

Sacred Heart Review. PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER. CXXV.

Subjectively considered, of course an unconscious and unintended calumny incurr much less blame than a conscious and intended one. In itself, however, it is even more injurious. Now a moment's reflection ought to be enough to show an educated mind that if God has intended a certain law to be of universal and abiding force in His Church, He can not at the same time be conceived as giving the Pope power to dispense from it. The two propositions destroy each other.

However, stopping to think what his statements mean is a mental process of which we find few traces in these lectures of the Dean. He skates cheerfully on, alike over thick ice and thin. He has tumbled in already fifty times, but no sooner in than out again and whizzing away. However, do not let my Catholic readers imagine that all educated Protestants are as immeasurably unthinking and careless as this. The great-st Protestant encyclopaedia, that of Herzog Pitt, is perfectly explicit. It informs us that the controversy of ages between the Gallicans and Ultramontanes turned on the Jus Divinum, God's law, or is he also (Jus Divinum, God's law) bound also by the Jus Canonium, the law of the Church? The Gallicans maintained his more limited, ascribing to the Canon Law a directive authority over papal action, but not a properly coercive power. The decision was finally given, as we know, for what was called the Ultramontane opinion. In 1870 that the Pope can ever dispense from the permanent and universally intended law of God is a senselessness that never entered into the heads of either party.

Now what excuse can Dr. Hodges plead for not knowing as much as he could have learned out of Herzog-Pitt on this great controversy, before venturing on the false and scandalous statement that in 1509 the date of Henry's marriage, the Pope was supposed by the Roman Catholic world to have the power of dispensing from the law of God? His invincible superficiality in everything that concerns the Roman Catholic system is, not an excuse, but the explanation. Thus we see that superficiality, without ill-will, may be much more injurious than ill-will working through adequate knowledge. It will only distort knowledge, but knowledge is a powerful constraint upon it. From this constraint, in this range of matters, Dr. Hodges is almost absolutely free. Therefore he can give out false and slanderous statements, without meaning to do any harm, and without any thought that he has done any.

Let me briefly repeat what I have already said concerning the limits of the dispensing power. Catholic theologians teach that there is first the natural Jus Divinum. This rests on the nature of man, as created by God, and as expressing, so far as can be done in a finite being, the moral and intellectual nature of God. From this law, God Himself can not dispense, for this would be to contradict His own nature, which is impossible. Then there is the positive Jus Divinum. This rests, not on the nature, but on the will of God. It may be terminable and restricted, or it may be permanent and universal. From the terminable and restricted law of God, of course the Pope may be authorized, in certain cases, to dispense. For illustration: when the President dispenses from the McKinley tariff in certain cases, he is not breaking the law, for the law itself makes provision for certain relaxations. Should these excepting clauses be struck out, then the President's power to dispense would cease.

By far the greater part of the Jus Divinum, however, has been given to the Church. "With the note of unchangeability." From this God might dispense, but will not, while the Pope neither will nor can, since power over this has not been given into his hands. One would think that any one who has so much as read Hum's history would know the nature of the dispute between Henry and the Pope. Henry did not need to dispense from the law, for he could not dispense from the law of God, for neither Clement nor Julius ever claimed that he could. The whole question was: Is marriage with a brother's widow forbidden by God's unalterable law, or only by the alterable and dispensable law of the Church? The Review has already stated the controversy, out of that well known Anglican authority, "The Speaker's Commentary." It was commonly held that the Levitical laws of marriage are not binding on Christians, except so far as they express the natural Jus Divinum or so far as they have been renewed by the Church. What the Church has renewed, of course she may abrogate, or relax.

Yet as the Church had never formally re-enacted these laws, so that there was as yet no definition of faith concerning them, the question might arise without heresy, whether marriage with a brother's widow is forbidden only by the Church, and therefore dispensable, or forbidden by God, and therefore un dispensable. The famous university of Bologna, in the Pope's own dominions, took the latter position. The question, then, was this: Has God forbidden marriage with a brother's widow? If so, all parties allowed that the Pope may permit that which God forbids, as a monarch may and meaningless thesis, which did not, and could not, enter into the head of any Catholic divine or educated layman.

After some wavering, the Catholic minority concurred with the great majority, in accepting the Papal decision, which, if not a definition in form, has so wrought in fact and controls decisively the present teaching of the Catholic Church, namely: that marriage with a former husband's brother is not forbidden by God to Christians, but is left by Him wholly in the hands of the Church. The Lutherans—I believe without exception—concur with the Pops. The Calvinists, it is true, sided with Henry, not out of love to him, but because Calvinism has all ways inclined to give the Old Testament an inordinate legislative force in the Christian Church.

What the Greek Church may hold in this matter I do not know, but I will venture to say that to day, in Western Christendom, Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican or Reformed, there is scarcely a vanishing fraction that doubts that Clement the Seventh's decision against Henry (whether we view it as political or conscientious) was a sound decision, and that the King's repudiation of Catharine, whose eminent worthiness and faithfulness he himself attested, had no moral validity.

Then, of course, his marriage with Anne was Christianly void. He himself subsequently procured from his obsequious Archbishop a declaration of invalidity, nobody knows on what grounds. Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem. "Whatever pleases the prince, is law by that fact," was Henry's and Cranmer's one unwavering principle. I may almost say, it was their one unchanging article of religion. Cranmer thought it a merit to love the King as much as God. Now God without the King is enough for the soul. Therefore it should follow, by Cranmer's position, that the King without God is enough for the soul.

The Dean says that in Henry's time England was full of friars, "whom the people properly hated." Doubtful Don Gasquet, confirmed by considerable Protestant research (which, however is too vague in my memory to be specifically adduced), has shown how very hard it was to induce either monks, friars or nuns, to testify their houses, or to find any serious testimony warranting the suppression of the abbey, priory, or other religious houses. The correspondence between the King's vicar general, Thomas Cromwell, and his agents, shows how embarrassed these were to excuse their proceedings, and how relentlessly Henry and Cromwell were bent, evidence or no evidence, on having the spolia of the monasteries.

Before going on, I have some remarks to make next on the friars of this time. CHARLES C. STARRUCK. Andover, Mass.

THE DANGERS OF INDISCRIMINATE READING.

The Bishops observe that indiscriminate reading is, perhaps, the most insidious form under which the poison of rationalism and unbelief is injected into the soul. Without attracting attention men, and women too, take up books or magazines that lie about, and, as it were, casually turn to the cleverly written and highly spiced articles against their faith which they find therein. Feeding the mind and imagination upon arguments and pictures against the virtue of faith must end as fatally to the soul as feeding them upon lascivious suggestions and forbidden images. Faith and chastity are equally gifts of God, that need careful guardianship, for they that love the danger shall perish in it. To say that it is impossible to get away from the literature of the day is only to say that in the choice of what to read and what to avoid, the exercise of a wise discretion and of a strong will are absolutely necessary. To read, without necessity, matter calculated to create doubt or to sap faith, is a sin against religion and the First Commandment. Finally, to sum up the argument and instruction contained in the pastoral letter, there is but one fitting attitude for a Catholic towards the Church, namely, that of unwavering loyalty. Beginning a new century, each one may well ask himself: What must be characteristic of my service if I am to glorify God? Is greater self-restraint, a more docile spirit, demanded of me that I may save my own soul and help to win back my neighbor to the fold? Surely it is needful that we should be all of one mind with the Church, and that we should all bear common witness to the faith in order to glorify God and our Lord Jesus Christ. In concluding, the Bishops say: And now that we are entering upon the twentieth century, we pray most earnestly to the faithful Virgin, the glorious mother of God, to intercede for the children of her dowry; to blessed Peter, to show himself once more throughout this realm of England, so loyal and faithful to his See during a thousand years. And we pray thus, that Mary and Peter, Thomas of Canterbury, and all the other saints of God may unite with us in imploring our Lord Jesus Christ to come again and reign in the mind and heart of the people of this country, and lead us all, in His own good time, into life everlasting. Amen.

The Pope's Poem. From the Independent.

The closing prayer, addressed to Jesus only, is a noble and touching one and will appeal to all Christians; while scholars will not know where to

look for the parallel of such a literary work, done at such an age, by one holding so exalted a position.

FIVE MINUTES' SERMON.

Quinquagesima Sunday. PASSION OF OUR LORD.

"He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon." (Luke 18, 32.)

If the Church on this Sunday, the vigil of Lent, as it were, reads to us the striking gospel in which our Lord announces His bitter passion and death, it is certainly her loving intention to lead us most earnestly to meditate during the holy season on the ever memorable suffering and death of Our Lord. Truly, what the soul is to the body, the devotion to our suffering Lord is to all our works of mortification during Lent. What is there in our religion that presents to us more forcibly the infinite love of God, the great value of our souls, the malice and guilt of our sins, than the dreadful sacrificial altar of Golgotha, where God sent out of infinite love for us, poor sinners, steeped in an ocean of sorrows in the agony of death sheds the last drop of His precious blood, to cancel our debt and to save us from eternal destruction.

O sinner, can you with the eye of faith view this sacrifice of propitiation without feeling intense sorrow for your sins, without your heart being rent with love for Jesus? Can you see your Saviour bleeding on the cross, writhing in the agony of death, and remain so unmoved? Can you take the crown of thorns and by pride again press it upon His head? Can you grasp the scourges and by impurity again scourge the body of the Lord? Can you take the nails and by covetousness you take justice again pierce His hands and feet? Alas! you certainly have not considered what St. Paul assures us in his letter to the Hebrews, that by your sins you have renewed the bitter passion and death of your loving Saviour. Oh, ever remember this admonition, and it will not be possible for you to be guilty of such malice. Meditate daily on the bitter passion of your loving Jesus: place before your eyes the bleeding Saviour in the agony of death, especially in the time of temptation, and you will certainly find strength in the five wounds for successful resistance; you will, moved by His infinite love, always persevere in gratitude, and have no other desire than by a true spirit of penance, to make reparation for the past.

Another most precious fruit produced by meditating on the sufferings of your Divine Saviour is, that you will learn, at the foot of the cross, not only to die to sin, but also to live to virtue, and you will thus become a true disciple of your crucified Jesus. The whole life of Our Lord was a sublime figure of all perfections, but as the setting sun sends his most beautiful rays on earth, so Our Lord at the completion of His life desired to show us His virtues. My dear Christian, you may be tempted to pride and vanity; if so, contemplate the Creator of Heaven and earth on the cross in the depth of humiliation. Can you look upon Him hanging between two thieves and not be mindful of the words He addressed to you: "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart?" (Matt. 11, 29.)

And you, disobedient Christian, look aloft to your Saviour. The heavens, the myriads of stars obey His will, and yet, He submits Himself not only to the will of His heavenly Father, but even to those who scourge Him, crown Him with thorns and nail Him to the cross. And you, who are mere dust, will you not even acknowledge your superiors as God's representatives? And you, revengeful Christian, when you hear your Divine Saviour on the cross praying for His murderers, must not holler and noisier sentiments fill your heart and extinguish the fire of un-Christian hatred and revenge! And you, my dear suffering brother, cast on the bed of sickness, you sorrowing and afflicted father, see how Jesus offers to His heavenly Father all the sufferings of His body and the bitterness of His soul without complaint; will not so heavenly a patience touch your heart and inflame your mind with a holy desire of following the Saviour out of love on the path of suffering?

But enough, my dear Christians, I would never cease were I to attempt to unfold before your eyes all the details of the comforting and encouraging lessons given by our suffering Saviour upon the cross. I shall only add Calvary's cross is the mirror of all sanctity, the school of all Christian perfection; no other devotion has brought more saints to Heaven. The Passion of Our Lord inflames the apostles with heroism and zeal for souls, infused the holy martyrs with unshaken courage to meet a cruel death; made the painful works of penance a pleasure to the holy confessors, strengthened the holy virgins to reject love of God the world and its pleasures and either in a cloister or on the field of Christian charity, to serve Jesus in His suffering members. The crucifix has always been for the saints a prayer book in which they daily read and meditated. It has been for the holy Fathers of the Church a library whence they gathered their inspired knowledge; it has been for souls anxiously working out their salvation a source of divine inspiration and graces.

Oh, let us, therefore, during the holy season of Lent frequently meditate upon the sufferings and death of Our Lord; let us accompany Him in spirit on the dolorous way of the cross, and the graces which we shall receive will be exceedingly great, for under the shadow of the cross we will learn to die to sin and live to virtue. Amen.

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IMITATION OF CHRIST.

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Be vigilant, and diligent in God's service, and often think with thyself for what end thou comest hither, and why thou must leave the world. Was it not that thou mightest live to God and become a spiritual man? Be fervent therefore in thy spiritual progress, for thou shalt shortly receive the reward of thy labors; and then grief and fear shall no more near thee. Thou shalt labor now a little, and thou shalt find great rest, yea, ever-lasting joy.

If thou continue faithful and fervent to working, God will doubtless be faithful and liberal in rewarding. Thou must preserve a good and firm hope of arriving to the crown; but thou must not think thyself secure, lest thou grow negligent or proud. When a certain wavering between hope and fear, and had overwhelmed with grief, once prostrated himself in prayer in the church before a certain altar, he revolved these things within himself, saying, "If I did but know that I should still persevere," and presently he heard within himself an answer from God, "And, if thou didst know this, what wouldst thou do, and now what thou wouldst then do, and thou shalt be very secure."

OBEY THE TRUTH.

We have good reason to believe that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of non-Catholics who had become more or less acquainted with the Catholic Church and are strongly inclined towards it. Some do not hesitate to declare that if there is any truth in Christianity it is in the Catholic Church. Others are thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, but for various reasons, they hesitate to declare themselves Catholics. But we believe the most influential of these reasons is that they do not fully realize the imperative obligation of obeying the truth and the imminent danger of refusing or neglecting to obey it.

Such persons should remember that God is Truth and therefore by rejecting or refusing to receive the truth, especially revealed truth, they reject God and refuse to acknowledge Him who is our Creator, our Redeemer our Life, our Peace, and our everlasting reward. It is an awful thing to reject or refuse to acknowledge and obey God's truth. To follow the light, we are aware, often involves a very great sacrifice. But surely, no one who thinks for a moment can fail to see that the tremendous interests involved, render any sacrifices we can possibly make unworthy of a moment's consideration. It is for this reason that our Lord said: "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." And "if any man deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in Heaven. We must be willing to for sake all things for the truth.—Catholic Columbian.

NECESSITY OF PENANCE.

All of us need to do penance for our numerous sins. We will have to do penance in this world or the next, we cannot escape it. When we think of it the penance is very light and will benefit us spiritually and bodily also. We all eat too much; we think too much of what we shall eat. We pamper our bodies until they are our masters. By fasting we bring our body into due subjection. Many of the diseases that flesh is heir to are brought on by over-eating, and if we put ourselves on a Lenten diet it will do much to improve our health. Many people are not satisfied with three meals a day; but must have a lunch twice a day; they are hardly through one meal before they are getting ready for another. Let us then this year try to limit our diet; let us fast and abstain

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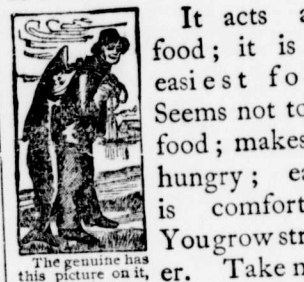
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