

The True Witness



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THE TORCH OF LIGHT AND CIVILIZATION

In a recent address the Right Rev. John Gallagher, D.D., of Goulburn, Australia, told in the following eloquent and forcible words what the Church has done for civilization. He said:

The Catholic Church remained not a mere antique, not merely in the decrepitude of old age—not merely as strong as she was in the year of the Hegira, when Mahomet fled from Mecca to Medina, but having renewed her youth like the eagle, went forth with all the energy of her pristine vigor, carrying together with the cross of the Saviour and the Book of His Gospel, her other ten thousand instruments of beneficence and enlightenment, to the limits of the world.

Hardly had she appeared on earth, when all at once, before the light of her teaching vanished the dark clouds of Grecian and Roman mythology emblazoned though they were by the fancy of their poets, though art had illumined them with countless forms of beauty, though the pen of the historian had woven them into the records of those countries which were loved so well. She it was that dashed from their pedestals those idols, which by falsities and lies had allowed the greatest part of mankind to forsake God, their Creator.

Having shown how the pagan philosophers were vanquished by the simple teachings of Jesus Christ, Bishop Gallagher said that for the first three centuries of her existence the Roman emperors had, aided by the strength of their thirty legions, striven to extinguish the light of her teaching in the blood of her martyrs, ignorant as they were that already on one of their seven hills, the Vatican, a humble fisherman had established a throne, and that from this throne his successor should, for all ages, rule over an empire larger in extent, more docile in obedience, more steadfast in its loyalty, than had ever been subject to the sword of Imperial Rome.

When the eagles of the empire retired below, and a blade of grass refused to grow before the tread of Attila and his Huns, was it not a successor of the fisherman—St. Leo the Great—worthy predecessor and namesake of the still greater Leo, who had just been taken from them—whose calm dignity and heroic bravery stayed the progress of the barbarian and saved from his fury, to be the seed-plants of new ages of progress, the last relics of an expiring civilization? Let them run their fingers down the pages of history for six centuries more and come to the year 1080.

When, about these days, a successor of Mahomet, pursuing the traditions of his race, had subjected to the obedience of the Koran and the sword every nation outside of Europe that was known to the civilization of the Old World, every knee that bent in profane homage to Allah and his prophet from the Pillars of Hercules to the walls of Bagdad, and the proud Sultan threatened to feed his war horse from the oats of the Vatican gardens on the altars of St. Peter's.

Was it not a priest and saint, Peter the Hermit, who, at the bidding of another successor of the fisherman, Urban II, made the churches and cathedrals of Europe ring with the thunders of an indignant and enthusiastic eloquence that reached to the very hearts of the people and called forth their faith and chivalry from the banks of the Thames and the Seine, the Tiber and the Rhine to cross over barbarous lands and dangerous seas to rescue the sepulchre where the body of their Lord had been laid, and to save once more the religion, the civilization, and the liberties of Europe?

And so on down the centuries. They would notice that in his whole discourse he did not speak of their Holy Mother, the Church, merely as a divine institution founded by their Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls.

He did not speak of the Church only in her doctrinal and sacramental system, as the guardian and infallible interpreter of revealed truth and sole authorized dispenser of the mysteries of God, for in that sense there was no institution with which she could compare. He merely spoke of her in her external and mundane and secular aspect, as the preserver of ancient civilization, the defender of civil and spiritual freedom, as the fashioner and moulder of Christian society. And from that point of view they would bear with him if he adduced one or two additional examples of what he meant.

When their Holy Mother Church set about the work which her Divine Founder had given her to do, she found woman in a degraded state, little else than a vile instrument of the lust and despotism of man. To-day, whether as a cowering dove she seeks an asylum for timidity and weakness in "those deep solitudes and awful cells, where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells," or as a Sister of Charity crowns her virginity with the sacrifice of youth, beauty and accomplishments, to the moulding of young souls; or as a daughter, wife or mother throws around the domestic hearth the sweet aroma of Christian piety and womanly love, she owed nearly all her dignity, all her supernatural elevation, to the sublime teachings and sacramental graces of their holy Catholic religion.

The Church preferred, nearly four centuries ago, to lose the wealth, the greatness and the power of that mighty empire on whose domain the sun was said never to set, rather than to concede to the guilty passions of a licentious King, Henry VIII, for the dissolution of the marriage bond and the rights of his lawful wife, the good Queen Katherine of Aragon.

The elevation of woman, then, from a position of lowliness, of degradation, of contempt, to the high and proper place which she now occupies of being the equal, the companion and the consoler of man, was, too, a work of social regeneration, the memory of which should not be allowed to die.

But then, some say "we willingly admit all you claim for the old religion. She exercised a mighty influence for good in the past. She kept the torch of learning ablaze during the darkness of the Middle Ages. She formed Christian society almost as we have it to-day, its laws, its customs, its institutions, its liberties, its civilization. But her time is past. Her period of usefulness is gone. She is fallen, never to rise again, that gave laws to nations. Her lot now is to be consigned as a beautiful relic of a glorious past, to some museum of antiquities."

Ah! they had not read her past history, or the history of the world correctly; they do not gauge her future destiny aright, who argue thus. She was still producing saints in plenty, whose aureole of glory was as bright in heaven as that which surrounds the brow of Agnes, or Ambrose, or Augustine; still refuting the theories of a false philosophy with a logic as convincing and a diction as winning as that which refuted the sophisms of Julian the Apostate; still battling for the rights of the Church and spiritual freedom with the same heroic courage with which St. Thomas a Becket met Henry II of England; still confronting hostile kings with the same zeal with which Henry IV. of Germany was met by Hildebrand; still tending the garden of knowledge with the same assiduous care, pruning down the prurient sprouts, cutting off the rotten branches, and nursing the tender buds of promise with the same unceasing watchfulness with which she gathered up and preserved its scattered seeds during the long and dreary years that succeeded the northern invasion.

She was still sending forth to the limits of the world, with the glad tidings of salvation to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of

death, missionaries with heads as clear and hearts as warm, and souls as enthusiastic in her cause as were those who with Augustine first proclaimed the truths of Christianity to the fair Saxon youth on Kentish strand, or with St. Patrick when he first lighted the Paschal fire in the halls of Tara.

Let them go to the observatories of China, and they would find them there watching the motions of the heavenly bodies, and explaining to that mysterious people the nature and the attributes of the great Being who made these bodies out of nothing, who appointed the courses in which they should revolve.

Go to the mines of Siberia, and they would find the Polish confessors and martyrs exhorting, suffering for the faith. Sail to the islands of the ocean and they would find the countless worshippers in spirit and in truth, whom their labor and their zeal were forming for the Eternal Father there.

Or, take the wings and fly to the very limits of the world, to the far West land, where the Sioux, the Shawnee, or the Blackfeet dwell—or where the McKenzie pours its majestic waters towards the frozen ocean, and there—

"On the western slope of the mountains Dwells in his little village the black-robed chief of the mission, Much he teaches the people, and tells them of Mary and Jesus, High on the trunk of a tree that stands in the midst of the village, And o'ershadowed with grapevines, a crucifix fastened, Looks with its agonized face on the multitudes kneeling beneath it; This is their rural chapel."

That which "the black-robed chief of the mission" was doing for his children "beyond the western slope of the mountains," in America and in every land, that same thing they were striving to do for the people in Australia, and it was to take the Crucifix from "high on the trunk of a tree" and place it in a church that they were gathered there that day.

TEACH IRISH TONGUE AT ENGLISH COLLEGE

An honors class of Celtic has been recently established in the Faculty of Arts of the Victoria University at Manchester, England, Irish and Welsh languages are both taught and they are placed on the same level as ancient classics for degrees of honor. Evening classes in Irish have been in existence in Manchester under the school board for the past four years. There were over a hundred students in two of them last year. The action of the Manchester University authorities in this particular is in odd contrast with that of the three Queen's Colleges in Ireland maintained at public expense under direct control of the Castle administration.

These colleges at their foundation were provided with chairs of Irish, but no more. Students might take lectures, if a sufficient number enrolled themselves in any college, but they received no credit for any proficiency acquired in that study. The chairs have remained, literally a name, during the fifty years since their foundation. A significant fact in this connection is that at Belfast Queen's College the Chair of Irish Language, with a salary of £120 a year, was actually filled by a Catholic for several years. He was the late John O'Donovan, and the only person of his faith allowed a chair in what was called the National College of Ulster. It may be added there were no pupils.

A Cure for Costiveness.—Costiveness comes from the refusal of the excretory organs to perform their duties regularly from contributing causes usually disordered digestion. Parmelee's Vegetable Pills prepared on scientific principles, are so compounded that certain ingredients in them pass through the stomach and act upon the bowels so as to remove their torpor, and arouse them to proper action. Many thousands are prepared to bear testimony to their power in this respect.

MORALITY OF HYPNOTISM

Catholic Attitude Stated by a New York Carmelite.

Is hypnotism unlawful? May I place myself safely under the influence of the experimenter?

These are questions, writes the Rev. Felix A. McCaffrey, O.C.C., of New York, in the Freeman's Journal of that city, which one very often hears nowadays, and it is with the purpose of giving a few of the pros and cons for and against hypnotism, and consequently allowing would-be inquirers to act in some way for themselves that I have been induced to pen the following lines.

Hypnotism is produced by passes, contact and fixation. The subject is told to gaze fixedly at some object at a short distance from and above his eyes, or to stare into the eyes of the operator, or to listen to the monotonous tick of a watch, or else some passes are made in front of the face and chest of the subject. After a time he gradually falls into a drowsy condition just like that preceding or on ordinary sleep.

This is one method of producing hypnosis. Others utilize the simple suggestion of the idea; for instance, the subject is told to "Gaze fixedly at me, and think of nothing but of going to sleep. You feel your eyelids heavy; you are very drowsy; your eyes grow more and more fatigued; they wink; your sight is becoming dimmer and dimmer; your eyes are closing; you cannot open them! Sleep!" If the operation is successful, the patient passes into the hypnotic state, from which he is usually awakened either by passes in the opposite direction or by blowing on his face, or by an emphatic "Awake!"

Such are the different methods employed in accordance with the different views which they hold regarding hypnosis by the doctors of Paris and those of the Nancy Schools.

According to the former as represented by Charcot hypnosis, at least in its deeper stages, is a nervous disorder found only in hysterical patients, and exhibiting itself in three stages of cataleptic, lethargic and somnambulistic trance.

According to the Dr. Bernheim and his followers of the Nancy School, hypnosis is not a nervous disorder, but a state claiming close affinity to natural sleep. They explain away the nervous disorder theory of the Paris School by attributing it to the fact that those who advanced the opinion confined their investigations chiefly to the neurotic patients of the Salpetriere hospital, and assert that the three stages insisted on by Charcot may be explained by suggestion and imitation.

Hypnotism is now extensively employed on the continent as a therapeutic agency in the curing of diseases. It may not (in time to come for as yet it may be said to be only in its infancy) fulfil all the expectations which its most sanguine exponents hope for it; but it undoubtedly deserves recognition in medical circles on account of the many cures which have been thoroughly investigated by the most eminent scientific men.

Although sometimes exhibiting effects which appear to be at least suspicious, we are assured by authority that hypnotism is no longer to be regarded as a superhuman gift; for almost all its effects as far as known at present can be explained by our knowledge of physiology and psychology. The reason given for its never attaining the status of a universal therapeutic agency is on account of the number of persons suitable as subjects.

On the point of suitable subjects practitioners are by no means agreed. Bottey gives only 80 per cent as susceptible; Morselli, 70 per cent; Delboey, over 80 per cent; while Bernheim denies the right to judge of hypnotism to all hospital doctors who cannot hypnotize at least 80 per cent of their patients, and Force fully agrees with him. (Moll, "Hypnotism," p. 47.)

Were this a scientific treatise we might discuss some of the remarkable phenomena which follow from hypnotism, such as illusions and hallucinations; the inhibition of voluntary muscles; exalted sensibility; amnesia and defined suggestions, etc., but this is not our purpose, and we will proceed to the question:

Is hypnotism lawful, and may one safely subject oneself to the influence of the experimenter?

Well, it is admitted on all sides that hypnotism when practised by the unskilled unauthorized exhibitor, is attended with serious results both to the body and mind. It undoubtedly has power of doing good when employed by the skilled physician, but the employment of it by these irresponsible and unscrupulous charlatans is likely to bring it again into disfavor. Cases are extant where subjects experimented on by such have been rendered lunatics, or had their nervous system severely damaged. Crimes have been committed by persons who have been hypnotized.

A person who is hypnotized is capable of receiving beneficial suggestions; so he is almost as liable to receive impressions for evil; and it is quite possible for him while under the influence of hypnotic sleep to be impressed with the belief that he is to commit some act after he has awakened from this sleep. Consequently continental Governments have rightly and wisely prohibited the exercise of this power except by those who are skilled and duly authorized.

Again; frequent hypnotization brings on a horrid hypnotic habit, and renders the patient more or less subject to the will of the experimenter, a consequence which may often be attended with serious damages. Wundot, in his lectures of "Human and Animal Psychology," describes hypnotism as "a two-edged instrument. . . . It must be looked upon not as a remedy of universal serviceability, but as a poison whose effects may be beneficial under certain circumstances. . . . It is a phenomenon of common observation that frequently hypnotized individuals can, when fully awake, be persuaded of the wildest fables, and thenceforth regard them as passages of their own experience."

But, where hypnotism is employed for illicit purposes, or in connection with superstitious practices, as spiritism, clairvoyance and occultism, then it is evidently immoral.

Discussing the question, is hypnotism ever lawful? Genecot tells us that its use is altogether unlawful if means, in themselves bad, are employed to produce hypnosis, or if supernatural or unworthy effects are sought ("Theologia Morala," vol. I, 255 et 55.)

But as employed by medical men of standing and skilled scientists, it is in all probability free from superstition, and lawful; for he says that although many of the phenomena which arise from hypnotism cannot as yet admit of sufficient explanation there exist probable reasons why we should attribute them to natural powers. And, the Holy See has not condemned it when thus used, but only its abuse. For instance, in the Encyclical Letter of August 4th, 1856, we find the distinction drawn between its use and abuse, and those are reprehended who, without having sufficiently studied the subject, boast of having the power within themselves of divining, etc. Besides, since 1856, no document has been issued in which the Holy See repudiates the use of hypnotism; although it cannot be ignorant of the fact that it has been employed by many skilled and Catholic doctors, with moderation, 'tis true; and for good reasons.

Nevertheless, even when all sign or symbol of superstition is wanting it is unlawful for anyone to subject himself to the influence of the hypnotiser without grave cause.

MENEELY BELLS.

A contract has just been made with the Meneely Bell Company, of Troy, N.Y., for a chime of ten bells for St. Joseph's Church, Albany. This set of bells will be an exact duplication of the much admired chime in St. Peter's Church, Troy. That in St. Peter's Church, Albany, just over the hill, has long sounded in the homes of the parishioners of St. Joseph's Church, and its melodious music has increased the desire for a chime in their own tower. This new set of bells will be much like the chime which is now being manufactured by the Meneely Bell Company for the nearly completed Christian Science Church in Boston, Mass.

French Villagers Devise Ingenious Plan to Frighten Government Officers.

The townspeople of Cominac, France, devised a novel plan to defeat the attempt of the authorities to make an inventory of the property of the Cathedral there.

Being notified that a government inspector was coming to make an inventory, they bought three black bears from a travelling showman. The animals were kept without food for two days in an adjoining cellar. They were released in the cathedral, hungry and angry, when the inspector reached town.

The inspector, with a military escort, arriving at the cathedral, was surprised to find his entry not resisted, but he no sooner was inside than the door was shut and fastened from the outside. The inspector hardly had time to speculate upon the meaning of this before he saw the bears hastily shuffling down the center aisle to investigate the newcomers.

Thereupon the men frantically tried to reopen the door. Amid derisive laughter they made a bee line for the nearest confessional and clambered on top of it, while the soldiers ran helter skelter in every direction seeking shelter, which they found in the side chapels.

The townspeople then negotiated with the inspector through a window and obtained a ready promise that he would quit if he was released.

The showman captured his bears, which were fed while the inspector and his escort escaped. The animals are being kept in a cellar against the next attempt at taking an inventory.

The ministry held its first council at the Elysee palace Wednesday. Minister of the Interior Clemenceau presented a dispatch announcing that 600 peasants had attacked a detachment of troops engaged in manœuvring in Fougères, a department of Ille et Villaine, under a misapprehension that the troops came to take inventories of church property under the church and state separation law. A captain, lieutenant and ten soldiers were injured and the detachment retired precipitately. The Minister of Justice was ordered to prosecute the offenders.

Catholics in Scotland.

According to the new Catholic Directory for Scotland, Mother Church can claim half a million of children in that country, with a handful over. Of these 380,000 belong to the Archdiocese of Glasgow. Thus almost exactly three-fourths of the Catholics of "Alba" are dwellers by the banks of the Clyde and the subjects of Archbishop Maguire. In 1878, the year of the Restoration of the hierarchy, there were but 360,000 Catholics in all the six dioceses of Scotland. There were then 272 priests in the country; now there are 525, well nigh double that number.

The figures given for the missions reveal an increase of ninety in the twenty-eight years. They now stand at 230. But the total number of places that are hallowed by "the clean oblation offered in My name" is larger than this by 150, as in some parishes there are several "stations" having each their weekly or monthly Mass. Of religious houses Scotland possesses sixty-five, and, of these, fifty-two are occupied by nuns. Far less than a century ago there was not a religious in the land. Yet the remaining thirteen do not favorably compare, in point of number, with the monastic institutions that, in the Stuart days, studied the country. One day the reign of the cloister will return. The overwhelming majority of Glasgow Catholics, and in a slightly less degree, of Edinburgh's 62,000, are from St. Patrick's Land of Fire by birth or extraction; and love of the cloister has ever been a tradition with the Celt. Meantime it is the reign of the Hearth.