

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.
CCLXXXV.

We have seen that the Republican correspondent has undoubtedly a right to say that in the Middle Ages the Popes from time to time used their authority "to promote war" and that no one needs say that all the wars which they promoted were wise or right, since the Pope, in administration, is confessedly a fallible man, and since the policy of one Pope may be more, or another less, complicated with secular interests.

We have seen, however, that this writer in no case makes mention of the medieval wars promoted by the Popes in the interest of legitimate self-defense, the self-defense of Rome, of Italy, or of Europe, and that he makes no mention of their habitual influence in encouraging peace by arbitrations, which the great Protestant Bishop of Durham regards as very nearly miraculous in their wisdom and justice.

As Froude has said, or is said to have said, this writer might truly declare: "I have no concern with anything that raises the reputation of the Papists. My one business is to defame them."

Coming down to the sixteenth century, we have seen that the Popes did undoubtedly encourage the Catholic princes and peoples to attack the Protestants, or rather to repel their pre-vious attacks, and that in this they did no more than their duty, since original Protestantism was a violent and revolutionary explosion, acrimoniously and scornfully, and, in large measure, ferociously, addressed to breaking down the continuity of Christian history and belief, and to disintegrating the common foundation on which European society had rested for ages.

Yet we must not imagine Catholic Christendom at the time of the Reformation as gathering itself into a serried military phalanx, of which the Pope was commander-in-chief. Great historical revolutions, as we look back upon them, are sometimes foreshortened into a suddenness and a compactness of which the actors in them have not always been conscious.

We must remember that after the tremendous shock (both for good and evil) given to all Europe by Luther's Theses—he said afterwards: "I wrote about indulgences without really knowing what an indulgence was"—yet three years passed before there was a final breach between him and the Holy See. Nay, even later, Adrian VI. offered to re-open the whole case, and was willing to assume it as possible that Leo X. had been precipitate or even invalid in his proceedings against the Friar. Luther, however, insisted on remaining excommunicated. He sometimes wavered a little, but in general he remained steadily hostile to any projects of pacification.

We must remember also that Lutheranism was not definitely pronounced by the Church heretical for forty six years after its first appearance, covering the space from 1517 to 1563, when the canons of Trent were completed and papally published. During this long interval explanations of Lutheran tenets were given, varying all the way from unadmitted and even extreme heresy back to the brink of Catholicity. Indeed, a Catholic author says that the Augsburg Confession is nearer Catholic doctrine than some Catholic schools. And although, as our Puritan friend, Professor Frank H. Foster, declares, the Catholics were nearer the truth than Protestants concerning the crucial doctrine of justification, yet Cardinal Contarini and other great Catholics declared that there were elements in Lutheranism well worthy of being absorbed into Catholic theology, something which has more or less come to pass in Germany, where the sermons of the priests concerning the terms of acceptance with God are often more acceptable to English and American Protestants than those of the Lutheran pastors, something which Mr. Moody seems to have found true in this country also. Indeed, at one time it seemed as if an accommodation was about to be reached, but it was broken off by the stiffness of the Spaniards on one hand and of Luther on the other.

During most of this time the Lutheranism, in large regions, had made so ritual that Luther boasted that if a foreign Catholic, who could not understand the German sermons, should drop in, he would easily suppose that he was in a Catholic congregation enjoying some privileges of ritual variation.

Meanwhile there was constant uncertainty and wavering in the public mind. One day the great quarrel seemed at most on the point of closing. The next it seemed to have reopened more widely than ever. The Spaniards' recent heresy in the remotest trifle. The milder and better balanced apprehensions of the Popes did not care so much for uniformity if the substance was sound. The language of the Lutherans towards the approaching Council was sometimes deferential, sometimes contemptuous. The Emperor, wavering between orthodoxy and ambition, seemed sometimes ready, politically, to support the Holy See, and sometimes the Scalaeid League. The Pope himself was sometimes tempted to wish that the heretics might gain a temporary advantage, and so frighten Charles into a better remembrance of his religious duty. Men while all were in suspense to see on which side England would finally throw in her great weight.

Moreover German princes of more than doubtful opinions were continually soliciting episcopal institution from Rome, under the implied threat, if rejected, of carrying off their sees bodily into the opposing camp, something which came near happening with the great Electoral Archbishop of Cologne, and which would have issued in a line of Protestant Emperors.

It was not until the final rejection of the Council of Trent by the Protestants of both wings, Evangelical and Reformed, and until the great Catholic Reformation had set in with its full

strength, that the complete irreconcilability of the two religions became evident on both sides, and the inevitable struggle began in all its energy.

Even then it was twenty-five years before the sluggish Philip could be persuaded out of his hope of maintaining peace with Elizabeth. He kept looking for her conversion, or assassination, or dethronement in favor of her catholic cousin, or compulsion by her own subjects into better ways. Not until the outrages of the English buccanniers had become simply intolerable—see the vivid picture of them by Quiller Couch—and until Mary's murder had left him the next Catholic heir, did he finally make up his mind to attempt the conquest of the heretical island. Sixtus V. gave him his blessing, but astutely withheld his money until he should see that it was not to be wasted—a condition of which the unlucky King failed ignominiously. In fact the Armada and its calamitous issue for the Spaniards would have come to pass had the Pope said never a word.

So also Rome had a very remote concern with the eighty years struggle between Spain and the Dutch. The Calvinists had an amiable habit of shooting into Catholic congregations, an amenity which it is to be presumed that the Catholics sometimes returned. The Inquisition, established in the Netherlands not by Rome but by Spain, of course esteemed it its duty to burn heretics, and was encouraged in this opinion by the Protestants, although there was certainly a very serious difference of opinion over the question who were the heretics to be burnt. Naturally the Holy Office was not rendered more remiss in its functions by the news of Catholics shot down by the Calvinists in the midst of the Mass or by intelligence that at Brill two hundred monks and priests had been slowly tortured to death by the Reformed.

In all these matters Rome had a very remote concern, or no concern at all. Of Alva's terrible severities it was not she who was the instigator, but Madrid. Had Rome endeavored to interfere, her intervention would have been met, as it was met by the Holy Office in Spain, with occasional forced compliance with hypocritical evasiveness, or with bold recalcitancy. There is no reason to suppose that she had any thought of protesting. I can remember any instance of that age in which Catholics intervened in behalf of persecuted Protestants, as a century later, Innocent XI. intervened in behalf of the Huguenots. Nor do I remember a single instance in which Protestants interfered in behalf of persecuted Catholics. Elizabeth, says Lecky, equalled Alva in her atrocities, yet neither Wittenberg nor Geneva found fault. How could they, when their own divines taught them that every Papist living ought to be massacred? Yet had Rome tried to move the iron Spanish vice she would have had her labor for her pains.

Yet Mr. Froude declares that the Duke of Alva only lacked one thing of being an eminently virtuous man, namely, success. Had he accomplished his end, says Froude, his policy would have been exemplarily commendable. As he failed, his bloodshed is justly abhorred. Elizabeth in Munster, accomplished fruits, if not of conversion, at least of subjugation, and therefore her policy is illustrious.

CHARLES C. STANBURY.
Andover, Mass.

MISTAKES ABOUT THE WOMEN OF MEXICO.

We regret to find a writer in the *Delineator* for December misconceiving and misunderstanding the life of Mexican women, and the part which religion plays therein. Describing the devotedness of Mexican maidens and matrons he says of them that "they are restricted to the Church and the home." Mr. Brandenburg seems to think this restriction a severe hardship. He ought to read what Mr. Guernsey, special correspondent of the *Boston Herald* in Mexico, has had to say so often concerning the happy life of the Mexican woman—a life filled to overflowing with many duties relating to their homes and families, and yet never too busy for the gracious demands of that ceremonies and lavish hospitality for which Spanish Americans are famous. Those who are accustomed to certain social circles in this country where duty to God is never mentioned, or even thought of, may find the devotion of Mexican women to their Church rather strange, and perhaps something to be pitied; but Mr. Guernsey who has lived in Mexico for years has probed deeper into the matter than the average traveler from the United States, and he gives unsolicited praise to the nobility of the life of the average Mexican woman, and the happiness and comfort which she diffuses throughout her home.

In another part of his article, however, we find Mr. Brandenburg speaking as follows of the great work which the Church has accomplished and is still doing among the heterogeneous tribes of Mexico: "There are seven hundred known dialects, eighty distinct methods of tribal dress, and endless variety of local customs. In every peopled valley one can hear at dawn and dusk the clangor of the small cracked bell of the little church established in other centuries by the Spanish missionaries. How thorough must have been the method that not only wrought the conversion of so heterogeneous and scattered people, but has perpetuated it even though they have not changed from their primitive state! There are churches and Indian priests where there are no roads but mule paths, and no law but fear of the *jefe politico*, and where the news of the sudden submergence of Great Britain and all its inhabitants below the level of the sea tomorrow would be heard by some possible chance two or three years hence. All of the assaults of the civilization of the white man have left little trace except in the matter of religion."—*Sacred Heart Review*.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

The Epiphany.

FOLLOWING GOD'S GUIDANCE.

Boys, therefore, followers of God, as most dear children. (Eph. v. 1)

My dear brethren, these are not words of counsel or good advice they are words of command, written by St. Paul. This command is to follow God, and to follow Him as most dear children, obediently as the Magi did of old. What is it to follow God? It is to do at least as much as we do when we follow any one great man. How do we act then? We seek to do with him a great deal. We listen to his every word. We do as he does. We adopt his views of things. We repeat what he teaches. Neither do we dare to differ from him, for fear that people will say that we have no sense; nor do we venture to act in any manner opposed to his ways of doing. In a few words, a man who is followed is the leader in fashion, in taste and style. Everybody approves his ways, and imitates them. His friends have also the friendship of the world, simply because they are his friends. Any one whom he approves and recommends is listened to and followed because he has recommended him. If we want to follow God, He does not really require us to follow them. But how can we do this?

First: Seek to be with God a great deal. Where is He, that we may find Him? God is everywhere, and is always found by looking for Him and seeking for Him diligently in prayer; for prayer keeps us near to God and God near to us. And He is at every altar: hear Mass not only on Sundays but now and then on week days; visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Secondly: Listen to His every word. God speaks to our souls in prayer, not with a voice like the voice of a man, but in His own sweet and quiet way. We must listen attentively to hear the gentle words of God, not with our outward ears of the body, but with the ability to hear that is within our souls—the ability of the soul to hear the voice of a spirit speaking to our spirit. God also speaks to us through His Holy Word in the Sacred Scriptures, in the Epistle and Gospel set apart for each Sunday of the year, in the writings of holy men and women, in the teachings of Christian parents and friends. But the most important way in which God has taught, and continues to teach us, is by means of His Church. When we listen to her words in sermons and other instructions, we hear the Word of God.

Thirdly: Do as God does. Try to be like Him, and Him alone. Take care to do always the thing that is right. Try hard to be loving, merciful, forgiving and gentle to all, even your enemies. When we have anything to do, we must say: Would God do this way or that way? When we meet with great treatment from others, with ingratitude and base injustice from those we love, we must say at once, how does God treat those who do these things? How does He treat me, notwithstanding my many, many sins? I shall go and do to these bad people as He has done to me. I shall even bless them, as He has blessed those who have wronged me.

Lastly: If we want to follow God, at least as well as we follow a great man whom we have made a leader among us, we are sure to honor his friends, and obey those he sends to us in his name. Who are these? Not only all good people, but especially our pastors and spiritual directors. The pastor or parish priest is a man sent by God to make sure of the success of God's work in his parish. Any one who follows God in that parish unites heart and soul with his priest to help him carry out his plans. If any one wants to get the greatest amount of merit for his good deeds, he is sure to get it by following first these plans. For the priest stands as a father among his children. He knows the good and the bad, the rich and the poor. He knows what is best for each. He is the best adviser as to what ought to be done, and as to the way it is to be done. In charity he is certainly the best leader. Private works and charities are good, it is true; but the first duty, after one's own necessities are cared for, is to follow the order of God, in siding the parish through the parish priest and his assistants. We may safely say that one act done for God, in union with those put over us by Him, is worth in heaven, and here also, many good works done simply because we like to do them our own way.

To follow God, then, is to follow as dear children. We must consent to be led by God in all things connected with duty, just as little children are led by their fathers and mothers. We must take care, at least, that we follow His lead, and not show more honor to others than we do to Him.

Every mature man or woman knows scores of instances in which what appeared to be a misfortune has turned out to be the beginning of a prosperity; and yet scores of men and women continue to cry aloud instead of bracing their wills, bearing their burdens in silence, and giving the world what it so sorely needs—the stimulus of brave example and the sunshine of good cheer.—*The Outlook*.

Are we mindful enough concerning the care we should have for the young generation? When the end comes, and the Lord asks us: "Where is thy brother's keeper?" let us hope we will not have to reply: "I know not, Lord. Am I my brother's keeper?" It was Cain who first gave that excuse, and he should not be a model for us in our life.

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THE OUGHT TO BE'S.

[Written for The Catholic Standard and Times by Rev. J. T. Roche, author of "The Ought to Be of Hearing Mass," "Our Lady of Guadalupe," "Month of St. Joseph," "Belief and Unbelief," etc.]

THE AMERICAN GIRL.

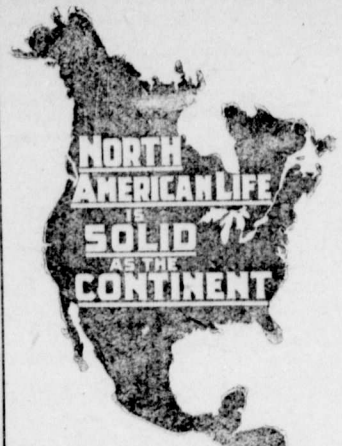
During the week just closed there have been dozens of editorials in Western dailies lauding the pluck and independence of an Omaha "American girl" who defied the commands of her Bishop and attended the wedding of a friend to a divorced man, although such attendance involved excommunication from the Catholic fold. The gist of all these editorials is that the "American girl" has only lived all such old-fogy attempts to restrain her liberty, and that the prelates of the Church are standing on slippery ground when they undertake to dictate her personal movements.

Of course, it was cruelly unkind on the part of the aforesaid Bishop to interfere with what was destined to be a leading society event. He should have realized the magnitude of a temptation involving lace and gowns, and all the mysterious fascination of a bride's position. Have not hundreds of Catholic girls before this given up their religion in order to become brides? Why should not one occasionally cut herself off from the Church in order to be a bride's attendant, even though the wedding be opposed to the good taste of a Christian community? And then, again, how foolishly on his part to lay down laws for so exalted a creature! Could he not have foreseen all this editorial disapproval—the severe censure of those moulders of public sentiment who long ago accorded to the American girl the first place in the country's affection? He was surely treading on dangerous ground, and all because he chose to renege at this inopportune moment those 265,000 American girls who, in the past ten years, have figured in the divorce courts of the country; and that other army, more numerous still, of unfortunate maidens whose sense of independence has driven them down to the brothels and dives of our metropolitan cities. It was very wrong of him to remember all this at such a time; to remember, too, as usually he must, that every American community has its quota of wilful maidens, whose disregard of parental and moral restraints has made their bawled independence only another term for easy virtue and a tarnished reputation. Yes, it is a serious indiscretion in a Bishop to impose restrictions upon the actions of this wondrous creature, even though he disregard of God and Nature's laws in all that pertains to the marriage tie have become the nation's greatest menace. The real cause of sorrow is that such indiscretions have been so few and far between.

WORTHY OF IMITATION. A good many journalists have taken advantage of the Omaha incident to dwell upon the fatality of excommunication as a preventive of evil or a punishment for the same. Rome, they assert, excommunicated Luther, but the Reformation's great space, excommunicated Henry VIII., and Catholicity was driven out of England. Yes, it did; and time has vindicated the wisdom of Rome's action. Luther and Henry VIII. and their kind drew away from the Church a multitude of moribund Catholics, whose loss in the long run has been the Church's gain. Thanks be to God! Rome has never hesitated to point out the path of duty to the rich and powerful as well as to the poor and the lowly. If American Protestantism had the courage of its convictions, divorce would not be the menace to the nation's well being which it is to day. Excommunication might be employed to some advantage amongst the horde of marital free traders who have brought evangelized Christianity into national disrepute. When it is employed by the Church it is either as a preventive or a punishment. In either case it is a terror to evil doers, and to them alone.

A WOMAN'S PROBLEM. It is no; our wild, free and easy, harum-scarum Catho to young men who give us the most trouble in matters pertaining to marriage. It is those gentle maidens whose virtues have been lauded in song and story, and who are commonly supposed to possess a monopoly of the family piety. In nine cases out of ten, when there is question of a mixed marriage, it is a Catholic girl whose affections are involved. And when they fall in love nowadays they will brook no interference from any source. Parents are expected to acquiesce as a matter of course, and the priest may as well throw up his hands and prepare to perform the ceremony.

To the average American girl of to-day there is no fate so appalling as that of becoming an "old maid." They cannot well help it. Mothers have talked marriage to them ever since they were babes in arms. It has been held out as the great end and aim of their existence. They begin keeping company whilst still in short dresses, and are prepared to assume the responsibilities of married life before they are fit for anything else. It frequently happens that parents are consulted only when all the arrangements for the marriage have been completed by the young people themselves. The consent of the old people is a mere formality, and their opposition avails but little when the young people have made up their minds. There is little wonder, therefore, that the divorce courts are constantly occupied, and that the term "domestic felicity" has become a cause for unseasonable mirth. Our marriage customs sorely need reforming. The Church's legislation is intended to prevent love sick young people from entering into a life contract without mature deliberation. It frequently permits what it cannot well prevent, but it does it with bad grace and with many fears for the future welfare of the parties concerned. It tolerates mixed marriages under certain circumstances, but at the same time discourages them in every possible way. After nineteen centuries of chastening experience it proclaims the mixed marriage to be nearly always a mistake. It has found that it is impossible for two people whose moral standards are totally at variance to



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dwell together in peace. And this is as true to-day as it was in the days of Nero and Vespasian. A Catholic wife linked to a Protestant or unbelieving husband has abundant opportunity to sacrifice Catholic principles of conduct. She cannot be true to her convictions and at the same time be the ideal wife of a husband who sneers at many things which she holds sacred. It was a mistake, and frequently worse than a mistake, in the days of old. With the commonly accepted American views on the question of maternity, it is to day a moral calamity.

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