, following upon the closing of Zeebrugge, the enemy will have lost the only two ports on the Belgian coast capable of sheltering submarines, or through which submarines from the interior of Germany, reaching Belgium by the Dutch and Belgian canal systems, can find their way out in the North Sea.

TENS OF THOUSANDS of mines have been used in the construction of the new mine field, between Norway and the Orkney and Shetland Islands, which will be an extremely difficult obstacle for any German submarine seeking an exit to the open sea. The outer Atlantic along the northern route. Submarines from the Elbe and Helgoland will have to endeavor to make their way out by the Straits of Dover. There also they will encounter nets and other obstacles that make the passage perilous. It must have been a knowledge of the impending operations that led Lord Jellicoe to say some time ago that by the month of August the submarine menace would be greatly reduced, if not altogether eliminated. The operations at Zeebrugge and Ostend prove that the British navy still has the spirit that made it great under the leaders of the past. The Nelson touch has not been lost.

THE FRENCH official report tells of the capture of the park at Grivesnes by French troops, who during the operation took 258 prisoners and a large amount of war material. This victory is of great importance, because of the relationship of the position to the German plans for an advance against Amiens from the southeast. Grivesnes is a village to the northwest of Montdidier, and was the centre of heavy fighting during the last general attack by the enemy.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG's report yesterday morning announced that a small but important bit of trench north-west of Albert captured by the Germans during their assault of Thursday was retaken during the evening, and remains in possession of the British troops. It is rather a curious thing that, alike to the northeast and southeast of Amiens, the Allies have been steadily improving their position and securing far more favorable defensive ground against the next