

Let Something Good Be Said.

When over the fair fame of friend or foe
The shadow of disgrace shall fall; instead
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so
Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet
May fall so low but love may lift his head;
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet
If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside
In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead
But may awaken strong and glorified,
If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,
And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,
And by your own soul's hope of fair renown,
Let something good be said!

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Blessed Candles.

No Catholic home should be without its blessed candle. The prayers of the Church have ascended to God that "He would bless and sanctify them for the service of men and for the good of their bodies and souls in all places."

Pious Catholics light them during thunderstorms that God, in consideration of Christ, whom they represent, may deign to protect His servants. Let us light them whenever we are threatened with calamity and, if we do so in a spirit of faith, we will experience signal proof of God's fatherly care for us. But, above all, let the holy candle burn by the bedside of the sick and dying, dispelling by its blessed light the shades of trouble and despair which the prince of darkness strives to cast around the Christian soul in the hour of its dissolution, and illumining the dark road through the valley of death to the mountain whose light is God.

A Remarkable Plea for the Catholic Press.

A few years ago the following letter was mailed by the pastor of St. Mary's Church, Nevada, Mo., to his parishioners. It is so excellent a plea for the Catholic Press, — a plea now even more opportune than some years ago, that we publish it here for the edification of our readers.

"To each and Every One of My Beloved Parishioners:

"One of the greatest, the most important factors toward real and true Catholic home life, in our days, is a true and good Catholic newspaper. I am so perfectly convinced of this that I consider it my duty, as your pastor, to use every means at my command to prevail upon you that you will subscribe to either one or the other of our many excellent Catholic papers. Everybody nowadays reads, and the quality of your reading necessarily effects the quality of your faith. Were the Apostles with us in our days, they would insist that you read a Catholic paper. The Holy Fathers and the Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, and they all insist upon the importance of Good Catholic papers in our homes. Let not the subscription stand in the way. Some sacrifice should be made for a good cause, and that which costs nothing is considered worth nothing. However, deduct that amount from your church contributions, or allow one to pay one-half of the subscription. Once more, for the love of God, assist me in making my pastoral labors effective and fruitful in your home. For the sake of truth and religion subscribe to spread the truth first of all in your own family and then as the influence of your family may extend.

"Wishing you every blessing, I am your pastor,

FINTAN KRAEMER, O.S.B."

Some Roads to Rome in America.*

Edited by Georgina Pell Curtis.

HARRIET BREWER CHURCHILL.

My early years were spent in that town near Boston where I was born. My father was of Pilgrim descent, his ancestors having come from the old England to the new in the early days of the colony, some of them in the Mayflower.

My mother on the contrary was of the Bay colony, with an ancestry of soldiers, and her grandfather and uncles took a leading part in our war of Independence and were officers in the army of General Washington.

It will be seen that I came of stock that was not disposed to draw back when conscience was in question. But the peculiar tenets of the Puritans for which my forefathers braved the perils of the wilderness are dead and buried like themselves: while the Papacy which saw them come has seen them go—into oblivion, while the Holy Father from the banks of the Tiber still rules a Church greater in numbers and more perfect in organization than at any time in the history of the world.

I often think I should like to add to Lord Macaulay's famous passage and to say that when the New Zealander himself shall have passed away and his land be but a desert; when the inevitable catastrophe shall have occurred and this old earth drifts a derelict in space, then and not till then will the Church militant have ceased to exist. Then and not till then will the Sacraments cease to be administered and the Pope be no more.

In the days of my childhood New England was divided into two great religious camps—those who believed in the Trinity and those who did not.

My family was of the latter persuasion, Unitarians. That is to say it was in a church of that persuasion that we had our family pew but my father was an Agnostic, and admirer of Voltaire (whose works filled whole shelves in our library), of Buckle, Parker, Darwin, Huxley and the rest. His wife, my step-mother, was what is called an advanced Unitarian or Parkerite.

It may be divined that in such an atmosphere I was not oppressed with religious instruction. I was taught to tell the truth, and not to steal, etc., more as a matter of social polity than because lies and thieving were sins against the law of God. I was, I fear, a naughty little minx and never went to Sunday-School except for a few weeks before Christmas when the annual tree loaded with gifts loomed large in my expectations. I became then to all appearances a good little Unitarian. I remember on one rare occasion my stepmother read aloud to me the famous chapter of St. Paul on charity, and I recall wondering at the time, why she believed that the Bible was an inspired work and the Word of God. Her idea seemed to be that it was "a beautiful chapter." But no more so than something from Marcus Aurelius. I said that "if that was all there was to it there were other things more interesting."

It was a little later than this that I astonished my family one day by remarking that "I could not understand, if a person wished to lead a really good life, why it was not a good idea to go to confession as Catholics did." The idea was evolved out of my own brain and represented my childish idea of the fitness of things.

A year later when I was sent to Europe to finish my education,

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perhaps in consequence of that remark, I was furnished with a list of schools which I still have in my possession all marked with a large "P" for Protestant as my stepmother was very much afraid to have me come under Catholic influence. I was placed in a Swiss school, where I was very happy. It was of the Unitarian persuasion; but more philosophic and utilitarian than was the same in America.

Before returning home I spent several weeks in Rome, and hours and hours were passed in the churches in presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Here began, as Bishop Spalding declared, my conversion. Not that I was aware of it, or cared much for any religion.

After I had been at home about a year circumstances took me to New York where I for the first time came in contact with the workings of the Catholic Church. I saw the doctrines of the Church applied alike to rich and poor, gentle and simple, learned and unlearned. I witnessed the atmosphere of devotion, the unanimity of worship, the daily succession of Masses, the coming and going of one congregation after another, the devout genuflections, and all this in the commercial and latter day city in the world.

I was much impressed; and then a Protestant friend lent me a copy of *The Imitation of Christ*, of which I had never heard. A book written presumably by one of those idle and dissolute monks we read so much of in Protestant books.

Then I read Newman, and now that I have spoken of the great Cardinal, who is there who does not know that in the matter of a conversion, his is a name to conjure with?

Although I had never been strictly speaking a Protestant, I felt that, I could not openly denounce the opinions under the influence of which I had been educated until I had heard what a Unitarian minister should have to say for that particular sect. I called on the Rev. James Freeman Clarke. I remember one day his offering to pray with me. But I never could divest myself of the idea that all he said was merely the sum of his own reflections and opinions and being such was no more worthy of credence than the sum of my own. I felt that he had no more authority for anything he chose to put forward than that "he, James Freeman Clarke, thought so" and I think I can with truth say that just on this hinge turned the door through which I entered the Church.

I was also much impressed by the fact that the sermons in Unitarian pulpits were so often finished essays on topics of the time rather than on Christ. Almost any agreeable subject was introduced politics included. I even heard at what they called a "conference," a minister teach children an verse from Longfellow as a religious lesson. In fact many of the Unitarian sermons would have made excellent editorials in any first class newspaper.

The Unitarians in New England were founded by William Ellery Channing, who having decided that the Scriptures did not teach the doctrine of the Trinity, established a sect on that opinion. They prided themselves at that time on their progressiveness and they progressed so well that the first members having denied that the Son was God, their children denied that the Creator is our Father. A most logical conclusion, but quite a pagan one.

The Rev. James Freeman Clarke having failed to convince me in any way I applied to the Rev. Phillips Brooks. The conclusion of his advice was that if there were any church on earth which seemed

to me to have been founded by Christ it was my duty to join it.

A little later the Rev. Father Edward Holker Welch, S. J., of Boston College, gave me conditional baptism. The root of my conversion was my belief in the Papacy, the principle of authority; and I think to-day as I thought then that an honest study of its history is enough to convince the world of its claims. Its very existence carried along and protected through the ages is a perpetual miracle.

A Timely Consideration on Religion in the Public Schools.

Some months ago a mass meeting, characterized as "epochal," was held in Carnegie Hall, New York City. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews were represented among those who addressed the assembly on the need of providing some kind of religious and moral training for children attending the public school. The keynote of the meeting was sounded by Dr. John H. Finley, of New York, State Commissioner of Education, who submitted the following tentative plan:

"First. The preparation of a book of selections from the Bible by an interdenominational commission, appointed by the Legislature or by the Board of regents for use in the schools."

"Second. The formulation of a plan for non-proselyting co-operation between the schools and various denominations, to the end that every child may have democratic and religious instruction."

"Third. The granting of Regents' credits for serious work in Bible study of the schools."

The motives that prompted the holding of this meeting and the proceedings at the latter, reveal to what extent non-Catholic educators and non-Catholic religious bodies are beginning to recognize the excellence of the Catholic educational system as exemplified in the parochial schools.

The failure of the public schools to adequately train the will and impart moral stamina has long been the subject of grave comment.

The late President Harper, of Chicago University, once declared: "It is difficult to foretell the outcome of another fifty years of our educational system—a system which trains the mind, but for the most part, leaves the moral side untouched; no religion, no ethics, merely a sharpening of the intellect. The Roman Catholics meet this difficulty; our Protestant churches utterly ignore it."

George Wharton Pepper, a prominent layman of the Episcopal Church, in his book, "A Voice from the Crowd," says: "Of the evils of our present godless system of education I seem to be keenly sensible. I do not think I am unaware of the difficulties in the way of constructive reform. I confess myself wholly without suspicion respecting the motives and aims of our Roman Catholic brethren. If I am alive when they propound a remedy for existing mischiefs I shall make an earnest effort to place myself in agreement with this proposal."

Thus discerning public-spirited men not of Catholic faith have been admiring the Catholic educational system, regarding it as a model. The New York meeting is the crystallization of the efforts of such men, and perhaps something tangible will result.

Still, however reassuring such attempts may be to Catholics as testifying to the excellence of their own schools, it is to be pointed out that no system of religious instruction introduced into the public schools, as presently constituted, will in any way diminish the necessity of parochial schools or lessen the moral obligation of Catholic parents to give their children a Catholic training.

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