

POPULAR PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

On page 77 Mr. Lansing, after quoting, and of course, mistranslating, the concluding definition of the "Unam Sanctam," continues: "What this subjection means we may learn from Cardinal Bellarmine. He says, 'If the Pope should err by enjoining vices or forbidding virtues, the Church would be obliged to believe vices to be good and virtues bad, unless it would sin against conscience. Horrible and monstrous!'"

Why then do I spend time on such a man or such a book? Fiat experimentum in corpore vili. Had he been content with his proper obscurity, then, as his personal character is blameless, and his social influence friendly and benevolent, he would have been safe in a becoming humility. But he could not resist the temptation, which besets so many preachers of his level, of gaining a notoriety which would otherwise be beyond his reach, by blackguarding the Pope, which he has once relieved, it is true, by blackguarding the President. After all, there must be a touch of genius in the man, or he could not have written a book that is so absolutely typical. Had he known even a little more he could not have made all his slanders so glaringly distinct. His work is a caricature even of popular controversy, but it is a caricature which renders the original all the more speakingly alive for being so monstrously overcharged.

What does he know, and what does he not know, of Bellarmine? He knows two things, and what he does not know is everything. He knows that he was a Cardinal, and a Jesuit. He does not know when he lived. He introduces him as prophesying the Pope's death in 1773, when he himself had already been dead a hundred and fifty-two years. Of his character and achievements, I need not say, after such a specimen, he betrays not a glimmer of knowledge. Let us then glean it from our great Protestant encyclopedia, Herzog-Piltz, filling up with some touches entirely in keeping with that.

Robert Bellarmine, then, of high Tuscan nobility, sister's son of the admirable Pope Marcellus II., was, from boyhood up, a character of singular devoutness, purity, mildness, benevolence, truthfulness and candor. I do not mean, of course, to even him with the great Charles Borromeo, of whom Doctor Arthur T. Pierson has given so charming a description. Yet he does not lose lustre even by the side of him. At ten he insisted on being allowed to enter the new Jesuit order, the vows of which he took at eighteen, and to which, during his life of seventy-nine years, he remained unwaveringly loyal, being perhaps the last representative of the elder Jesuitism. He was so truthful and candid in his controversial writings, in giving the actual positions and arguments of the Protestants, that rabid Catholic zealots the counterpart of our rabid Protestant zealots of America, clamored for the suppression of his controversial writings. This clamor the Holy See met with a smile of amused contempt. It is true, one of his treatises, which contradicted the impetuous personality of Pope Sixtus V., was put in the Index, but was soon afterwards removed. One defect of character we must acknowledge in the excellent man, a somewhat too pronounced self-complacency, which, however, did no harm to anybody. He was a strenuous and devoted pastor, and, which certainly ought to please Protestants, he threw the whole weight of his episcopal influence against any such excess of honors to the Virgin as might overshadow the incommunicable greatness of her Son. When the Holy See finally required him, as a Cardinal to live at Rome, he insisted, against the Pope's wish, on throwing up the important Archbishopric of Capua, which must have largely reduced his income. A lack of moral courage has never been charged against him. He was a man that loved God and man, that practiced every virtue and hated every wickedness. Principal Fairbairn, intensely, and I might almost say, virulently Protestant, cites him among the great examples of devotion to the Redeemer. And this is the man who, we are told, enjoins us to call darkness light and light darkness whenever the Pope might choose to command!

We can not deny that there is one sad break in this long life eminent truthfulness. He was misled by his zeal for the Papacy into a gross inaccuracy concerning the Sistine Vigil. Rome, therefore, justly resenting the attempt to secure her momentary reputation at the expense of the truth, has refused him the honors of the altar,

which it is probable that he will never receive. Indeed, his virtues in themselves, those eminent, were perhaps hardly heroic. Yet, though he fell once through indiscretion of zeal, he was emphatically a good man, an honor to his order, to the Roman purple, and to the Church of God.

Now what does he teach concerning the Pope's right to command? Of course, as a Jesuit, over and above his duty as a Catholic Christian, he is required by the rule of his order to believe that no superior is to be obeyed if he enjoins "any manner of sin." As a Jesuit, he is also required to believe that obedience to the Pope, as to all authority, reaches only "so far as it is consistent with love to God and man." He is bound to believe that, where there is a reasonable doubt, the judgment of the superior should prevail, and should be regarded as sound until it clearly appears to be erroneous. On the other hand, he says in the second part of the fourth volume of his works (Naples ed., 1856, page 507) in an Italian treatise, not so concise, therefore, as his habitual Latin style: "If a pastoral sentence commands a thing which is clearly sin, then it ought not to be observed nor revered, and whoever should say that it ought to be observed would be in error, and of such an assertion the five propositions of Gerson would be true, because without doubt it is false that a sentence which obliges to sin to be observed, and it is also impossible that a sentence should command a sin and involve an obligation of observation, and, moreover, it is an opinion erroneous in morals because it teaches to do evil; and also erroneous in faith, for who says that it is lawful to do evil is a heretic, and if he does not repent, he ought to be given over to the secular arm that he may be punished as he deserves."

Has the Rev. Isaac J. Lansing ever heard of this? We may well ask if he has ever heard who is now reigning in the southwestern peninsula of the northeastern continent of the planet Mars. He doubtless knows the one fact just as well as the other. Does he know from what treatise his own mutilated quotation of Bellarmine comes? Of course not. How should he? No doubt even out and out impossibilities sometimes betray us, but if I had an arid desert depending on my being able to prove that the *De Romano Pontifice* was an unknown title to him, I think I should order my coronet off-hand.

Then, since he does not know, I will tell him. The *De Romano Pontifice* is the classical work treating of the Pope's authority, of its extent and of its limits. That it has any limits is something that cannot be beaten into these people's heads. From beginning to end Lansing denies it in every variety of phrase. That I can put him down with the authority of a great cardinal and theologian is past hope, as I have not been able, before now, to put him down with the authority of a general council. However, as Bunyan says of the men of Vanity Fair, there are "some more observing and less prejudiced than their fellows," even among his disciples, and to these I address myself. I more or less combine, but make myself responsible for giving the exact sense, and therefore allow myself the use of quotation-marks.

Bellarmino, accordingly, says as follows, speaking expressly of the Pope's commands: "An unjust law is no law." "A law commanding vice or forbidding virtue not only need not but must not be obeyed." "A grossly unreasonable law, even though not sinful, would involve at most only a casual obligation of obedience." "A papal invasion of fundamental religious or civil rights would involve the duty of resisting it to the utmost, and even, should this prove inevitable, by force of arms." "Self-defence is an inalienable right of every man as against every man, and the taking of any human life, however exalted, in such a cause, is no rebellion or usurpation of authority."

Of course, Bellarmine, writing at Rome about 1600, attributes to Rome a wide reach of indirect, and even direct, civil supremacy where religion is concerned, which, as Pius IX. has remarked in one of his addresses of 1871, would move laughter should any one dream of actuating it now in any such extent. Yet, allowing for the great inevitable changes of three hundred years, where could we find a work which, while frankly presenting the Pope as the divinely commissioned Chief of the Church, and allowing him a wide reach of prerogative, should bind him more impregnably to respect the essential rights of the individual and of society? Nowhere.

This pretended quotation of Lansing from the *De Romano Pontifice* has been turned into the odious thing that he gives by a threefold mutilation, as well as by violently wrenching it from its connection. I supply the omitted passages in italics. We see that this turns the citation into precisely the same sense as the Italian passage which I have quoted. The rendering "vice" for "vitium" is false. As we know, "vitium" covers every deviation from the perfect rule, great or small. As the passage shows, it does not here mean "vices," for these have long since been condemned by the conscience of Christian mankind. Bellarmine says: "Should the Pope err in enjoining what are faults, but not manifestly faults; or in forbidding what are really virtues, but not manifestly virtues, the Church would be bound in conscience to believe false virtues and virtuous faults. For in doubtful matters the Church is shut up to the judgment of the Supreme Pontiff." Therefore, he argues, as the Church cannot be doctrinally misled,

even temporarily, and even in these comparatively slight matters, it is impossible that the Pope can be suffered by God to give, even here, an erroneous definition of duty. Indeed, he remarks, it is precisely here that his infallibility comes into play, since the clear doctrines of duty have been defined ages ago, and cannot be now defined differently. The Pope is, he allows, liable to give a wrong command, but not an erroneous definition in an obscure matter. The whole passage is meant for a *reductio ad absurdum*. And yet, besides the three vital excisions, it is presented as giving the author's view of a possibility! What infernal cunning, to cut out these three vital clauses, to conceal entirely the nature of the argument, and thereby to disfigure beyond recognition the real meaning of this Godly and righteous man!

Charles C. Starbuck. Andover, Mass.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY AGAIN.

Sacred Heart Review. In our "Current Comment" department there appeared, in the Review of March 19, last, a paragraph dealing with certain statements made by the Review of Reviews of the month about St. Bartholomew's Day and the action taken by Pope Gregory XIII. when the first accounts of the event reached Rome. In contradiction of the perverted version of the papal action given by the Review of Reviews, we quoted from Guizot's "History of France," vol. 4, page 384, testimony to the show that, when the real facts in the case became known to Pope Gregory, he wept and expressed his detestation of that deed. Our esteemed contemporary, the Charlotetown (P. E. I.) Herald, reproduced our comment in its columns, whereupon its neighbor, the Morning Guardian, of Charlotetown, declared that our quotation from Guizot was not to be found in the volume or on the page we mentioned, and added that although the concluding portion of the quotation appeared elsewhere in the "History of France," the words were not Guizot's, but Brantome's.

We do not know what edition of Guizot the Guardian consulted. We took our quotation second-hand from a work which we believed trustworthy; and in looking the matter up now we find that Guizot's "History of France," translated by R. Black, M. A., and published by Estes & Lauriat in this city, on page 384, vol. 4—the identical reference given by us—contains practically the very citation we used in our original paragraph. Our insular critic is, therefore, altogether wrong when it says that nothing pertaining or approximating that quotation is to be found in the place indicated by us. Let it be granted that Guizot quotes, in part, from Brantome. He makes that writer's words his own, nevertheless; and he uses them simply to describe the change which he himself admits came over Gregory XIII.'s opinion of St. Bartholomew's day when he learned its real character. Guizot says: "At Rome itself . . . the truth came out, and Pope Gregory was touched by it." There we have an unequivocal admission by the French Protestant historian that the Pope was deceived in the first accounts he received of St. Bartholomew's day—and it was those accounts which caused Gregory to order a "Te Deum" sung and a medal struck—and a frank acknowledgment, by the same Protestant writer, that he was grieved when the truth came out. Brantome's words, which Guizot makes his own, are then used by the latter historian to describe the sorrow which the Pope experienced when the real facts in the case became known to him; but before he quotes from Brantome, Guizot himself admits that the Pope was misled by the French ambassador, whose report, as "Chambers Biographical Directory," page 435, states, represented the St. Bartholomew massacre "as the suppression of a Huguenot conspiracy." Guizot does even more than make Brantome's words his own. He corrects the error into which that historian fell to Pius V.,—an error committed also by Sully, and of which the Guardian vainly endeavors to make much—and gives the credit of them to their real author.

These facts constitute a sufficient refutation of our Charlotetown contemporary's criticisms and an ample justification of our original assertions. The quotation which we made from Guizot appears, in virtually the form we gave it, exactly where we said it could be found; and that Protestant historian there substantially admits that Pope Gregory, as soon as he learned the truth about St. Bartholomew's day, grieved over its occurrence. If the Guardian desires other Protestant testimony regarding the motives which caused that pontiff to order a Te Deum, etc., on the occasion, we refer him to the "American Encyclopedia," vol. ii., page 343, where he may read the following statement: "A solemn Te Deum over the affair was sung at Rome by the order of Pope Gregory XIII., but it must be borne in mind that, according to the accounts then at hand, the affair grew out of an unsuccessful conspiracy against the French government and the Catholic Church, and the Te Deum belonged to the same category with the one sung shortly before for the victory gained at Lepanto over the Turks." Then let the Guardian turn to Rattien's "Annals of Gregory XIII.," in which work the Protestant Ranko says are contained the most authentic materials for that pontiff's life, and there it will learn that at the time he ordered the Te

Deum "the Pope was personally informed by the Cardinal of Lorraine that King Charles, for his own security and the peace of his kingdom, had put to death the admiral (Coligny) who was the head and principal supporter of the Huguenots; and although he had thus been freed from great trouble the Pope did not show signs of more than ordinary gratification. He returned thanks to the Divine Goodness at home, and on the following day went publicly in solemn procession from St. Mark's to the church of St. Louis." And, finally, let it remember that the London Athenaeum, whose statement is quoted in vol. 3, page 15, of the Catholic World, admitted more than a score of years ago that the common notion of St. Bartholomew's day is "one of the great historical errors which has been transmitted from teachers to taught during a long course of years."

It would take a great deal more space than we can give it to correct all the mistaken notions which the Guardian evidently entertains regarding the character of St. Bartholomew's day and on the subject of Catholic and Protestant persecutions. To convince it, however, that the St. Bartholomew massacre was not the premeditated affair which it seems to imagine it to have been, and to prove to it that, when the truth was known to Catholics, they condemned the infamous deed, as did the Pope, we may refer it to White's "Massacre of St. Bartholomew," a work that is far from championing the Catholic side, wherein, on page 2 of the preface, it is admitted that "the opinion that St. Bartholomew's day was the result of mingled terror and fanaticism . . . is supported by Ranke in the second volume of his 'Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift,' 1836; and in volume one of 'Franzische Geschichte,' by Soldan, by Baum and by Coquerel." On page 471 of the same work the Guardian may read that "this manner of proceeding," wrote Walsingham, the English minister, on Sept. 13, 1572, "is by the Catholics themselves utterly condemned," with the additional statement that Cardinal Orsini, who was sent to France to congratulate the king on his escape, was surprised to find that St. Bartholomew's day was a far different episode from what Rome had been told it was, and was universally condemned. And were it not so prejudiced against Catholic testimony, we could refer our critic to the photolithographic copy of the "Ordine della Solennissima Processione" of Cardinal Lorraine's letter published by Quaritch of London, who says of it that "the fact that it was printed by the Impressari Camerali within at most a few months—perhaps within a few days of the Thanksgiving—confers upon it an exceptional historical value"; for in those documents it is plain to be seen that the real motive of the papal action was the Vatican's belief that the French king, by the execution of a few heretics and rebels, had saved the Church and his kingdom from great dangers menacing them. The same information is also plainly given in the congratulations of Pope Gregory to the French king on his escape and in the language employed by Mureto, who preached in Rome on the event. In fact, the whole affair was a political crime, a human wickedness, with which the Church had nothing to do; and even White, in his "Massacre of St. Bartholomew," pages 459-462, admits as much, for he says that "the massacre of St. Bartholomew arose out of the paltriest and most selfish of motives. The plea of religion was never put forward, though it is a plea too often put forward to extenuate what can not be justified."

In conclusion, since the Guardian seems to labor under the idea that Catholics are the only persons who ever persecuted other people or committed "frightful atrocities" in past ages, we may remind its editor that Buckle, in his "History of Civilization in England," chapter I, says that "the crimes of the French Protestants were as revolting as those of the Catholics, and quite as numerous relatively to the numbers and powers of the two parties"; and that in a pamphlet on "The Massacre of St. Bartholomew," printed in Boston, in 1859, the author, a Protestant, C. C. Hazzell, says on page 21: "As respects Protestant persecutions, they have been of the worst possible kind in every country in which dissenters from Rome's supremacy have attained to full power. There is something ludicrous in the pretensions of so many Protestants to be free from the common stain of religious organizations. History flatly contradicts assertions so absurd. The blood shed by Protestants in maintenance of their several bedlamite fanes is of oceanic amount." And many similar testimonies might readily be adduced to show that Protestant families and iniquities greater even than St. Bartholomew's day painted in its darkest dyes.

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF PRAYER.

"What is the good of prayer anyway? God knows what we need and what is best for us before we ask Him. Does not reason tell us that it is absurd to expect Almighty God to change the laws of the universe for our benefit? Then there is no certainty that we shall obtain what we ask for, pray we ever so fervently."

Such is the language of a large number of persons, and unfortunately it is not confined to infidels and scoffers, and those who never pray; but many good, honest, and conscientious people, who wish to do their duty and enjoy the comforts of their religion, are troubled with doubts arising out of difficulties with which the subject seems to be surrounded. The subject is a large one, and it would take much more space than we can spare in a single article to give a clear and comprehensive explanation of the difficulties above suggested. We can only give a clue to the answers and recommend those who desire a full and complete discussion of the whole subject of prayer to read Cardinal Gibbons' chapters on prayer in that admirable book, "Our Christian Heritage."

Of the reasonableness and beneficial influence of prayer, it would seem, there can be no rational doubt. If we believe that God has made us for some purpose, and that He takes an interest in our fulfilling that purpose. He is not merely our Maker. He is also our Father, and it must be pleasing to Him to have us recognize Him as our Almighty and most merciful Father—that we should look to Him, and depend upon Him, and thank Him for the many mercies we receive at His hands.

That this exercise is beneficial there can be no doubt. It would seem impossible for any man who habitually and earnestly prays, to be a bad man. The beneficial effects of prayer are well summed up by the Cardinal in his admirable discussion of the subject.

"To sum up," he says, "Prayer is the most exalted function in which man can be engaged, because it exercises the highest faculties of the soul—the intellect and the will; it brings us into direct communication with the greatest of all beings—God Himself; it is the channel of heaven's choicest blessings. In a word prayer renders us co-operators with our Creator in the moral government of the world, since many of the events of life are shaped in accordance with our pious entreaties. Conceive, then, the dignity of God's saints. The affairs of life are decreed from all eternity; and the eternal decrees themselves are in a measure regulated by the prayers of His servants. Prayer moves the Hand that moves the universe."

And this indicates the answer to the objection that God knows beforehand, and has decreed what is to come to pass, and, therefore, it is useless to pray to Him. What if He has decreed that certain things are to come to pass in answer to our prayers? We are reminded here of the fable of "Scholasticus" in the old Greek reader which we studied in our college days. Zeno, the fatalist philosopher, was about to punish his servant for some misdemeanor, when the servant, hoping to escape punishment by appealing to his master's principles, said, "But, master, it was fated that I should commit this fault." "Ah," replied Zeno, "it was also fated that I should punish you."

Says Cardinal Gibbons: "God from all eternity knew that I would, for example, pray to-day for a special grace to avoid sin. In answer to my prayer, He decreed from all eternity to give me to-day this special grace. The reason, therefore, why I receive this grace to-day is, indeed, because God has so decreed, but He has so decreed because I have prayed. In other words, I do not pray in order to alter God's designs, but I pray in order to execute them. By prayer I fulfil the

condition under which He has promised to bestow His gifts upon me. 'Your Father in heaven will give good things to them that ask Him.'"

Instead, then, of being disturbed by the difficulties to which we have alluded, let us console ourselves with the reflection that in our prayers we are fulfilling the will of God and confidently expect the fulfillment of our prayers, for the reason that Our Father in heaven has decreed, beforehand, to grant us the favors we ask of Him because we pray to Him.

And let us not be discouraged if we do not always get an answer to our prayers in the way we desire. That is no evidence that our prayer is not heard. On the contrary, we have the express promise of Our Lord that the fervent prayer of a truly humble, devout soul will certainly be heard and answered, if not in the way that we desire, yet in the way that He, in His infinite mercy and love, sees to be best for us. A wise parent does not always yield even to the pressing solicitation of a beloved child and grant just what he asks, because he knows it would not be best for him; but he will grant his request in some other way that will be more beneficial to him.

Let us, then, never fail to exercise a supreme undoubting trust and affectionate confidence in the power, wisdom and goodness of our Father in heaven, and never cease to present our petitions to Him with a lively faith that He will certainly hear and answer us in that manner which will be most for His glory and our highest good, both in this world and in that which is to come.—Sacred Heart Review.

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