

WHY LAUD MARTIN LUTHER.

Rather Brand Him With Shame and Ignominy.

Chicago New World. The secular papers for some days past have been indulging in profuse laudations of Martin Luther. The Post and Herald of this city have specially signalled themselves by their silly bombast. The grandest man of history, says the Post, was the man which Luther tacked on to his denunciation of Rome and his refusal to recant his errors at the Diet of Worms. Luther, in the opinion of the Post, was of course right and Rome wrong; therefore praise and honor to Luther forever. Facts and truth, however, declare that Rome was right and Luther wrong; therefore, be Luther branded with shame and ignominy. He rebelled against legitimate authority for no reason but to set up an opposing authority of his own. That rebellion, begotten by pride and nurtured by lust and avarice, he pushed on to what the world may call success, but it was the success of evil and error. In his apparent triumph he was still the unreconciling and rancorous rebel. His triumph was like that of Satan when he seduced man to misery and sin.

WHY LAUD LUTHER?

He achieved nothing great. His work was a work of destruction, and greatness displays itself in building, rather than tearing down. The most ignorant of men could level to the earth the basilica of St. Peter, but they could never build such a temple. In this respect how different from the apostate monk is the great Columbus, whose grand discovery the nations are now celebrating. He opened a new world to mankind, and the purpose prompting him to it was to spread the light of truth. Luther led an infamous revolt against the truth, and his inspiring motive was to aggrandize himself, to feed his pride and satisfy his lusts. Luther is credited with being the moving spirit of the great revolution of the sixteenth century. He headed the revolt and was the occasion of it, but was by no means the author of it. Were he the cause of that fearful upheaval, which resulted in sweeping whole nations from the fold of the Church, he might indeed be great, though not in an enviable sense; but even that greatness is not his, for the forces which brought the sad catastrophe about were in operation long before he came upon the scene.

ON THIS POINT DR. GOOSSENS SAYS: "Luther found it did not create or introduce Protestantism. The so-called Reformation was not so much a falling away from the Church of those who were really Catholics, as the coming forth from her communion of those who had previously been in it without being of it." The condition of Europe at that time was as a powder magazine into which Luther merely cast a spark. To do that required no peculiar elevation of character or force of genius.

It is said that the moment was one of reform, and that it was declared against the abuses in the Church. Nothing is more false. That there were abuses in the Church at the time no one will deny, but to what course may these abuses be traced? Not to Papal misgovernment or to lack of many efforts on the part of the Pontiffs to maintain discipline, but to the encroachments of the secular power upon the spiritual. Through the tyranny of princes unworthy men were thrust into ecclesiastical positions, with results most lamentable. The Popes sturdily resisted this usurpation of their authority, but with little avail. As a consequence the efforts of the Church at reform were to a large extent futile. The power to correct abuses had been taken from her and was being used to corrupt her. Now the Reformation tended to perpetuate and strengthen this tyranny of princes. It was in league with the temporal rulers and found its support in them, and instead of being a reaction against ecclesiastical corruption, it was the FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE INIQUITIES OF THESE PRINCES.

out of which the corruption sprang. Far from a Reformation, it was an outbreak against right and justice, and was the culmination of a religious rebellion which had been brewing in Europe for centuries. Let not Luther be credited, then, with any purpose of reform. His course was in the interest of vice, rather than against it. Rapine and sensuality were the natural outgrowth of the new teaching. In the city of Wittenberg, the cradle of the Reformation, this pernicious result was nowhere more visible. Luther complained in one of his sermons of the enormous increase of crime in that city. A similar state of things prevailed wherever the Reformation extended. The announcement of the new teaching was a signal to let the passions loose.

What did Luther teach? One thing he taught was the doctrine of private judgment. For that he had been much glorified. It was an advance, say his admirers, to intellectual freedom. Rome enslaved the human mind; Luther set it free! In the first place, this theory of private judgment did not originate with Luther nor the Reformers of the sixteenth century. It is as old as Christianity. It is found in the bosom of all sects, and is the germ of all errors.

PROTESTANTISM IS ITS OFFSPRING. Luther and his followers used it as a weapon against Rome; but while they preached it and applied it in their own case as a God-given right, they very inconsistently refused the use of it to others. The sixteenth century reformers were arrogant and tyrannical in their teaching, and would brook no opposition. As a consequence

they quarrelled among themselves, and established, each of them, a distinct and warring sect. Yet even did they originate the principle of private judgment and permit to all men the privilege of its use, little glory would redound to them on that account; for the liberty of private judgment in matters of religion is the liberty of perdition. As Balmaes says, "If you deprive the human mind of the support of authority of some kind or other, on what can it depend? Abandoned to its own delirious dreams, it is forced again into the gloomy paths which led the philosophers of the ancient schools to chaos."

Luther taught, moreover, that the human mind was depraved and corrupt. In the fall of man it lost its vigor and strength. On this account he ridiculed reason as a stupid ass. He proscribed the sciences as useless and damnable, philosophy as devilish, and his bosom friend

MELANCTHON GRAVELY CALLED IN QUESTION THE UTILITY OF THE SCHOOLS.

In all this we find little encouragement to intellectual development, and little ground for ascribing to Luther the credit of giving an impetus to learning. "There are, no doubt," says Brownson, "large numbers included under the general name of Protestants, who imagine that the reformation was a great movement in behalf of intelligence against ignorance, of reason against authority, of mental freedom against bondage, of rational religion against superstition and bigotry; but whoever has studied the history of that movement knows that it was no such thing—the furthest from it. It was a retrograde movement and designed in its very essence to arrest the intellectual and theological progress of the race."

Again, Luther taught that man, as he was born corrupt, was born without freedom. "Speak not to me of free will. I am an honest Lutheran, and will persist in holding that man is destitute of free will." Thus spoke Luther, the so-called liberator of the human mind, the morning star of enlightenment! The lamentable consequences of this doctrine he also fully accepted. Deprive man of freedom and you take from him all accountability for his acts. This Luther asserted to "As many as believe in Christ," he says, "be they as numerous and wicked as may be, will be neither responsible for their works nor condemned on account of them." "Provided one have faith," he says again, "adultery is no sin."

BEHOLD THE GREAT REFORMER! "Sin as such as you may," he wrote once to Melancthon, "but have faith and you shall be saved." Behold the apostle of virtue and truth! He declared himself inspired by God, the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, called by heaven to reform the world and correct its errors, and behold the damnable doctrine which he preached. Perish the memory of a man who would corrupt the world with such teaching.

Luther's character will severely bear investigation. It was a revolting mixture of pride, cruelty and sensuality. He believed in no restraint and practiced none. Whatever his heart desired or his impulses prompted, that he did; and as a consequence he sank to the lowest strata of corruption at a time when corruption was deep and widespread. By his speeches and writings he so inflamed the people with a spirit of revolt against both spiritual and temporal rulers that they rose in open rebellion in many parts of Germany. The outbreak is known as the Peasants' War. Impartial historians fix the responsibility of this war upon Luther. In the course of the insurrection, however, when appeal was made to him for support, he cunningly shifted the responsibility upon the clergy, and ordered the peasants to be slaughtered. "Strike," he said to the princes, "slay, front and rear."

LUTHER WAS A BLASPHEMER. His writings abound with blasphemous allusions to Almighty God. "I resemble Christ," he wrote, "who was crucified because he claimed to be King of the Jews, He fancied himself not only an instrument in God's hand, but a prophet. "I read in the future," he says, "the Lord shows me a portion of it." "The adultery of David was as much the work of God as the calling of Paul." "I owe more to my little Catherine (his wife) and Phillip than to God. God has made many mistakes. I would have given him good advice had I assisted at the creation." Again: "I, Martin Luther, have shed the blood of the rebellious peasants, for I commanded them to be killed. Their blood is indeed upon my head, but I put it upon the Lord God, by whose command I spoke."

All this, and other silly profanity, brands the so-called reformer as an emissary of Satan, instead of an apostle of God. Luther was intolerant. A certain Protestant author distinguishes two Luthers: one the broad, fearless champion of individual liberty of thought while assailing Rome; the other a narrow, arrogant, tyrannical dogmatist who would suffer no opposition. He strongly denounced the Jews, and ordered that they be killed rather than suffer them to practise their religion. He had Carlostadt banished because he disagreed with him on the doctrine of the Real Presence.

It may here be remarked that the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist was a point for which Luther strongly contended. How little the Protestant creed of today resembles the creed of its founder! As Luther rejected Rome, so his followers have in turn rejected him, until Protestantism as a religion has dwindled down to a mere "tradition of prejudice."

mentioned. Of the Cardinals, Bishops and priests he asked "why should we not wash our hands in their blood?" He was a traitor to Christendom. When the Turks were threatening Europe, he declared it a crime to take up arms against them. Luther was a robber. In order to win the secular princes to his doctrines he offered them the lands of the clergy and the spoils of the monasteries. "In a short while," he said to them, "you shall see that tons of gold are concealed in the monasteries." The sacred vessels of the sanctuary made more converts than the eloquence of the reformers. Luther's only complaint was that the princes got too much of the booty, and the preachers too little. He was moreover a hypocrite. To the Pope he often professed loyalty, and at the same time would hurl denunciations at him in private letters to his friends. Luther was a slanderer. He circulated a grave, though unfounded charge against Tetzel, which had much to do with the Dominican's death. And here let it be declared that there are no grounds whatever for this other serious accusation against Tetzel, viz., that he preached the forgiveness of sins through indulgences without contrition and sacramental confession. His written instructions about indulgences are a sufficient refutation of this charge.

LUTHER WAS STEEPED IN SENSUALITY AND DEBAUCHERY.

He was called by the Sacramentarians the "Beer Pope." "The Elector's wine is excellent and we do not spare it," he wrote to Splatinus. Around the table in the Black Eagle tavern in Wittenberg, he nightly quaffed his lager. As a remedy against temptations of the devil he advised a friend to "drink copious draughts in honor of Jesus Christ." In a letter dated July 2, 1540, he wrote, "I am feeding like a Bohemian and swilling like a German, thanks be to God." The veil which covers his more criminal debaucheries is here better not to lift. A full narrative of his life in this respect would offend decency. He sanctioned the bigamy of Philip of Hesse. The detection of the Landgrave had more terrors for Luther than the approval of an adulterous union; and accordingly in conjunction with Melancthon, he authorized Philip to take a second wife, "in order," as they expressed it, "to provide for the welfare of his body and soul, and bring greater glory to God."

Such was Luther. In point of intellect, he was strong and vigorous, though not so richly endowed as to be celebrated on that account beyond the age in which he lived. Had he not attained an unhappy notoriety, there is little reason for believing that he would be much known to-day.

HIS FOOLISH RAVINGS ABOUT THE DEVIL

are sufficient to convict a dozen men of insanity. In many instances his conduct bordered closely upon madness. He was arrogant and insolent. He will stand out through all time a prominent figure in history, but prominent more for the accidental circumstances into which he was thrown than for any remarkable personal attainments; more for the evil than for the good he wrought; more for his vices and infamies than for his virtues. His name is linked to dishonor. The festivities of Wittenberg, on this account, are not likely to be productive of any good. Better let Luther rest quietly in his grave. Any attempt to do him honor necessitates a recurrence to his conduct and character, and to throw light upon these is to stir up a disgusting pool.

Is It Not So?

It is a remarkable fact that, while thousands annually return to the Catholic Church because they become convinced she is the real spouse of Christ—the one true Church which all must hear or be condemned—few, if any, leave her from purely conscientious motives. It is true that many forsake her; but an investigation of the causes which impelled them to such a step will invariably show they were prompted by no doubt of the soundness of her doctrines, or the correctness of her claim of being guided by the Holy Ghost. Some leave her because their pride has been wounded, and they have not sufficient humility to submit to her decrees; others because she takes such a decided stand on the marriage tie; and many leave her in order to better their worldly position.

No Wonder.

Why should it be so often repeated that it is the surest, promptest, best remedy, when doctors are surprised at its effects. Law-rener, Kans., U. S. A., "George Patterson fell from a second story window striking a fence. I found him using St. Jacobs Oil. He used it freely all over his body, and I saw him next morning, hale and hearty, the blue spots finally disappeared, leaving neither pain, scar nor swelling. C. K. NEUMANN, M. D.

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SORROW FOR THE DEAD.

A Consoling Doctrine Charmingly Portrayed by the Rev. Joseph Farrell.

There is just one thing on earth that is absolutely universal, and that one thing is death. There is one sorrow that finds a home, at some time or other, in every human bosom, and that one sorrow is sorrow for the dead. Yes, "it has been appointed unto all men once to die," and neither human prudence nor human power can stay the execution of that decree. Our path through life may be a pleasant one; it may be strewn with every flower which a fallen world has ever yet preserved, but at some place upon that road a grave is dug by the decree of God, and that grave shall one day claim us.

Who of us, looking round, can fail to perceive the awful universality of death? The throne is not hedged around so securely but that death at the appointed time breaks through and leaves it vacant. Riches cannot bribe, poverty is not too lowly to claim its notice, and so it comes that all men die. But by some strange perversity, the very commonness of death makes its awful significance less heeded. It is only when it touches us closely; it is only when it lays its hand on lives that have been closely bound up with our own; it is only when the near and dear have been its victims; it is only then we feel the awful reality of death, and then the common sorrow comes to us and makes our homes desolate.

But when those we love have come to die; when the parting has taken place that gives to death a bitterness which else it would not have; when we long in vain for the well-remembered greeting of the now cold hand, and the music of a voice that has gone silent, can we bring to ourselves to believe that all is over between our dead and us. Can we bury our dead out of our sight; stand sorrow-stricken beside the lifeless form; wait till the last sod has been heaped upon the grave; shed one, the saddest, tear of final parting; and then go back to mix again with the busy world, and believe that we have no more to do with the departed?

Oh! surely not. There is something in our hearts that protests against such a conclusion. It would be doing violence to the very nature that God has given us to believe that human friendship and human love reach only to the grave and cannot pass beyond its shadow; that they are flowers so frail that death's cold touch can wither them forever; to believe that even the mysterious power of death can break the mystic bond that, in the first and greatest of the commandments, binds the love of our fellow creatures with the love of God Himself. Our very instincts—and after all these are but dim foreshadowings of mighty truths—our very instincts compel us to look beyond the grave, to see through all its shadows the traces of another world, and to brighten by the hope of a future meeting the gloom which the death of those we loved had flung upon our hearts. Nor could we feel even this to be enough. It would be poor consolation, after all, to live through the weary years upon a hope, and to feel that all the while, until the future actually came, our connection with our departed brethren had absolutely ceased; to feel that, though love and friendship might bloom again in a brighter land, yet, that for the present they are dead and could make no sign. The heart would look for more than this. Its very affection would prompt it to seek a means to bind together the world in which it still remains, and that mysterious world beyond the grave, whither the dead have gone, and to which the living are hourly speeding.

It seeks to be assured that love and friendship can reach beyond the grave and do good service; that kindly offices of charity need not cease because one soul still remains in the flesh and the other has departed to the unseen land. And lo! faith has made these wishes and these hopes a living reality. The loftiest intellect could only conjecture, the fondest heart could only wish, that these things were so, but the Church of God, drawing forth from the treasury of faith, the sublime dogma of the Communion of Saints, has revealed these wonders to the simplest intellects.

She tells us that there are two worlds—the world of matter and of sense and the world of spirits. The world around us which we see and feel and hear, and the world to come, which can be reached only by the gate of death. She tells us, too, that as in this, our world, there are different states in that other world as well. She tells us that the state of any individual in the world to come depends precisely on the condition of this soul when death has summoned him before the judgment seat of God. If the soul, at death, be in a state of mortal sin, it is lost forever. Of such as these we need not speak. If they have fought and lost, and their loss is irreparable and eternal. They have passed forever from the Communion of Saints. For them, forevermore, no prayer may go before the throne of God.

But to those who die in the state of grace salvation is secure. Their fight has ended in victory, and for them is an immortal crown. But knowing, as we know, that into the unveiled presence of God nothing that is defiled can enter, knowing that such is the Infinite Holiness of God, that the slightest stain excludes us from the enjoyment of the beatific vision, and knowing, moreover, that few hope to pass without defilement from a world where the Holy Ghost has declared that even the "just man falls seven times," we are naturally led to ask, What is the lot

of such as these in the world of spirits?

Again, we know that though mortal sin may be remitted, as to its guilt and as to the eternal punishment it deserved, yet there remains a temporal penalty, and we can easily perceive a man passing from this life before complete penance has blotted out the debt. Here, then are two classes. What shall be the lot of those when death has claimed them; shall they go into the glorious presence of their God? Surely not. They are not yet purified. Shall they, then, go into everlasting fire? No; God is faithful to His word, and only to deadly sin has He attached the awful punishment of hell. Where, then, shall their lot be cast?

The Church, borne out by reason answer at once. They shall go into a place of temporary punishment, where they may pay their vital sins wiped out, and may pay the debt which they owe to the Infinite Justice of God.

Such, briefly, is the doctrine of Purgatory; a doctrine full of teaching upon God's justice and God's mercy; a doctrine so consoling in itself and so much in accordance with what the nature of the case might have been expected to demand, that when those who deny it, refuse to acknowledge the authority of the inspired word that declares that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins," I can only wonder at their blindness—not judging individuals amongst them but leaving them to their conscience and their God.

What is the Use?

Pay no attention to slanderers and gossip-mongers. Keep straight on your course and let their backbiting die the death of neglect. What is the use of lying awake at night brooding over the remark of some false friend that runs through your brain like lightning?

What is the use of getting into a worry and fret over gossip that has been set afloat to your disadvantage by some meddlesome busybody who has more time than character?

These things cannot possibly injure you, unless, indeed, you take notice of them, and in combating them give them standing and character. If what is said about you is true, set you, self right; if it is false, let it go for what it will fetch. If a bee stings you, would you go to the hive and destroy it; would not a thousand come upon you? It is wisdom to say little concerning the injuries you have received. We are generally losers in the end if we stop to refute all the backbiting and gossiping we may hear by the way.

A Kindly Man.

Cardinal Goossens must be one of the kindest and most thoughtful of men. The venerable Primate of Belgium was lately on a tour of confirmation in the Canton of Leau. A poor girl fell suddenly ill at Gaesen, and was sorely afflicted, not because of her sickness, but that she could not attend to receive the Sacrament for which she had been prepared. The Cardinal-Archbishop heard of it and went out of his way to the hamlet where the sufferer lay and administered confirmation. The joy of the humble family was extreme, and the enthusiasm of the entire village at this trait of fatherly benevolence on the part of the beloved Dr. Goossens passed all bounds.

Recently a great crowd knelt at the tomb of Edward the Confessor, in Westminster Abbey, and prayed for conversion of the English people to the Catholic faith. Subsequently all went to the Westminster Town Hall to attend the meeting of the Catholic Guild of our Lady of Ransom. The members of the Guild called upon the saint to seek to convert England from her ways of error, to rescue the apostates and to intercede for the forgotten dead.

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