

## CONSIDERATIONS OF CATHOLICISM BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

Sacred Heart Review.—CCXCIX.

We will examine some passages in one or two Provincial religious papers that have been sent us, beginning with the "Presbyterian Witness" of Halifax. We will take first a letter from Mr. Murdoch Mackinnon, protesting against the Protestant propaganda in Canada. He felicitates the "Witness" on its growingly friendly relations with the Roman Catholics, of whom he rightly says, that "they are doing their part, and a very great part it is, of the Master's work in the world."

This is all excellent. The Protestant propaganda in Canada does seem rather scant of results. As Mr. Mackinnon says, ignorant and worldly Catholics may best be incited to a higher life by their own clergy. Yet the collision of varying opinions often strikes out sparks of faith and knowledge which otherwise might lay dormant. The rich fruits of the Counter-reformation appeared after the tremendous shock of the Reformation had startled the spiritual energies of Catholic Christendom out of their slumber. See the late Bishop Hurst's admirable article in the "Methodist Review."

Mr. Mackinnon compliments the Canadian Catholics on the patience with which they tolerate the Protestant propaganda, and questions whether the Protestants would endure a Catholic counter-movement. Under favor, it seems to me that neither the compliment nor the censure is fully deserved. The Canadian Catholics love the law, and so, no doubt, do the Protestants. Either party, in tolerating a propaganda of the other religion, is simply complying with good citizenship. Canadian, like American, law, under certain precautions for the public peace, guards the right of every man to express his religious beliefs and to win as many adherents to them as he can.

We on this side have certainly our full share of intolerance, yet we endure without remark a Catholic propaganda which expressly calls itself a "mission." How many converts it makes, I do not know; but it certainly accomplishes a great deal of good in removing misunderstandings. Even the intolerant South, where indescribably hideous slanders are diffused and received, has not yet thought of lynching a Paulist Father.

Now we, in turn, might accomplish great good if we appointed a mission, and sent out agents among Catholics to circulate such books as "External Religion," by the Rev. George Tyrrell, S.J., or "The Saved and the Lost," by Rev. Nicholas Walsh, S.J., or the Encyclical of August 10, 1863, or Cardinal Manning's extended letter to Mr. Ward on the obligation of recognizing the fruits of the Spirit wherever found or the "Ave Maria's" warning to Catholics not to contradict these teachings of the Catholic Church, or Rudyard Kipling's portrait of Father Victor, or Dr. Arthur T. Pierson's charming little biography of St. Charles Borromeo, or his thrilling account of the Catholic martyrdoms of Korea, or Savonarola's "Triumph of the Cross," published by Propaganda. We have more money than the Catholics; then why should we not spend a surplus of it in so excellent a colportage?

Then also what an excellent effect it would have if the Evangelical Alliance would depute men of weight and sound lungs, to go in front of Catholic districts, and in front of the churches, to proclaim with a loud voice: "Oyez! Oyez!" In the name of the United Protestant world, hear and understand. All that Martin Luther says agreeably to St. Paul, we, with all good Christians, receive and believe. But there are certain propositions of the said Brother Martin which we abhor and detest. "Imprimis: Faith justifies before love and without love. 'Item:' If a man only has faith, it is not vital how many concubines he has, or how many murders he commits. 'Item:' (orally reported): A Protestant ought not to be afraid of a good round lie for the good cause. 'Item:' If a woman not being

sought in marriage becomes a mother out of wedlock, she pleases God better than by remaining a virgin. 'Item:' Unmarried chastity is a pretence and an impossibility. Who ever shall say such things Bishop, Reformer, or Divine, let him be Anathema. And let all the people say, Amen."

Now I can not but think that such an exchange of agencies would be very helpful towards establishing a better understanding between the two religions. If we will only cleanse our own Augean stables, our brethren of the other part will not be burdened with the disagreeable office of cleansing them for us.

I can not therefore, altogether agree with Mr. Mackinnon in deprecating all agencies among the Catholics, although I will not undertake to say that the Presbyterian propaganda of which he speaks is guided entirely on the lines which I have laid out.

We will now turn to page 4 of the "Witness," column 2. Here is an article on the Immaculate Conception. I need not say that, as a Protestant, I do not receive this doctrine. Nor do I entertain the prevailing Roman Catholic belief touching the relation of the Blessed Virgin to the Divine administration. Therefore I should have no occasion to animadvert upon this leading article of the "Witness" but for a sentence or two at its end. Thus: "The pope says good things about Mary: so do we all. But we do not worship her."

It appears then, according to the "Witness," that the Catholics worship the Virgin. If so then of course they are idolaters. Now, as St. Paul declares, an idolater has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Then if the Catholics are idolaters, all the friendly things which the "Witness" in this very number, says and receives, and its recognition of the Church of Rome as a Christian body are wholly unwarranted and criminal, and should subject the editors to ecclesiastical process. Moreover, its friendly commendation of a late article of mine in this "Review" (inadvertently credited to the "Ave Maria") is highly reprehensible for I throughout deal with the Catholics as Christians, which, if they are idolaters, I have no right to do.

The original Reformers were more consistent here. At least Calvin said: "The Papists are idolaters; therefore they should be put to the sword. Bucer said: 'Rather they, with their wives, their children, and their cattle, might well be stoned, or burned in the fire.'

True, Calvin recognized that there are genuine Christians still in communion with Rome, but he must have viewed these as a vanishing exception. John Knox made no such weak concessions. He and his brethren were driven almost wild by a timid suggestion that an occasional Papist is perhaps a child of God. Richard Hooker's suggestion that possibly a few Catholics were saved before the Reformation (he did not say after) was very ill-received by the Puritans. The Primate gave it a guarded assent.

Now here was consistency. The Calvinistic Reformers, at least, were not much disposed to eat their cake and have it. Their reasoning was clear enough. An idolater can not inherit the kingdom of God. The Papists are idolaters. Therefore the Papists can not inherit the kingdom of God.

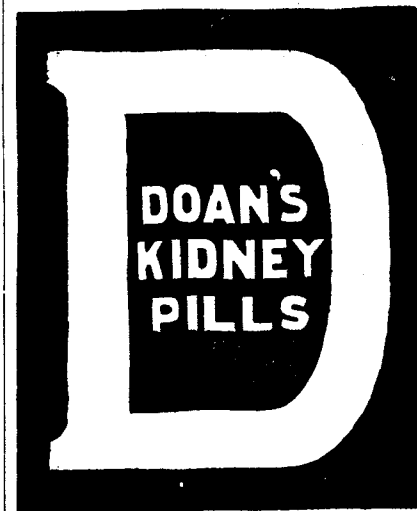
On the contrary, the "Witness" says: "Idolaters, except by repentance, can not be saved. The Roman Catholics worship the Virgin, and the worship of a creature is idolatry. Yet the Catholics, though idolaters, may be, and often are, excellent Christians. Moreover the Church which commends this worship of a creature, is a Christ-

ian church, Where is the consistency here?"

Does the "Witness" say that Catholics worship the Virgin in the elder sense, in which "the people worshipped the Lord and the King?" And what is there wrong in that? Is not the glorified Mother of the Lord, present or absent, worthy of immeasurably higher veneration than Solomon, present or absent? Solomon is a creature, and Mary is a creature, but surely Mary is a vastly more exalted creature than Solomon.

Do Catholics acknowledge the Virgin as the source of grace? They do not. Now we all acknowledge that the intercession of a creature may be the channel of grace. To invoke such intercession, therefore, whether well or ill-warranted, is essentially different from our petitions to God, to grant us internally the gifts of His Spirit, or externally the benefits of His Providence.

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Andover, Mass.



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## CONVERSIONS TO THE FAITH.

Such statements as the following are of frequent occurrence in the papers now-a-days, and afford us encouragement for more earnest work and frequent prayer than ever that our separated brethren may return to the one true Church of Jesus Christ. Father Conway, the Paulist, announces as the result of a recent series of lectures to non-Catholics, sixty-four converts to the Catholic faith, including twenty Episcopalians, six Lutherans, two Scotch Presbyterians, one Hebrew (the second in seven years). Again, Archbishop Ryan confirmed lately, at St. Charles Borromeo's Church, Philadelphia, as the result of a mission given by Franciscan Fathers, fifty adults, of whom thirty-four were converts. Again, the Senior Kennicott Hebrew Scholarship at Oxford has been awarded to Mr. Frederick A. Ingle, B.A., of St. John's College, who was for a short time in the Anglican ministry, but is now studying for the Priesthood at the College Beda, in Rome. If these facts should meet the eye of any man who is still kept out of the Church by a belief or a hope that Anglican orders are valid,—though, even if they were so, he would still be severed from communion with the Church's prescribed centre of unity,—let us quote here for him Cardinal Newman's emphatic words, which were spoken even before the late Pope's pronouncement against those orders:—

"As to my views of Anglican orders I can not conceive that they are valid—but I could not 'swear'

Continued on page Six.

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