

THE PROTESTANT VOICE.

Martin Luther's Memory Honored this Week at Wittenberg.

Boston Republic.

Protestantism possess so small a past that it can hardly be blamed for making the most of its anniversaries, especially when any of these, like the event celebrated at Wittenberg this week, takes the observer back to the birth of that religious creed. With the view of lending a greater antiquity than it owns to its sect, Protestantism, nine years ago, celebrated with all the pomp it could command the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of its founder Martin Luther; it would be an erroneous conclusion to reach through that Protestantism itself dates from 1483, the date of Luther's birth; and its origin cannot correctly be said to have been contemporary with the event that is being commemorated over in Saxony this week, the nailing of Luther of his theses on the door of the Schlosskirche of that town; since the Diet of Speyer, held twelve years subsequently, is generally assigned as the dawn of that religion; and it was from that gathering that the sect took its name. However, three hundred and seventy-five years have elapsed since Luther, on October 31, 1517, nailed his theses on the door of the Wittenberg church, and the restoration of that edifice to the condition it was then in is the event which led to the celebration of the present week.

Fifty odd miles of a railway ride southwest from Berlin lands you at Wittenberg, a town of some fourteen thousand inhabitants, who follow the usual trades of German workmen, though some of the more profitable industries of the place have fallen into decay of late years. In Luther's time Wittenberg possessed a spacious Augustinian monastery, of which the "reformer" was for a time an inmate; but this edifice passed out of Catholic hands shortly afterwards, and became the residence of Luther and Katharine Bora. To-day it bears the name of Luther's Museum, though only a portion of the original monastery has been preserved; and near by

STANDS A LUTHERAN SEMINARY.

The Schlosskirche, on the doors of which the pseudo-reformer tacked his bombastic theses, was built in 1490; it suffered severely during the seven years' war, was subsequently repaired, and has now been put in much the same state it had when Luther began his warfare against the Catholic Church by nailing his propositions on its portals. The first spoliation of the church was the direct result of Luther's own teachings, and took place while he, after having been ordered out of Wittenberg because of his scandalous conduct there, was junketing with boon companions in the Castle Wartburg, where he stayed from May, 1521, to March of the following year. During this absence of his from Wittenberg, a number of his fanatical followers broke into the local churches, demolished the altars and statuary, and committed other vandalisms of such outrageous character that Luther himself wrote a letter in condemnation of their conduct. The manner of life which the "reformer" led while his followers were sacking the church which modern Protestantism has restored anew, may be judged from his own declaration that "I have done more harm to the Papacy while sleeping or drinking Wittenberg beer with Philip and Amsdorf than all the princes and emperors together." The parish church, from the pulpit of which were pronounced many of Luther's fiercest and coarsest philippics against the Pope, dates from the fourteenth century, but has undergone such changes as practically make it another edifice now; and the spot whereon Luther burned the Papal Bull and other writings, at the Elster gate, is designated by an oak tree. The Bull in question was issued by Pope Leo, June 15, 1520, and its transmission to Germany was entrusted to three legates, one of whom, Dr. Eck, subsequently proved Luther's staunchest adversary.

THE THESIS WHICH LUTHER nailed on the door of the Schlosskirche, or Castle Church, and which event was commemorated by the ceremonies held at Wittenberg this week, were, as is well known, the Augustinian's challenge—for the founder of Protestantism was then a monk—to the Dominican friar, Tetzel, to dispute with him the doctrine of Indulgences as taught by the Catholic Church. The Prince Archbishop of Mainz, Albert, had selected Friar Tetzel to preach in North Germany the Plenary Indulgence which Leo X., the Sovereign Pontiff, had granted, under due conditions, of course, to the entire Catholic world, and the proceeds of these sermons were to be applied to the building of St. Peter's at Rome. Luther was envious of the fame which Tetzel, who was very eloquent, won by his discourses, attended by immense audiences; and his envy unquestionably had much to do with the course which he subsequently followed. It is the universal Protestant claim that, in these theses, Luther pronounced against the Catholic doctrine of Indulgence; yet the seventy-first of the propositions which he tacked on the portals of the Wittenberg church declared that "whosoever speaks against the truth of Papal Indulgences, let him be anathema." The truth of the matter is that Luther did not himself understand the subject, and he confesses as much in his own works, when he says, speaking with reference to the theses in question: "Upon my salvation I knew no more at that time what an Indulgence was than did those who came to inquire of me." Again and again can contributions be found in Luther's writings,

all going to show that the "reformer," when he began his attacks upon the Catholic Church, was striking at random and blindly led by pride, rather than governed by reason or logic.

No doubt there were abuses committed by certain Catholic preachers at the time that the general Indulgence

PROCLAIMED BY POPE LEO

was being preached in Germany. These abuses, however, in no wise affected the Catholic doctrine, which was clearly set forth by Tetzel, in the following words, the very year that Luther issued his famous challenge: "Indulgences do not forgive sin, but only the temporal punishment due to sin, and this only when the sin has been sincerely repented of and confessed." Neither did the abuses that were committed alone prompt Luther's challenge; nor does it seem that at the outset he aimed at creating a schism in the Church. "No cause," he wrote in 1519, two years after the event commemorated this week at Wittenberg, "is so great, or could become so great, that one should separate himself from the Catholic Church." The facts in the case are that Luther, being an Augustinian, to oppose the Dominican, Tetzel, of whose popularity he was jealous. His original aim was simply to win for himself something of the popularity which the Dominican preacher enjoyed, and when he succeeded in doing that by the publication of his theses, he lost his head, as many a man had done before him, and allowed himself to be carried away by the applause that surrounded him, until he forgot his priestly vows and committed such excesses as to draw from Erasmus, his own disciple, the following forcible declaration: "It must be evident to the most feeble intellect that one who raised so great a storm in the world, who always found pleasure in using language either indecent or caustic, could not have been called God. His arrogance, to which no parallel can be found, was scarcely distinguishable from madness, and his buffoonery was such that it could not be supposed possible in one doing the work of God."

IT MAY BE ASKED,

though, why such a character as Luther is shown to have been in his own writings and by the admissions of his associates could have obtained the great influence he exerted in his day, and why the religion which he invented should have been accepted by so many people. The answer to both queries may be found in the fact that Lutheranism, to call the "reformer's" religion by his own name, appealed to the passions and did away with many of the mortifications and acts of self-denial which Catholicity requires from its followers. Luther virtually absolved his believers from all restraints, and by his own life encouraged them to indulge their inclinations, no matter in what direction these led them. The miserable condition in which the poorer classes found themselves, in consequence of the tyranny and exactions of the feudal lords, also helped the spread of Lutheranism, whose founder began by preaching the widest sort of communism, but, when he saw the baneful effects of his doctrines, took the opposite tack and endeavored to inculcate slavish submission to authority, even going so far as to say on one occasion that "the abolition of slavery would be directly against the gospel." The late Cardinal Hergenrother, in writing in one of his works on this question, mentions a number of the Lutheran doctrines, among others the mistaken manner in which some of the Catholic representatives opposed them, "the alluring doctrine of justification by faith alone; of the enslavement of the human will; of the assurance of salvation; of invalidity of conventual vows; of the harmfulness of celibacy and good works; and, more than all, the violence of princes and cities, who, after the expulsion of Catholic priests,

FORCED THE PEOPLE

to hear the 'new gospel,' so that in many places the people were torn away from the old Church by brutal force; and with insidious fraud Catholic rites were for a long time preserved, and the old forms of religion kept intact, so that the blinded people might not be aware of any essential change in their faith."

Modern Protestantism retains very little semblance to the doctrines which Luther preached after his apostasy and renunciation of his Catholic vows and faith; and were the "reformer," in whose honor those important ceremonies were held at Wittenberg this week, to return to earth he would be at a loss to recognize any traces of his teachings in the sect that united to honor his memory. It is a singular fact that, here in this country, the church that calls itself Lutheran has been lately allied with the Catholic Church in opposing Protestantism in the efforts which that denomination made to deprive Catholic children of religious instruction. The defeat of the Bennett Bill in Wisconsin, and the impending repeal of the Edwards' law in Illinois, both of which pieces of legislation was enacted by the fanatical demands of Protestantism, are the results, not only of Catholic, but also of Lutheran, opposition to any invasion of parental rights in the education of children; so that at least on one issue there is to-day agreement between the Church against which Luther rebelled and the one that bears his name, and a wide difference of opinion between the latter and some of the Protestant sects that aimed at honoring his memory the present week, and that claim "the Pope of Wittenberg" as their founder.

SUFFERING WITHOUT FAITH.

Without Christian faith, suffering, which seizes man, tortures him, and will not be shaken off, easily becomes an overwhelming evil, admitting no alleviation whatever. One may exhaust his supply of comparisons without being able to give more than an imperfect idea of the anguish endured by the man who suffers violently, and who has not faith to support him. We may say, for instance, that life, under such conditions, is an arid and burning desert, across which man plods wearily, without a shade wherein to repose, without a fountain or spring at which to shake his thirst, without even a cloud to mitigate the intense heat that scorches his brow and oppresses his whole being. We may call it a tempestuous sea, upon which the mariner, tossed about in his fragile shell, momentarily expects a horrible death as the acme of cruel fears and incessant anguish; or term it a dark and freezing night, in which the traveller tires himself out in seeking a path, from which he wanders more and more, with no hope of arriving at his journey's end, with the certainty rather of miserably perishing.

All these similitudes, far from being exaggerated, are far below the frightful reality. Could we tear aside the veil that screens so many unfortunate lives, which nothing soothes or consoles, we should soon understand that the state of those who suffer without faith is far sadder and more desolate than can be pictured by any effort of the fancy. How many firesides are the sole witness of the terrible and heartrending struggles undergone by thousands of souls who refused to submit to God and to adore His sacred will! How many roofs have for years of hearts crushed by sorrow and intolerance to the whispers of faith! How many forms pass us daily, fair and beautiful to the eye, that are yet only the outer walls of gloomy dungeons, that echo the groans and lamentations of souls stricken by suffering and misfortune, and unwilling to seek solace in Christian resignation and Christian hope!

Thousands of these unfortunates, almost crazed by sorrow, and unaided by the lights and consolations of faith, sigh for death, and invite its advent with their whole heart. When it comes not at their call, or delays too long in coming, they do not hesitate to commit suicide; or if they restrain themselves from that criminal folly, it is for reasons that in no way affect their horror of life. Death itself does not suffice for some of them: they long for complete annihilation as a fate preferable to a state of continued existence, for they dread the possibility that the sufferings of this life may not end with death, but be continued indefinitely thereafter. In a word, suffering, which even with all the helps of faith the Christian endures with difficulty, becomes for the unbeliever a veritable hell upon earth.

It will be said, perhaps, that the sufferer should by the use of his reason rise above the painful necessities of life, and so predominate over pain. This process of rendering suffering acceptable is more speculative than practical. Let the trial be made, and the experimenter will discover that, in very truth,

"There was never yet philosopher That could endure the toothache patiently."

Violent and continuous suffering, for the man whose faith does not illumine nor grace sustain, a mystery which disconcerts human reason, a trial which finally overcomes the strongest nature. But very little time is needed to demonstrate the inefficacy of all man's natural resources in an encounter with genuine pain.

Nor will the remedy prove more effectual if he seeks to console himself with the thought that his suffering is decreed by some blind and fatal power. We may repeat to ourselves a thousand times that it is our fate to suffer, that we must endure the torment, that it is to our advantage to accept it in silence, —all in vain. Our suffering will be none the less intense; it will none the less crucify our soul and body; we shall experience none the less acutely that privation of happiness which tortures us like a raging thirst. Face to face with so inexorable a divinity, a power that, from no understood motive, condemns us to suffer, we will rebel, and add to our pain by cursing its inflicter. This fatalistic system, as impotent as it is unreasonable, will only aggravate instead of soothing our misery.

A modern writer has well said that, far from God—that is, without faith,—the soul, life, the whole universe, becomes naught but an immense void. Once we quit the hand of the Infinite, we wander through spaces whose silence terrifies. We ask ourselves why we are and what is the mystery that our existence hides. We ask especially the meaning of sorrow, the eager fire which seems to emerge from nothingness and glide through our veins as promptly as life itself. Faith alone can deliver us from our cruel disquietude and all its terrible consequences—and alas! how many there are who have no faith!

Surely it were a worthy deed to pray for the countless number of wretched human beings who suffer without faith, and so suffer doubly and hopelessly. Through our prayers they may be brought to lend a docile ear to the teachings of the Church; may kneel before a crucifix and there contemplate a dying Christ; may rest beneath the fearful gaze of Mary, Mother of Sorrows. Then will their minds and hearts be comforted and their wills made submissive. They need but say, "I believe, I love, I hope," and their suffer-

ing will undergo a transformation; all the afflictions of life will henceforth become supportable; and, far from engendering malediction and despair, will be blessed and loved as the source of unspeakable happiness to come.—*Ave Maria.*

WHY NOT PREPARE?

BY PHILLIP O'NEILL.

The careful always prepare, even for the most trivial worldly occasions. Whether it be a wedding, a feast or a journey, the sound of preparation is heard. This is the work of prudence. The highest work of prudence is to prepare for the life that is to last forever, one would think. Ah, my friends, along the highways of to-day I see you reaching out for things that perish: for houses and lands, and wealth and social station, and fine apparel and—personal comfort, and frivolous accomplishments. And your thoughts are fixed only on these—and life so uncertain and time so short. Good friends, within the space of a few years you will be removed to another life beyond, that will last so long that a thousand millions of years will only be the commencement. You will be removed where the things of this world shall have faded forever from your remembrance. In a little while not one of you will be left, and your memory will be forgotten. The headstone on which your name is written will be near your grave, and covered with soil. How foolish to live for this short life only! How vain to value the things that perish! What madness to neglect to prepare for a journey from whence there is no returning?

FEW ARE PREPARED.

"The Lord will come to His servant in a day that he expecteth not." (Luke 12). All men and women are surprised by death. They are stricken down in the midst of their worldly plans. Sudden deaths of the healthy and strong occur every day, but we shut our minds against the thoughts they suggest. It is a kind of mental blindness that we take no account of the shortness of life, the uncertainty of health and the suddenness of death. Not a single one of my readers has any fears of death, nor will they harbor any, until they offer in a death-bed repentance the dregs of a mispent life to God.

When the death-bed comes we are disgusted at the worthlessness of all that we valued so much—beauty, pleasure, wealth, society, rank, station. We are shocked at our consummate folly in prizing such idols of clay. Bah! Then comes that feeling of intense desolation creeping upon us as we think of our helplessness. Too late! To look back is regret; to look forward—despair. The proudest man, the haughtiest woman at that moment consent to be a slave and to eat the crumbs of bitterness and poverty. Then comes the appalling sense of our loneliness as the soul passes from all it knew to seek the unknown. Its virtues and vices alone follow it to the judgment seat—the virtues so few, the vices innumerable. God grant that we shall never experience the despair of such a moment. Not for millions would we trust to a death-bed repentance for such an occasion. We know that the immortal soul is not for this life, but for a higher life. We know that this life is but a preparation for the next. Then why not prepare? Why live for this world if we must go to another so soon?

John Tauler, a mystic of ages gone, had the power to turn the minds of his hearers inward, so that they became almost petrified, as it were, in the contemplation of their startling condition revealed to them for the first time. If I could wield with the pen the searching power of John Tauler, before to-morrow night ten thousand people would have asked: "What shall we do?"—*Catholic Mirror.*

A Touching Friendship.

Perhaps one of the most touching instances of apparently ill-sorted friendships is that of the well-known lioness, which died at an advanced age in the Dublin Zoological Gardens in 1876. So feeble had she become that she was unable to repel the rats, which found their way to her quarters, and continually annoyed her by biting her feet. It was finally resolved to introduce a good ratting terrier into her cage, and this was done with a result thus graphically described: "The dog was naturally received with an angry growl; but as soon as the lioness saw how her companion treated his first rat she began to understand what the terrier was for, and immediately her behavior towards him was changed. She now coaxed him to her side, folded her paws around him, and each night the little terrier slept at the breast of the lioness, enfolded with her paws, watching that his natural enemies did not disturb the rest of his mistress."

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So says Dr. Cudde, an old and honored practitioner, in Belleville, Ontario, who writes: "For Wasting Diseases and Scrofula I have used Scott's Emulsion with the most satisfactory results."

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"The Saints."

The very idea of a saint is wholly lost to the non-Catholic mind. Kate Field once wrote that Catholics made saints of persons who on principle never took a bath nor changed their clothes; and Tennyson, in his poem on St. Simon of the Pillar, makes the man of God a feeble minded clown. Catholics resident in Protestant countries have misunderstood, and partly forgotten, their saints for two reasons: they would not expose them to Protestant ridicule by frequent mention of them, and left the writing of their lives to pious persons who forgot the saints were human beings, and made them out altogether angelic. Popular Catholic art has rooted the angelic idea in our minds, as one can see by a hasty examination of our popular engravings and statuary. So that between Protestant prejudice and Catholic blundering, we have all been deprived of a rational acquaintance with the saints. A saint, as Catholics understand him, is a more or less exact copy of Jesus Christ Himself, as far as man can imitate that divine Model. The life of every true Christian is modelled on the life of Christ. When you meet with a spotless soul, laboring in sweetness, meekness and patience, to know and love and serve God more completely and unselfishly every day whose meat and drink is to do the will of Heaven, you have met a saint. He may be a common saint, without any call to enlighten the Church, to illumine its history, honor its altars, console its children in all ages; his vocation may only be to let a small and humble circle feel and see what the perfect love of God is; his lot may be obscurity; nevertheless he is a saint, and of his kind there are thousands in the Church at this moment. From these common saints God selects the historic souls who are to stir the world with their genius, as did St. Thomas; convert nations, as did St. Francis Xavier; make wonderful history like Pope Hildebrand, and draw the tears of Christian and unbeliever alike by such a tragedy as St. Agnes'. Between the historic saint and the common saint there is not the slightest difference, except in the gifts that God has given them and the duties He requires of them.—*John Talbot Smith in November Rosary.*

Ireland Revisited.

(Respectfully inscribed to P. O'Neill, Esq.)
God bless your Irish heart, Pat!
Long may its spirit rule,
And genius ne'er depart, Pat,
Your village school.
In fifteen years I've seen enough,
The simple, the refined, the rough,
(And shall again),
To know that you are of the stuff
Makers need men!
God bless your Irish heart, Pat!
'Tis many a weary day
Since from you I did start, Pat,
From my way.
To spin it out I'd like to see,
To put my "learning" to the proof,
As you'd enjoy it,
Nor ever hold myself aloof
From old Moorehead!
God bless your Irish heart, Pat!
Since after three long years,
What wonder they should start, Pat,
The sudden tears?
For other "mothers" I have seen,
Through many another "school" have been,
Beyond the foam;
But love of mine they could not wear
From you and home!
God bless your Irish heart, Pat!
Its sorry I am to go,
The best of friends must part, Pat;
And 'tis so sad,
But "banneath lath," my friend, and pray
I may be yet the same you say:
Not yours the fault,
If, in the effort, night or day,
I should cry "halt!"
God bless your Irish heart, Pat!
Long may its spirit rule,
And genius ne'er depart, Pat,
Your village school.
Your "mothers" and "mothers" I have seen,
To each a man's share I'll be bound,
Wherever they be,
That Mother Ireland yet be crowned
Queen of the sea!
—William Dollard.



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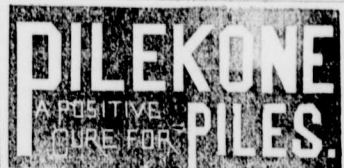
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