

PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

CXXIV.

Dr. Hodges' fifth lecture turns upon the English Reformation. I need not say of myself that, as a Protestant and Episcopalian, I am well content with the result of this. I view Anglicanism in its various branches, not in the least as likely to swallow up the rest of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, but as likely to be increasingly influential in the world, and beneficially so. Even so intense a Roman Catholic as Joseph de Maistre has, I understand, ascribed to the English Church an important providential function, although of course he would interpret this very differently from the way in which we should.

On the other hand, Dean Hodges is far from joining in Froude's foolish and insolent attempt at canonizing that detestable wicked man, Henry the Eighth. These are two points on which Protestants and Catholics of English speech are generally agreed, in abhorring Henry, and in venerating Catherine. Even Luther and Melancthon adjudged the Queen, as she valued her salvation, never to consent to a divorce. The "Dictionary of National Biography," which embodies the latest results of historical research with singular impartiality, makes out Henry to have been even a wicked man than common report has described him. His rule, says Professor Gairdner, became worse and worse, until, during Thomas Cromwell's ministry, for which his master is absolutely responsible, it was unmitigated tyranny at home, and unmitigated perfidy abroad.

Dr. Hodges, I take it, would hardly object to describing the Reformation in England as being like the Revolution of 1688, a beneficial event indeed, but brought about by agents of whose personal character and motives, for the most part, the less said the better. This, of course, does not apply to the most of the martyrs. Whether the benefits could have been secured without a breach with Rome is a question which Anglicans, and indeed other Protestants, will decide variously, and which many will hesitate to decide at all. There seems no doubt that the great bulk of the English people desired a thorough reformation of the national Church, but without a revolution of doctrine and ritual, and with out a rupture with the central See. The English people, however, nobles and commons alike, were never consulted in the matter. Parliament, under the Tudors, had become a simple machine for registering the pleasure of the Crown. The breach with Rome, and the final breach with Rome, were all of them simple expressions of the royal will.

When men say that Henry put away Catherine merely because he had fallen in love with Anne, this seems to be going too far. There is good evidence that Henry's conscience (for even he had a conscience, such as it was) had been more or less disquieted about the validity of the Julian dispensation for his marriage with his brother's widow. Dr. Hodges mentions these scruples, but he seems warranted in passing them over slightly, and in fixing as the certain cause of Henry's breach with the Pope upon the King's passion for "the tawny girl, with an extra finger, and a wen on her neck," as she is described by a Protestant lady. How far the description is warranted I do not know, but we need not look for any delicacy of taste in beauty from such a man.

Dr. Hodges' singular and fundamental misrepresentation of the question of the dispensation has already been remarked on by the Reviewer, and I need only repeat. Dr. Hodges declares: "The marriage laws of Leviticus were held valid in all Christendom. They plainly forbade a marriage with a deceased husband's brother. In order that such a marriage might take place the Pope must grant a dispensation. He must set aside what all men held to be the law of God."

Now postponing, for the moment, all other questions, let us ponder this deliberate statement, by the head of a great Protestant divinity school, that just before the Reformation (Julius II died in 1513) the Roman Catholic world held that the Pope has power to dispense with a permanent law of God! If the Catholic Church held so, then of course she holds so now, for there has been no change of doctrine in the matter since. Treat has found it wholly superfluous to mention it. Either, then, the Fathers of Trent view it as a teaching so abhorrent to Christianity as to need no condemnation, or else they regard it as a doctrine so certain as to need no vindication before any one who believes that the Pope has any dispensing power at all.

Now this Protestant Episcopal Dean, not in malice, of which he never shows a trace, but, I do not hesitate to say, in the simplest stupidity of irresponsible thoughtlessness, calmly assures us here that Roman Catholics then believed, and by necessary inference that they now believe, that God may give a permanent law to the Church, but that this avails nothing against the Pope's power to relax it! In other words, God has endeavored to give certain permanent marriage laws to His Church, but His endeavor have of necessity been impotent, inasmuch as, whatever He binds, the Pope at his pleasure may loose!

Now, if this is so, under what possible use can Dean Hodges shelter himself for recognizing the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian body? John Tillotson—afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury—is stated on high au-

thority to have declared that a Christian man can not excuse himself from accepting any other religion at the bidding of the Government unless he can show an individual revelation to the contrary. Now suppose the Church of England had incorporated this proposition into her creed. Could she then have been recognized by other Christians as still a Christian community? Assuredly not. Then how can Dean Hodges hold himself exempt from the greater excommunication, if he deliberately and continually treats as a Christian body a Church, which, on his showing, deliberately, and by general consent sets the will of the Pope above the will of God?

Does he, though, really treat Rome as a Christian Church? Certainly. You have but to read the lectures to know this. To be sure, he droily describes Catholic Christendom as having once ceased to be Christian for about a century. Afterwards and before, however, he treats it as having been and as now again being, truly and eminently Christian. Now as the time which he treats as a lapse from Christianity had no peculiar doctrine of the Pope's dispensing power, it follows that Dr. Hodges treats the deliberate postponement of the will of God to the will of a creature as an opinion altogether consistent with true and eminent Christianity. How, then, can he possibly be retained in the communion of any Christian body?

The answer to this, that half the time he never stops at all to think what his words do mean. I think I have shown this abundantly, and more than abundantly thus far, and so we are likely to find it to the end. When such a man as Dr. Little (I need not speak of the coarse slanderer Hill) calmly interprets the Jesuit Rite, confirmed by the right to command their superiors to sin, it is plain that he has never stopped to think through what all Christians alike believe touching God, His will, and sin as the transgression of His will, and what all Roman Catholics believe, touching the power of the Pope as holding its validity solely from the grant of God, for ends of His holy will. In like manner, when Dean Hodges tells us that the marriage laws of Leviticus were held to be the law of God for the Church, but that the Pope was supposed competent to set aside the law of God, he puts together two absolutely incoherent things. He might just as well tell us that eight and five are thirteen, but that four and four are five and twenty. Either statement implies delirium, or else mechanical repetition of certain words, without any thought of their implications. Dean Hodges finds whole sets of Protestant formulas, constructed in disparagement of Catholicism, without either thought or care of their possible truth, and when they come in his way he picks them up and uses them with the most innocent intent in the world.

What does the Catholic Church teach concerning the relation of the Pope's dispensing power to the law of God? CHARLES C. STARBUCK.

Andover, Mass.

FIVE MINUTES SERMON.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

SCANDAL.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like to leaven." (Matt. 13, 33.)

On two occasions our Divine Saviour takes leaven as a subject for parables, and each time in a different sense. He compares it to day with His holy doctrine. As a small portion of leaven leavens the whole mass of bread, and makes it palatable, in like manner, the doctrine of Christ should be a means by which mankind is spiritually changed and renewed. On another occasion, however, He says: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who try to rob you of your faith and deprive you of eternal life."

It is in this latter signification of leaven, of the great sin of scandal, that I wish to speak and warn you. To give scandal, signifies to give occasion of sin to another person; hence, every thing is scandal by which we seduce our neighbor to do something evil or to prevent him from performing his duty either by word or action, by persuasion or participation, or in fact, in any way by which we may become accessory to another's sin. It is not necessary to have had the diabolical intention of seducing another; you are accountable before God if you knew that by your scandalous behavior you might be the cause of perversion. If my dear Christians, you have been to your neighbor the occasion of a venial sin, you have done him a greater injury than if you had set his house on fire or had done him any other great temporal injustice; for the loss of property, health, or other temporal goods is, according to the doctrine of the Church, not so great an evil as the smallest, venial sin, by which God, the Supreme Good, is so shamefully offended, and by which so great an evil is done to the soul.

Should you, however, have caused others to commit a grievous sin, then woe to you, a thousand woes, for not I, but the word of God denounces you as the murderer of a soul, the assistant of Satan. You are accountable that your brother has lost sanctifying grace, that his soul is dead; it is your fault; that his name is obliterated from the book of life, that he has lost Heaven; that he will be irredeemably lost, should he depart from this world without having done penance. What execrable wickedness! Could you act more diabolically towards your brother! Cain was an infamous villain, for he murdered

his innocent brother Abel, but far louder does the wickedness of your sin, O scandal giver, cry to Heaven for vengeance, for you have injured, not the life of your brother, but his immortal soul; you sinned him, not with a temporal and passing injury, but with a misfortune without measure.

In Holy Scripture the sinner is sometimes compared to different beasts, to represent to us his degraded condition. This, however, is only a feeble picture, a poor comparison; for it is by no means so great an evil to be an irrational animal as to be an enemy of God, a slave of the devil, an heir of hell; it is, by no means, so sad a lot to lose the resemblance of humanity as to lose sanctifying grace, those glorious titles child of God and heir of Heaven. This is a calamity so terrible that language has no words to describe, no eyes tears sufficient to bewail, and yet, O scandal givers and imps of Satan, this is the misfortune you draw down on the head of your brother, this is the woe with its incalculable consequences. That which the devil, with all his iniquity, can not achieve, this you do for him by murdering the soul of your brother. May you not well tremble before the anger of God in the hour of death!

Imagine your only, dearly beloved child had been captured and brutally murdered, and you, the father, should judge the murderer and pass sentence, would you not in righteous justice condemn him? Consider what judgment our Saviour, the Judge of the living and the dead will pass on those who seduce souls, for whose salvation He labored for three and thirty years, and for whom He shed His blood on the cross. Ah, can any weight be too heavy to tie around his neck! Can any abyss of hell be too deep in which to cast him! O seducer and wicked murderer of souls, tremble before the anger of your Eternal Judge and do penance for your grievous sins; do not simply confess and bemoan them with bitter tears, but repair the injury as far as you are able, by praying for your fallen brother, admonishing him to penance, begging him to be reconciled to God, and edifying him by your good example. Truly then, and only then, will you find mercy and forgiveness before God. Amen.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of Judgment, and the Punishments of Sin.

Then shall holy works be of greater value than many fair words.

Learn at present to suffer in little things, that then thou mayest be delivered from more grievous sufferings.

Try first here what thou canst suffer hereafter.

If thou canst now endure so little, how wilt thou be able to bear everlasting torments?

If a little suffering now makes thee so impatient, what will hell fire do hereafter?

Surely thou canst not have thy pleasure in this world and afterwards reign with Christ.

If to this day thou hast always lived in honors and pleasures, what would it avail thee if thou wert now in a moment to die?

All, then, is vanity but to love God and to serve Him alone.

For he who loveth God with his whole heart, neither teeth death nor punishment nor hell; because perfect love gives secure access to God.

But that he, who is yet delighted with sin, should be afraid of death and judgment is not wonderful.

It is good, however, that, if love as yet reclaim thee not from evil, at least the fear of hell restrain thee.

But he that layeth aside the fear of God will not be able to continue long to good, but will quickly fall into the snares of the devil.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

ZEAL.—This is the characteristic virtue of the League of the Sacred Heart; it is a burning desire to see God's kingdom come. A zealous Promoter can spread the devotion through one entire parish, and it will soon spread to the adjoining parishes. How much good can be done can not be calculated. Even the zealous associate has a special field of work. He can enroll all of his friends and relatives and by his example cause others to be come more faithful in their duties. Would that all would feel in their hearts the fire our Lord came on earth to kindle, and in a short time the whole world would be transformed.

FERVOR.—Fervor is an intense desire to please God. It makes us burn with the brilliancy of the light which faith gives to our souls, and long with the ardor of hope for the promises of God; and makes us love Him with all the warmth of our affections. Like St. John Chrysostom, the fervent soul forgets itself and is ready always to cry out even in death, "Glory be to God for all things."

AMABILITY.—Since the law by which God commands others to love us is like unto the law by which He commands us to love Himself, we should

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do nothing to give any one just cause of offense or displeasure, or to make it hard for them to see God's image in us, but in all our actions manifest the spirit of mercy and sweetness; the attributes which chiefly draw us to love God will make it easy for others to love us. And we should remember when we are offended with the faults of others, how often we have offended them with our many failings and yet expect them to forgive us.

CONFIDENCE.—This is not a virtue, but a condition necessary for the exercise of virtue. It is called for chiefly in the virtue of fortitude and it sustains that virtue by raising and strengthening our hope of needed assistance and by expelling the fear of failure. It can do all things in Him Who strengthens us. Hope makes us trust in God. Confidence makes us trust in ourselves in virtue of help we expect from God. This, then, is a most necessary condition, and one which we should do all in our power to strengthen. This we can do by prayer, constant and earnest.

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