

What Have You Done To-day?

We shall do much in the years to come;
But what have we done to-day?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum;
But what did we give to-day?
We shall lift the heart and dry the tear,
We shall plant a hope in the place of fear,
We shall speak the words of love and cheer;
But what did we speak to-day?
We shall be so kind in the after while;
But what have we been to-day?
We shall bring to each lonely life a smile;
But what have we brought to-day?
We shall give to truth a grander birth,
We shall feed the hungry souls of earth;
But this is the thing our hearts must ask:
What have we done to-day?

**St. John Chrysostom,
Archbishop, Doctor of the Church**
(Feast January 27.)

This great Saint and Doctor of the Church was born at Antioch in the year 347. In 386 he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Flavian, who conferred upon him the office of preacher. Owing to his wonderful oratorical powers he was surnamed "Chrysostom", i.e. Mouth of Gold. Later on appointed to the archiepiscopal See of Constantinople, he, by his wonderful preaching, caused a great renewal of Christian Morals among the inhabitants. He was most solicitous in the care of the poor and infirm, and wrote such beautiful works on various religious subjects, that he is reckoned among the four greatest Greek Fathers of the Church. On account of his frank condemnation of the laxity of Morals even in high places, he incurred the enmity of the Empress Eudoxia and was twice sent into exile. On this second journey into exile, on account of the inhuman treatment he suffered at the hands of the guards, he died at Comana on the 14th of September 407. His feast is commemorated by the Church on the 27th of January.

Cardinal Newman has the following to say of the oratorical powers of the Saint:

"St. Chrysostom had his own rostra, his own curia; it was the Holy Temple, where his eloquence gained for him victories no less real, and more momentous, than the detection and overthrow of Catiline. Great as was his gift of oratory, it was not by the fertility of his imagination or the splendor of his diction, that he gained the surname of 'Mouth of Gold.' We shall be very wrong if we suppose that fine expression, or rounded periods, or figures of speech, were the credentials by which he claimed to be the first doctor of the East. His oratorical power was but the instrument, by which he readily, gracefully, adequately expressed,—expressed without effort and with felicity,—the keen feelings, the living ideas, the earnest practical lessons which he had to communicate to his hearers. He spoke because his heart, his head, were brimful of things to speak about. His elocution corresponded to that strength and flexibility of limb, that quickness of eye, hand and foot, by which a man excels in many games or in mechanical skill. It would be a great mistake, in speaking of it, to ask whether it was Attic or Asiatic, terse or flowing, when its distinctive praise was that it was natural. His unrivalled charm, as that of every really eloquent man, lies in his singleness of purpose, his fixed grasp of his aim, his noble earnestness. A bright, cheerful, gentle soul; a sensitive heart, a temperamental open to emotion and impulse; and all this elevated, refined, transformed by the touch of heaven,—such was St. John Chrysostom; winning followers, riveting affections, by his sweetness, frankness, and neglect of self. In his labors, in his preaching, he thought of others only."

**Some Roads to Rome
in America.')**

Edited by Georgina Pell Curtis.

CHARLES FISK BEACH, Jun.,
(Concluded.)

If we should multiply cheap copies of the Statutes and encourage all men to read them and to construe them in the light of their own understanding or misunderstanding, and to act on such construction, staking their lives and property on the correctness of their private notions about law, and tell them not only to reject any and all authoritative interpretation but also to rely solely on their own wisdom as to what the Statutes mean, we should be doing about civil law just exactly what the Protestants do about the divine law, and we should have in civil society just exactly what we have in religion—absolute and impossible anarchy. Civil society could not exist on that basis or without courts duly established to construe and to enforce the law or without a Supreme Court to decide absolutely and finally as to the meaning and intent of the law. Neither as it seemed to me could society on its religious side, exist in the absence of authority and without a Supreme Court from which there is no appeal and which must be recognized by all. Protestantism thus appeared to me to be a system of confusion that no wise and just God could create or sanction. I could not understand how a God infinitely wise and just could authorize a system upon which was to depend the eternal salvation of the human race which nobody could understand and about which none agree.

There are several hundred local Protestant sects scattered here and there over the earth, all claiming to teach the truth, all of equal rank, all pretending to derive their doctrine from the same book, many of them putting up claims to exclusive prerogative, no two of which teach the same system, many of which teach the most contrary doctrines, some of which promulgate what most men agree is nonsense, and all of which have but a local and generally but an ephemeral existence. The distinctive doctrine of each little sect, that particular *ism* which constitutes its *raison d'être*, is stoutly denied and held for heresy by most or all of the rest. Each sect conclusively and to its own satisfaction "proves" its doctrine from the Scriptures. Thus the *pro* and *con* of every conceivable religious tenet is asserted by one sect or another and claimed to be "proved" by holy writ. There being no one to decide, it results that for these people taken in the mass and as a whole, the Bible means nothing, proves nothing, teaches nothing and produces nothing but confusion and anarchy. That is precisely the net result of the sum total of Protestant doctrine. Some sects in the same time have about died out and many new ones have been born. Upon the Protestant theory this must go on for all the future; and just as the Methodism of to-day is very little kin to the Methodism of John Wesley's time, and as the Presbyterianism of the twentieth century has almost nothing in common with the Presbyterianism of Jonathan Edwards, so the sects of the next century will inevitably develop new phases of belief and teach new doctrines and proclaim new dogmas as essential to salvation. Where is it to end? And considering that one's soul's salvation depends upon it, what shall one do to make a wise choice among the sects?

It seemed to me that most thoughtful men born Protestants who are content to remain in any sect and are satisfied to believe its

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doctrines can do so only so far as they think only about that sect and confine themselves rigidly to it. If one would remain intellectually satisfied with Presbyterianism, or Methodism, or Episcopacy, or what not, he must shut his eyes to everything else and put the emphasis of his thinking, not on a comparative study of Protestantism as a whole as contradistinguished from Catholicism, but upon an exclusive contemplation of the dogmas of his own sect, whatever it is. If one takes a serious general view of Protestant sects, weighing one over against the other in any really intelligent fashion, applying a rigid scientific analysis to the operation, and going at it in its ensemble, one must conclude that there is an enormous amount of humbug in it, that it is necessarily and in its essence inconsistent and impossible, irrational, grotesque and absurd. Who is wise enough to separate the wheat from the chaff? Why is one sect worthier to be followed than another? No single Protestant tenet of any sect which is not stoutly denied and repudiated by some other Protestant sect. Confusion worse confounded, each remitted to his own wisdom, all reaching different conclusions, and no one to decide. A *deductio ad absurdum* if ever there was one. Verily the only way to have intellectual peace in Protestantism, as it seemed to me, is to stick stoutly and blindly to one sect, not thinking or caring or knowing much about the rest. To know them all is to know how absurd the whole scheme is. Any human government that instituted such a system in civil affairs would be repudiated by all reasonable men. I never could see how a religious system of that sort is any better.

The sixteenth century struck me as far too late for the discovery of ultimate religious verity. If the proposition is that until then the Christian system had been wrong, if it then called for repudiation, and if only then real divine light was finally vouchsafed to a few schismatics in Germany and England, I could not resist the conclusion that the whole Christian system is unworthy of serious consideration; because who shall say that some centuries hence, or after the matter of that the day after to-morrow, a new "Reformation" may not break out, and new light—new gospel truth essential to salvation—be discovered, superseding all previous issues—like railroad time-tables, or the catalogues of the department stores or the telephone books.

So it seemed to me more and more as I thought of it.

In contradistinction to all this confusion I saw the certitude of Catholicism; I saw historically a real Church, not a kaleidoscopic jumble of sects organized by schismatics from time to time, but the Church of God coming down to us from the Apostles and from Christ himself, continuing in ordinary generation the work begun on earth by the divine Saviour. I was much impressed, as I considered its history, by the continuity of Catholicism, its direct derivation from the Head of the Church, its historic oneness from the beginning; and I then was in a frame of mind to accept its claim to divine authority to govern and to interpret. That seemed to me reasonable and rational, and to be what a wise God would naturally have ordained for His Church on earth, if He ordained anything. Anything else leaves all men in doubt, and in practice inevitably lets many men go wrong. All of Protestantism cannot possibly be true, much of Protestantism is certainly untrue and no human mind can decide what of Protestantism is true. There is therefore no safety in it. Who shall

decide how far one sect is right and the others wrong? All make the same pretence to truth with equal fervor, while gravely putting out claims the most diametrically opposite.

The mind rejecting that system turns necessarily to the only thing that is left, namely to Catholicism. If anything in Christianity is true, Catholicism is that thing. It is rational and reasonable, and what serious men would expect of a wise God. It works order in religion, and works along lines that in other spheres commend themselves to sane man. The Catholic system is what we have in the home and in the State; it provides an authority from which there is no appeal. It gives us veritute. It does about divine law precisely what the State does and must do for civil law, that is it sets our doubts at rest by ultimate and final decision. If there is no power under heaven given among men of divine sanction so to decide, then the Bible means nothing and is not a safe guide and Christianity is a dream. Lawyers know that statutes, even the most carefully drawn, must be interpreted by courts of last resort before they can safely advise their clients as to their true and ultimate force and effect. Everybody knows that what a statute really means is what the Supreme Court finally says it means—not what wrangling attorneys argue and claim it means. That is the position and pretension of the Catholic Church as to her authority to interpret the divine statutes. No other religious organization makes or can make any such claim. Historically it is Catholicism or nothing. No truth was ever truer than that. Unless, then, God has thus provided on earth a sure interpreter of His law and of His will, a final arbiter to speak a language that we can all understand, and to which we all must bow, divine law as attempted to be set forth in the Holy Scriptures is an inscrutable mystery; no man knows what it is, or what to believe and can only stake his soul's salvation upon the best guess he can make. Under the Protestant scheme one man guesses Mormonism, another guesses High Church or Low Church Episcopacy, another guesses Alexander Campbellism, another guesses Mrs. Eddyism and so on all through the long list of the sects. Some surely guess wrong.

It seemed to me that the authority of the historic Church, her divine sanction as against this chaos of conflicting "isms" is the only ark of safety. Reasoning of this sort, enforcing itself upon my understanding for a series of years, finally made me a Catholic from conviction. Then the grace of God I trust did the rest. So after a long period of hesitation I abjured the faith in which I was born, and in the ancient Church of the Carmelites in Paris, in the rue de Vaugirard, under the kindly ministrations of Abbé Félix Klein, I was baptized and received into the one, holy Roman Catholic Church. "Whereas I was blind now I see."

THE END.

**A British Report on
the Language Question.**

The British Government appointed a commission in 1916 to ascertain what improvements might be made in the preparation of British youths for their part in the new world that is to follow the war. The committee was to inquire specially into the position of modern languages in the educational system of the nation. It is significant that this committee of representative and patriotic Englishmen reached the striking conclusion that ignor-

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