

## MEDIÆVAL MEDICINE.

In a copy of the Humanitarian, a London monthly, Mr. Alfred Momerie has a peculiarly false article on the subject of "Mediæval Medicine." The theory laid down by Mr. Momerie amounts, in a few words, to this: it was only after the dawn of the seventeenth century that medical science became studied and actually practised. During all the past ages the Catholic Church, through her priests and monks, taught that it was an infringement on God's prerogatives to make use of human means to cure illness; that it was a great crime to practise medicine, for it was an invention of the devil; that the only means whereby man could legitimately escape the ills that flesh is heir to were prayer, miracles and relics. The priests strove thus to keep the people in ignorance in order to keep them in subjection, and the natural sciences were condemned because they were ruinous to the superstition by means of which the popular mind was enslaved. To illustrate this theory the author ridicules the intercession of the saints, scoffs at relics and apparitions, makes fun of miracles, laughs at the Agnus Dei, the beads, the scapular and similar objects of veneration. After a series of attacks upon the Church and her teachings he thanks heaven for the Reformation that freed mankind from the slavery of priestcraft and that gave to the world the great medical discoveries that have proved such a boon to the race.

In a few words the foregoing is a synopsis of that very extraordinary and audacious contribution, which is but a part of the un-Christian and materialistic articles of which the Humanitarian is made up. We are not as much surprised at the false statements and illogical reasoning of this infidel as we are at a magazine, in the light of the closing nineteenth century, attempting to court public favor with such weapons.

In the first place Mr. Momerie is not only mistaken, but he is evidently willfully and maliciously wrong. To say that the art of surgery or the practice of medicine only dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century is so absurd, so false, so childish, that it stamps the whole contribution with the seal of insincerity. In fact the writer must imagine that his readers are either fools or densely ignorant; in either case a poor compliment to those whom he addresses and whose sympathies and approval he seeks to gain. The fact is that medicine has been practiced as far back as the days of the early Greeks. Long before Protestantism was ever dreamed of; long before the Catholic Church was established by Jesus Christ; long before Romulus and Remus founded the city of Rome, on the banks of the Tiber; long before Alexander the Great marched to the conquest of the known world; when Grecian architecture was yet unknown; when Jerusalem was the center of civilization; when the pyramids of Egypt were young and the gardens of Babylon were in full bloom, there was a species of medical schools among the peoples of the earth. By degrees, like every other branch of human knowledge, like the arts and sciences, medicine became gradually more widely known. It is true that in the days of Christ the Saviour performed miracles, but by no means did He forbid the use of herbs and medicaments in the curing of the sick. These natural means of attaining a natural object He left to men; His were supernatural means, where He conferred the blessings of health and strength upon the stricken. Even so was it with the early apostles and the saints of the Church. At times, in order to prove

their divine mission and to inspire greater faith, they had recourse to supernatural means, such as miracles; but by no means did they disregard the ordinary human cures that lay in the bosom of nature and awaited the exercise of man's skill and knowledge to be brought into action. Throughout the Ages of Faith—by the enemies of the Church improperly called the Dark Ages—the science of medicine and the art of surgery were handed down from generation to generation. In the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, in Italy, Germany and France, we find some of the most wonderful masters in the great science of curing human ills, and the works that they left have been the basis of some of the most exhaustive writings that our more modern authors have given to the world.

Again, the theory of ignorance, due to the Church's action, is so false that the slightest knowledge of history will suffice to reduce it to dust. Throughout all those long centuries, when the cloud of barbarism hung over Europe; when each nation and each tribe was taught to keep its rights by the sword; when the spirit of chivalry was abroad; when the hordes of the North ravaged the cities of the world and reduced to ashes the monuments of art and the relics of learning; in the monasteries, in the convent cells, in the Church's treasure-house of science, all learning and knowledge took refuge and formed a safe asylum against the whirlwind of destruction that rushed over the continent. The very Bible itself was preserved, copied, transmitted from age to age by the religious clergy of the Church. The learning and acquirements of centuries were conserved by the ministers of Christ's establishment. While the columns of science were shattered and libraries were burned, the monks and priests, the hermits and fathers snatched every relic of knowledge from the debris around them and hid them away in the depths of their seclusion, there to be kept intact until a freer and more civilized age would permit them to be sent forth again in safety to the world. And for all this devotion to the cause of science and literature, of art and learning, the ingratitude of the puny infidels of this age attacks the Church and accuses her of being the mother of ignorance.

We would advise Mr. Momerie, when next he seeks to vent his spleen against Rome and her clergy, to be more careful as to his statements, to study up history a little more exactly, to have somewhat more of conscience when relating facts, to try and learn the first elements of argument before attempting a syllogism. We would also advise the Humanitarian to be a little more Christian. Its name indicates error, when its principles are purely humanitarian, and devoid of all spirituality, "humanum est errare." In fine, we do not hesitate to stigmatize the assertions of this writer as maliciously false, nor have we any hesitation in saying that the organ which published them is unhealthy. The day has gone past when the Catholic press was silent upon all these attacks. In a free country like Canada we have a right to express our views, to defend our Church and to assert her prerogatives, and we have no intention of allowing such slanderers to go unslashed.

As well might we accuse the Catholic Church of wanting to prevent human progress because she did not invent a trans-continental railway to carry Coure-Lion and his crusaders to the East, as to accuse her of fostering ignorance because she did not give the people of the middle ages all the improvements in medical science that this century has developed.

## INFALLIBILITY.

Reason and History Support the Dogma.

Perhaps you think it is impossible to believe in the infallibility of any human creature. I ask you, why is this impossible? You answer, because all men can err and do err. I reply if all men can err and do err, why should not the men who wrote the Holy Scriptures have erred also? You may say you believe that Almighty God protected them from error. Exactly, and that is the kind of claim we make for the Pope. We believe that the Pope has divine assistance which enables him to determine matters of faith and morals. You may think it ridiculous, but it may be true for all that. It is not more ridiculous that God should protect the Pope from error in faith and morals, than that God should protect St. Paul. The subject is a man in either case, and though every man be liable to error, it is not ridiculous to suppose that for a special purpose God might give to any man this divine assistance, as He gave the gifts of prophecy and inspiration to the men of old.

Remember, no Catholic believes that the Pope cannot sin. No Catholics believe that the Pope is infallible in *private life*. It is only when, as Supreme Pastor and Teacher of the Church, speaking to the whole Church, deciding questions of faith or morals, that we believe him divinely protected from error. The Pope as temporal sovereign has ruled over the States of the Church, but his infallibility "does not touch his decisions in temporal affairs." No Catholic holds that in every speech, conversation or writing the Pope is infallible.

After all, Protestants are in the same boat with Catholics over this. I once asked a Nonconformist Minister, "How is a man to find the truth amidst the present confusion of tongues?" He replied, "If a man takes the Scriptures and seeks the aid of the Holy Spirit, he will be directed into all truth." What is this but saying that every searcher after the light is infallible? Here is not one Pope, but millions. Here is infallibility all round! The only difficulty about the personal infallibility of everybody is, that hardly any two agree about anything, so that thousands of contrary opinions would all be infallibly true, and the Holy Spirit would be teaching one thing to one man and an opposite thing to another! Some people find it hard to believe consistent dogmas, but what would they say if they had to believe *inconsistent* ones? If you come to reckon up what is reasonable in such a matter as this, surely a system professing one faith, even though it does include the divine assistance of one man when disputes arise as to what is the one truth, is far more logical, and possible, than a battlefield of conflicting opinions where everybody claims to be right and no two people agree.

You will tell me that there is not a word in Holy Scripture about the infallibility of the Pope. I used to think so at one time, but the Bible is a large book, the Protestant often picks out what suits his arguments and ignores what supports the Catholic arguments. Let me call your attention to one or two points. Did it ever occur to you to consider the peculiar position given by our Lord to St. Peter?

[1] When our Lord received from His Apostles their declaration of faith in Him as the Son of God, it is Simon Peter who says "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord even changed Peter's name from Simon to Peter, which means a *Rock*, and said to him:—

"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

These words have only one meaning. Christ built His Church upon St. Peter, and gave to him the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Explain the words otherwise, and you explain them away. You may say that St. Peter received no more than the rest of the Apostles, or any other Christian—yes, you may say so, but Christ says something else.

Our Lord said that St. Peter's confession of faith was no inspiration of flesh and blood, but of "the Father which is in heaven." To St. Peter Christ gave

the keys of His Divine Kingdom or Church, for St. Peter was to be the chief steward.

[2] After His Resurrection our Lord called upon St. Peter three times to declare his love, and each time commanded him to feed the sheep and lambs. There was to be the One Fold, and St. Peter was to be the chief shepherd on earth. Even when Jesus foretold that St. Peter would for the moment deny his Master, He assured him that He had specially prayed for him to the Father, and called upon him to confirm his brethren.

[3] In the lists of the Apostles given in the Gospels, St. Peter is always named first.

[4] In the Council at Jerusalem, when the Apostles chose to fill the place of Judas, it is Peter who opens the proceedings and gives directions for the undertaking.

The special prerogatives given by Jesus Christ to St. Peter are claimed to-day by his successors, the Popes of Rome. The word *Pope* means *Father*, and the Pope has always been regarded as the Father of the faithful in the Catholic Church.

This has been acknowledged by all the early Christian writers. Take these only:—

Tertullian [A. D. 195]:—"Was anything hidden from Peter, who is called the Rock whereon the Church was to be built?"

Origen [A. D. 216]:—"To Peter was the supreme power to feed the sheep delivered, and upon him, as on the earth, the Church was founded."

"Peter, upon whom the Church of Christ is built."

St. Cyprian [A. D. 248]:—"Peter, whom the Lord chose as first, and upon whom He built His Church."

"There is one Church, founded by the Lord Jesus Christ upon Peter, for the origin and purpose of unity."

St. Optatus [A. D. 370]:—"Thou canst not deny that thou knowest that in the city of Rome to Peter first the episcopal chair was given, in which sat the first of all the Apostles, Peter; . . . in which one chair *unity might be preserved by all.*"

St. Ambrose [A. D. 385]:—"Peter's ship, which is the Church. That ship is not tossed about in which prudence sails, where unbelief is not, where faith blows. . . . For how could that be tossed about in which he presided, in whom is the foundation of the Church?"

St. Chrysostom [A. D. 387]:—"Peter the Head of the Apostles, the first in the Church . . . and when I name Peter I name that unbroken Rock, the firm Foundation."

St. Augustine [A. D. 430]:—"The Roman Church, in which the supremacy of the Apostolic See has always been in force."

I could fill a book with like quotations. You may say you do not care what the early Christians believed, but mark this: there are the words of Christ to Peter; you cannot get away from them, and the early Christian interpretation of them is more likely to be Apostolic than yours.

That Church has existed for more than eighteen hundred years. She has confronted atheism and heresy, has fostered education, and given to the world the highest human achievements in literature and art. She is an independent religious body that stands before kings and claims freedom of conscience for her children. What wonder if from the story of all these centuries the Protestant can unearth sinful acts and errors of judgment, on all matters outside of the realm of faith? What is the testimony of impartial Protestant writers as to the value of the Catholic Church in human history? Mr. Kinglake, in his *Eothen*, remarks:—

"The universal aptness of a religious system for all stages of civilization, and for all sorts and conditions of men, well befits its claim of Divine origin. She is of all nations and of all times, that wonderful Church of Rome."

The Protestant Dean Milman, speaking of the 5th century, wrote:—

"On the throne of Rome alone, of all the greater Sees, did religion maintain its majesty, its sanctity, its piety; and, if it demanded undue deference, the world would not be inclined rigidly to question pretensions supported as well by such singular and unimpeachable virtue."

Again:—"From the 6th century to the 14th, the Papal power was the great conservator of Christianity, of the best Christianity, perhaps, which those ages could receive, and it was of incalculable benefit to European civilization."—*San Francisco Monitor*.