

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCLXXIII.

The general chorus of appreciation and eulogy called forth in the Protestant world by the sickness and death of Pope Leo XIII. has of course had its exceptions. There will always be "Devil's Advocates" in the world. Nor can such exceptions reasonably be denounced, as long as their temper is simply critical and enquiring, not sneering and vituperative. Of this latter hateful disposition I do not remember that any examples have come to my eye, except in one or two Spanish-American Protestant papers, upon the death of the Pope.

However, it is always warlike to criticize the critics, and to insist that their exceptions shall be accurately taken. Otherwise, in fairness, their depreciation goes to swell the general volume of praise. The presumption is always for the soundness of this, in view of the usual inclination of men to carp at him "who followeth not with us."

The Advance, the Congregational organ of Chicago, demurs to these praises of Leo, although I can not say that it denounces them.

It finds its objection on the ground that his Pontificate was wholly devoted to the interests of his Church.

This might call out praise from Roman Catholics, but how could it evoke such a current of praise from Protestants? We Protestants have no interest in extending the power of the Roman See. Our interest lies quite the opposite way. It can not be that Protestants are praising Leo because he was a zealous Roman Catholic.

Cardinal Antonelli was that, but who of us thinks of praising him? No one that I know of except Miss Dorothea Dix, whose philanthropic efforts he and Pope Pius IX. so warmly promoted.

The Roman See is to us very much what the Southern Confederacy was once. Jefferson Davis was wholly devoted to the interests of this, but assuredly we of the North did not extol him. Stonewall Jackson was equally devoted. Why is it that we hold him so high in honor? Because he pursued an object, the success of which, in the spirit of a high-minded, righteous and religious man. Human excellence always draws the hearts of men, however they may judge the immediate object pursued. We honor Hampden, and we honor Falkland, although they were opposed in war, because of their personal human worth. Indeed some of us who are on Hampden's side honor Falkland personally, more than him, and find a strong ingredient of baseness in Carlyle's temper, who can not mention the noble-minded Viscount without a most ignoble sneer.

Assuredly Leo XIII. has not called out this warmth of regard in general Protestantism as being Pope. Gregory XVI. and Clement XIII. were equally Popes, but how much do Protestants care for them? Leo XIII. is honored because, being Pope, he is apprehended as a high-minded and saintly man. He is honored as such ardent Protestants as Harmaek or Herzog, Pitt, would honor such Popes as Pius VII., or Innocent XIV., or Benedict XIV., or Urban VII., or Gregory V., or Gregory the Great, or Zachery, of whom Neander says that while he was zealous for the interests of the Papacy, he was yet more zealous for the interests of truth and righteousness. He used the Papacy, as he should have done, to promote the ends of the Kingdom of God.

Of course Leo could not have been honored, by anybody, had he not studied the interests of his Church. The question is: Has he worked for these in the spirit of selfish partisanship and dark intrigue, or in the love of truth and in the light of duty, in the pursuit of mercy, justice, social purity and religious faith? The world generally seems to have decided for the latter assumption. I do not pretend to have gained any such personal insight into his character and administration as to be entitled to render a verdict on my own account, but it seems to me that the judgment of the world appears to be that he has followed out the immediate ends of his great office, as was his duty, in a spirit deeply concerned for the general interest of mankind. No good and great man who is at variance with our own religious communion can fall of disappearing us in much that he does and leaves undone. Yet this hardly seems sufficient to justify us in carping against the general judgment of the world that he has been a good and great man.

There are some Pontifical acts of Leo XIII. which seem remarkably to identify immediate, papal and general human interests. For instance, his encyclical in promotion of the study of St. Thomas has resounded much beyond Roman Catholic limits. We remember how enthusiastically it was greeted, and its author hailed as a great intellectual reformer, by the Independent, to which no one is likely to attribute a medieval or Roman Catholic turn.

Indeed, Professor Ernest Lavisse, who, if a Catholic at all, seems to be very loosely such, informs us that it is now "good form" in France to close a scientific lecture with a passage from St. Thomas.

Personally I am not enough of a metaphysician to enter very deeply into the thinking of the great Schoolman, but I can testify, as a much more eminent man, the late Dr. William Sheild of Union Seminary, does emphatically, to the spiritual and intellectual benefit breathing from his works, to the cleansing and clarifying, and strengthening, and exalting power to be found in the study of Aquinas, even when only carried on derivatively, through the *Divina Commedia*, and the abundant illustration of it from St. Thomas, made by Sartazzini, and by King John of Saxony. An act of so wide an influence might well have called out high commendations, even had Leo's Pontificate offered no other special point of remark.

The echoes of this encyclical find percussion in quarters far removed from Leo's personal point of view. One of our most learned theologians and professors, standing, moreover, at the very antipodes of the late Pope, remarked to me once that if we wished to train our young men in clearness of vision, a settled repose in Christian philosophy, and a perfect and impartial apprehension of the arguments on every side of every proposition, we perhaps could not do better than to follow the Pope's recommendation, and to set up in our seminaries courses for the study of Thomas Aquinas. We are not likely to do this, if only because it is urged by a Pope, as England rejected the Gregorian Calendar for 170 years. Yet such views of this encyclical, taken by such men, seem to show that Leo XIII. by no means confined his view to that which was merely Church. Indeed, how can a high-minded and clear-minded man, firmly settled in the persuasion that God is in Christ, set forth his thoughts concerning matters of universal and eternal interest, without acting for the good of the whole intellectual and believing world?

The Pope's encyclical (or encyclicals) on Labor, and its rights and duties, is undoubtedly meant to conciliate workmen to the Church, but it means much more than this when an economist of the standing of Carroll D. Wright declares that it is a *vade mecum* with him, and that it has done a great deal to settle economical thought. Here again we seem to find an official act of one Pontiff, in these acts, of one Pontiff, might well take him out of the list of ordinary Popes. Yet these two acts are far from being all that are beyond the common mark.

A recent French article, Liberal, and by no means ecclesiastical, the substance of which is given in the Tablet, remarks that dates and facts do much to vindicate for Leo XIII. the place of author, or at least of a main promoter, of the Dual Alliance. Now I frankly own that I hate France and detest Russia; but as long as there are two such great powers in the world, it is certainly true that the Dual, balanced against the Triple Alliance, has had much to do with keeping world steady. This now is an act, the benefits of which is distinctly redounding to the good of mankind, and only obscurely and incidentally to the advantage of the Roman See.

These considerations admit of being prosecuted farther.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK. Andover, Mass.

SISTER MARGARET. An eminent physician once said that we pass by countless saints during the course of a day—that we touch elbows with them on the streets.

It is a consoling thought to cherish, particularly in these times when we hear so much of the evil that is rife, for the good that exists is unfortunately not given as much publicity. If we pass by the friends of God in our daily coming and going, without knowing them, happy they who do catch glimpses of the beautiful inner lives of those who dwell in the quiet places of the earth.

There was one well-remembered, kind soul who in her round of work was an ideal of Christian womanhood. I first saw her the day the carriage stopped at the convent door to give some directions about the time the boxes would arrive. Her rosy, smiling face framed with the band of snow-white linen appeared in the door-way, and from that time on during the following school years, she was ever the gentle, kindly old lady sister. Some say she was a convert; she may have been, if there be truth in the saying often heard, that converts make the best Catholics, for she was sincere in her every act. Inconspicuously one learned the meaning of a contented, holy life by being a few moments in her presence,—her goodness and cheerfulness seemed to impart to those about her. How glad she used to be giving out the news of the coming of some of the home friends, and what a cheering word she had for the often disappointed ones!

And when the school time drifted into the past, we heard one morning that Sister Margaret was dead. It was in the early autumn days they laid her way under the brown grass and rustling leaves beyond the hill of Notre Dame country. She had lived her life, a full one and rich in noble deeds, and was it not right she should be called for the reward? So pass many of the good about us, but the memory of the faithful comes back now and then in the darker moments to touch our hearts with newer life.—The New World.

ENCIRCLES THE GLOBE WITH ITS MEMBERS. "By their fruits you shall know them," said our Divine Lord. The fruits of the League of the Sacred Heart are numerous, and most precious. The first fruit is the love of God and our neighbor, the beginning of all wisdom. The second is fervent and frequent Communions—the altar rails are crowded every Sunday and feast-day by devout worshippers of the Sacred Heart. The third is a most tender and practical devotion to our Blessed Mother—a devotion which marks those who will be among the elect—and a love for her holy rosary. The fourth is a practical devotion to the Saints, whose lives teach us to live that we may enjoy a happy eternity with them. And the fifth is the knowledge how to sanctify our moments of labor, yes all our actions,—and make them all prayers for our salvation.

An endless chain that encircles the world, is the League of the Sacred Heart. It binds all its members together and unites all their hearts, so that at all times the incense of their prayers and good works is ascending to heaven. They are bound together by love of the great loving heart of our Lord, and they will that His kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Twenty Second Sunday After Pentecost. HYPOCRISY.

"Why do you tempt Me, ye hypocrites?" (St. Mat. xxii. 18.)

What was it in the conduct of these Pharisees that made our Lord send them away unanswered and unsatisfied? If we listen to their words, there is nothing in what they said but what was most true and appropriate. They told our Lord that they knew that He was a true speaker, that He taught the way of God in truth, that He cared for no man and did not regard the person of men. Could anything be better said by the light of men dismissed these fine talkers still wrapped in darkness and ignorance. What is the reason for this treatment—a treatment so different to that which our Lord generally gave to those who came to Him?

The reason is plain. These words of theirs were only on their lips, not in their hearts; they did not mean what they said nor wish to mean what they said. In fact it was all put on. They came to our Lord to ensnare Him, to get Him into difficulties. In one word, they came to Him as tempters. But He who not only hears the words of men but sees their hearts detected their dishonesty and insincerity, and measured out to it its fitting punishment. The Savior of mankind left those hypocrites, so far as we are told, unforgiven and unsaved.

And now how does this apply to ourselves? Very closely and practically. Far and away the most important thing for all of us is that we should receive from God the forgiveness of the sins which we have committed. In order to do this, to go in person to God, as really as these Pharisees went to our Lord, and we have to make to Him certain professions of sorrow and contrition. We have to say we are heartily sorry for all our sins, we declare that the reason why we are sorry is that these sins have offended Him Who is infinitely good and full of all love, or at least that the loss of heaven or the danger of everlasting punishment makes us detect those sins; above all, we have to declare that our mind is made up not to commit mortal sin again, nor willingly to expose ourselves to the dangerous occasions of sin. These are the professions which we have to make to Almighty God over and over again. If they are sincere and genuine, they will, through the Most Precious Blood of our Lord, secure to us the remission of our sins, however many and great those sins may have been.

But the important point is that these professions should be sincere and genuine. How, then, are we to know that they are sincere and genuine? Well, of course, if we know that we don't mean what we say, that we don't intend to make any change in our life and conduct, those expressions are plainly hypocritical and will bring down upon us a curse instead of forgiveness. This is so plain that it only needs to be mentioned to the unlearned. But there are many people who intend to do right and yet make a mistake about the act of contrition. They think that its sincerity and goodness depend on their feelings. They think that they ought to be able, if they are truly sorry, to shed tears for their sins, or at least to have profound emotions.

Now no one will deny that it would be a good thing to be able to shed sincere tears of sorrow for our sins. The saints have done so, and have instructed us that we should pray for the grace to be able to do so. But the act of contrition may be and generally is sincere and true if—but mark the condition—we have made up our minds not to sin again, and also to avoid dangerous occasions of sin.

This is the test of a real good act of contrition, and it is a good test, for every one must know his own mind on the point. If we have that full and sincere determination, an act of contrition is good, however dry and cold may be our feelings; but if we have not that determination, if we have not resolved to avoid bad company; if, on the contrary, we intend going on much as before, then, although we might deluge the confessional with floods of tears, our Lord's words to the Pharisees would be appropriate to us: "Why tempt Me, ye hypocrites?"

This, then, dear brethren, is a very important application of to-day's Gospel to ourselves: that we must take great care not to approach Almighty God with words which we do not mean, and especially, in coming to Confession, that we must come with a real, true determination to avoid all grievous sin in the future.

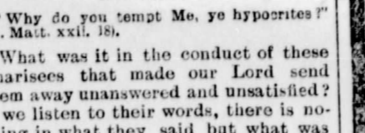
IMITATION OF CHRIST. DEBARRING ALL THINGS CREATED. THAT SO WE MAY FIND THE CREATOR. And unless a man be at liberty from all things created, he cannot freely attend to things divine. And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few who wholly sequester themselves from transitory and created things.

For this a great grace is required, which may elevate the soul and carry her up above herself. And unless a man be elevated in spirit and set at liberty from all creatures and wholly united to God, whatever be knoweth and whatever he hath is of no great weight.

Long shall he be little and lie groveling beneath, who esteemeth anything great, but only the one, immense, eternal God.

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ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS. All Saints and All Souls—the two solemn days of remembrance for the great multitude of the nameless sanctified and departed—how the shadowy spirits fit the dying year for whom winter is even now weaving a shroud of snow!

Spirits all, as they are we invoke the aid of the free and we pray for the deliverance of the bonded. All saints may pray for us; we pray for all souls. To-day we beg, we receive: to-morrow we offer, we bestow; to-day we are mendicants; to-morrow, benefactors.

The glorious, deathless brotherhood of the Church, its imperishable communion of saints, is made evident to the most unthinking during the first two days of November, when we, the living, the unpunished, in loving charity with the blessed in heaven and with the suffering souls in purgatory. On these days of mystical love earth itself seems to be transient, unreal and sin and hell are very far away.

Few are the saints whom we know by name. Since humility is one of the first essentials of sanctity, no saint could have wished to be known of men. The renown of the greatest among them was not self-sought; because they fled the lukewarm and startled the sordid and instructed the ignorant, the re-claimed glorified the name of their claimers. The unnamed saints are a multitude in heaven. "I saw a great crowd whom no man could number," testified St. John after having beheld the heavenly vision. The martyrs who died for Christ in the early centuries of the Church are numbered not by hundreds or thousands, but by millions.

Long after the decline of the Roman persecutions, Turkey and England began to emulate Diocletian and Nero. How many Christians in Europe, Asia and Africa who repudiated Mohammedanism to die for Christ can never be known. Nor can the martyrs of holy Ireland be enumerated. The numbers slaughtered for their faith by Cromwell and Elizabeth alone reach an appalling total. The Holy Isle is inundated with the blood of martyrs. Even before Peter Erin was famed for sanctity; the prince of O'Neills in their mediaeval glory venerated a hundred of their name who were canonized saints. Thousands of saints had Eire in her golden days, hundreds of thousands in her day of sorrow.

Yes, "all saints" are countless; every Christian nation has given to heaven innumerable "Servants of God." Their heavenly path concerns us more than their numbers, the path marked out by the Gospel of their own day—the Eight Beatitudes. "Blessed are they" forever, because they were humble, just, resigned, meek, faithful and patient. In heaven there are saints of all ranks and conditions," writes Dr. Weninger. "Emperors and empresses, learned men and intellectual men, poor and rich, officers and private soldiers, magistrates, mechanics and peasants, man-servants and maid-servants, married and single, widows and widowers, youths, maidens and little children. Many saints lived in the same station in which you live; like you, they lived in dangers and temptations; like you, they suffered, and yet they served God and went to heaven. Are you unable to do what they did?"

We are recommended to invoke especially these saints who on earth were in our own "station." For a woman these must be sainted women. Great indeed is the republic of heaven in all its ranks, from the Queen of Virgins to Pelagia the penitent, from Helena the Empress to Zita the servant, from Clare of Assisi, the noble, to Agatha, child of wealth, to Rose of Lima, daughter of poverty; from Genevieve, the simple shepherdess, to Teresa, the mystic.—Catholic Standard and Times.

There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated devout man and the knowledge of a scholar.

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CHATS WITH

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