

OPEN REVOLT.

We have shown that the laws, unwritten as well as written, that govern the Catholic Church, and therefore Christianity, are the creation of a Divine Legislator, and that the same Supreme Lawgiver has appointed an infallible judge in the person of His Vicar on earth, to interpret those laws. Against the decisions of that judge—his being the highest possible tribunal—there can be no appeal. Consequently, whosoever is unwilling to accept such laws and such interpretation must be prepared to make open revolt against the authority of that "duly authorized judge." And such has been the course followed by a great number of so-called Christians.

We use these words advisedly; because no real Christian will honestly, in his own heart, revolt against the laws of Christ. And in opposing the interpretation of these laws, by Christ's Vicar, he is *de facto* coming in conflict with the will and the authority of Christ Himself. This is but logical. It cannot be otherwise reasoned out. The disregard of any tribunal reflects upon the source whence the tribunal has drawn its powers. If it is so in a human system of jurisprudence it is equally, if not more so, in the case of a Divine system.

But has ever any created being had the audacity to revolt against the authority of the Supreme Lawgiver? Certainly; and they are numerous. But there are a few whose importance, and the effects of their rebellions, give them a claim to an unenviable distinction. The first on record to rise in revolt against the authority of God was Lucifer, who, in the halls of heaven, cried out *non serviam*—"I will not obey." From that day until the present millions have followed in the footsteps of the first rebel against Divine authority. We find them in the days of the old Mosaic law; we find them more numerous since the advent of Christianity.

In order to be guilty of revolt against the law of God, one must first know that such law is of Divine origin, and that in refusing to accept it he is refusing to obey the will of its Maker. Let us take one example—by no means the only one. Luther rebelled against the Church. Why? Not because he found less opportunity of practising virtue inside the fold than outside of it. He simply rebelled because he was firstly overcome by that same spirit of pride that caused the fall of the first grand rebel. He found that the laws unwritten, as interpreted by the infallible judge, were somewhat too severe upon men, and that under them the passions had not full swing enough. He also discovered that the laws written were so in accord with the laws unwritten that it became necessary to change, amend, or abolish the latter so as to make them harmonize with his ideas of what such laws should be. The result is known to the world; hundreds of sects, divisions, conflicting sentiments, clashing opinions; no union, no certainty, no peace, no salvation. Will any sane man pretend that Henry VIII—the once Defender of the Faith—was actuated by pure motives when he raised the standard of revolt against the authority—in matters spiritual—of the Divinely authorized interpreter of the laws of Christ? We have but to go to the source of all these revolts, to the spring of each so-called reformation, and there, at the fountain-head, we find the measure of their worth.

It is not our intention of entering into any detailed history of the different revolts against the authority of the Church; it suffices for our purpose to point out the fact that they are all, or have all been the outcome of pride or lust, or else

of both combined. The laws given by Christ to His Church arise in humility and flow onward in morality. But it is human to err, and pride and immorality are both human. Our poor nature, prone to vanity and inclined to lust, frets under the restrictions that the laws of Christ impose. Consequently, when we cannot escape from them, and we feel that we cannot but break them, there is only one way in which to stifle the voice of conscience and to defy the dictates of reason—it is open revolt. To deny the exactness of those laws, or their immutability, necessitates a denial of the authority of the one appointed to interpret them. Nothing easier in the world than to thus break out in open revolt against the laws. But, of course, it must be remembered that such revolt, while perhaps not immediately punished by the Lawgiver, constitutes an offence for which a terrific account must some day be rendered.

We have now come to the conclusion, for the present, of our arguments on this question of the laws of the Church. Men are free to accept or to reject them as they please; but upon their shoulders rests the responsibility of their conduct. If they reject the authority of the duly authorized interpreter and judge, they thereby reject the laws that he is called upon to interpret; and if they reject the laws they consequently defy the Legislator. Out of this there is no escape. If they hear not the Church they are as the heathen and the publican; in other words, they are as adorers of false gods, and as men who are not according to the spirit of God. But when men know the law, and when intentionally, and for purposes of their own, they defy that law, or attempt to change it to suit their own objects, they are guilty of the crime of revolt and are like unto Lucifer, enemies of God, and unwilling subjects of the great Creator and Master of the world. The chain of this system of jurisprudence is unbroken and is immutable. A Divine Lawgiver; laws unwritten as well as written; a duly authorized interpreter of those laws; and finally humanity, that must accept them as coming from a Divine source and through an infallible channel.

OUR YOUNG MEN.

In last week's issue we referred to the words pronounced by the Rev. Father Donnelly, of St. Anthony's parish, in regard to the advisability of a greater spirit of emulation amongst our Catholic young men, and his wise counsels concerning the many advantages that they could reap from a concentrated effort to secure a grand central hall or establishment wherein the hours of leisure might profitably be passed. This is a subject upon which we long desired to express a few broad opinions. We do not yet feel prepared to map out a line of conduct that would lead to the result sought; but we will be grateful for any practical suggestions. In the meantime, we will draw attention to a few facts that are so patent they can scarcely be made a subject of discussion.

In this very city we have an institution under the protection of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens, which is, in itself, a credit to them—we refer to the Christian Young Men's Association. It is unnecessary that we should enter into any detailed account of the advantages and accommodations offered to young men by that institution. Suffice to say that every reasonable and legitimate requirement is there to be found. Reading rooms, library, gymnasium, and all the other attractions constitute only portion of the benefits that the Association's

halls present. The stranger in the city finds there a perfect welcome, and he discovers a real brotherly reception from persons whom he never before met. Again, all the spiritual requirements—according to the non-Catholic idea—of a citizen or of a stranger are there satisfied. It is an organization that is doing a twofold work—that of a religious and that of a social kind. We are informed that the number of our young Catholics who belong to the C. Y. M. A. is not few. There they find the enjoyment, relaxation and encouragement that they so much require. And instead of spending their days, evenings or nights in the hotels or the billiard-halls, they frequent the rooms that are open to them and wherein they enjoy very innocent and often very healthy amusement.

But while giving full credit to the Association for all the good it is calculated to do we cannot but remark that for the Catholic he must breathe an entirely non-Catholic atmosphere. He is free from certain dangers that yawn in the path of morality, but he is exposed to other dangers that lurk along the highway of Faith. In this no blame can be attached to the zealous persons who have organized and who keep up the Association. If any blame is to be at all imputed, it may be firstly to the young men themselves, who do not know the risk they are running and who may not appreciate the situation in which they find themselves. But above all do we blame the lethargy of those who should make it their business to secure similar institutions for the Catholic youth. It is all very fine to have different organizations and societies; but if the result is a constant relaxing in Catholic principles and practice on the part of those who do not belong to such societies, we say it is time that they should all combine to give us a grand central hall, or establishment, wherein the vast number of our young men could find a species of home and a centre around which to congregate and to enjoy the hours at their disposal, while avoiding all risk of endangering their faith.

The means are not wanting—nor is the good will. What we think is most lacking is concentrated action. There is apparently no person to set the ball rolling, no one of sufficient influence to make a first move. We will not say any more for the present. Surely this is a sufficiently broad hint, and we will await results. We trust that it will be taken by some of our friends who occupy positions of sufficient influence, with the various existing organizations, to enable them to do some practical work in this direction. We do not presume to dictate. We simply ask for suggestions and seek to know the public and general sentiment upon this question.

It is high time that Montreal—this great Catholic city—should have an organization for young men that would not be inferior to those we find in the larger American cities. If a young Catholic stranger comes to Montreal, unless he has some very intimate friends, he will vainly seek for a Catholic organization in which he can find himself at home, and from which he may expect that help and encouragement which should be found in every large centre. No matter how numerous or how excellent our existing societies are, that person cannot claim admittance, not being a member heretofore. Individual assistance may be given, but that is at best of little practical use. But not only for the stranger, but for our own citizens, such an association is required; and if it is for the benefit of young men, of the rising generation, so much the more should older men lend it all the aid within their power.

ADVENT.

This is the glorious season that heralds in the greatest event of all the year, the anniversary of the greatest event of the ages—Christmas. It is also a season of penance. According to the rules of the Catholic Church every Wednesday and Saturday, as well as each Friday, is a day of abstinence. The altars are draped in purple and at the Holy Sacrifice the priest dons penitential garments. All these are tokens of the great humility with which we should cover ourselves at the approach of the season of pleasure, joy, universal love and general peace.

Centuries had rolled past since the fall of man; away in the infinite solitude of His Eternal Majesty God declared that man should be redeemed. Centuries rolled into centuries; prophets arose and declared their missions; the white tents appeared in the desert; humanity looked out of the darkness upon the dawning of Salvation's day. It was the vast, the wonderful advent in which the children of God gazed forth upon the future and anticipated the fulfilment of those promises which had been given.

At last a star twinkled in the firmament, a star that proclaimed the approach of the rising sun. Gradually the clouds of night vanished and finally the great, round, effulgent Orb of Redemption rolled up from behind the hills of time, and shot rays of promise down the slopes of the future. Each year, in a certain way, this season of Advent is celebrated. During four weeks (instead of four thousand years) the faithful look forward to the coming of the Messiah. The day is approaching when His Star will be seen by the Wise Men in the East. "Vidimus stellam ejus in orientem." And across the desert of trouble and sin will they follow that star, until it twinkles above the little crib at Bethlehem. So do all Christians look out for the star that shall flash upon the Eastern sky of their earthly pilgrimage, prepared to follow in its track until it pauses over the crib wherein lies the Hope of the nations.

If it took so many centuries for the world to prepare for the event of Christ's birth, surely four weeks are not too much for the ordinary Christian to get ready for the celebration of that wonderful anniversary.

Advent is not only a season of penance, but also one of prayer. Oh! that mighty instrument of prayer! It is the real weapon in the hand of every soldier who walks in the ranks of the Church Militant. It is a sword and a buckler—all in one. It has pierced the heart of Christ and drawn forth therefrom the endless sources of grace; it has gashed the heart of Mary and caused it to bleed in compassion for humanity; it has split the skull of the demon and laid him low at the feet of Faith; it has decapitated the hydra of sin and destroyed the influence of that enemy of humanity; it has flashed in the vanguard of the celestial army and led the hosts of Michael the Archangel; it has been unsheathed by the saints to assert the rights that belong to Christ's Church; and it has served as a shield against the poison-tipped arrows of Satanic vengeance that the barbaric hordes of infidelity pour in upon the army of the faithful. It is the only real weapon upon which humanity can rely, and in no season more than that of Advent is it powerful for protection.

It is yet somewhat early to enter upon the consideration of Christmas and of all the blessings that the holy season brings; but we cannot refrain from asking that our readers pause during the remaining weeks of Advent and study well the importance of the season just at hand. It