

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE HERESY EPIDEMIC.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—The recent heresy trials that have caused of late so much commotion in the Presbyterian, and to some extent also in the Methodist Church, have given rise to the following remarks. Although the said trials have been reported extensively in the Protestant press, very little has appeared about them in the columns of THE TRUE WITNESS. Were I to ask the reason of this apathy, you would probably answer: What signify those trials to us Catholics? In matters of faith we humbly bow to the decision of the Church as the sole authority competent to deal with questions of doctrine and Christian morality. We leave other communities to decide—if they can—on similar points by the Bible, and to fight their own battles in their own way. At the same time—and on the principle that something useful may be learned from the failings and shortcomings of a neighbor—"Pas est ab hoste doceri"—I submit the following for your kindly consideration:

Heresy may be defined a persistent denial of one or more Christian truths,—for example, Baptism, the Incarnation, the mystery of the Adorable Trinity, &c. The baptized man or woman who would call in question and refuse to believe implicitly any doctrine revealed by God may be likened to the Archangel Lucifer, whose motto is "Non-Serviam."—I will not be a slave. It follows therefore that heresy, being a revolt against the Almighty, the person obstinately guilty thereof is justly deemed a heretic when condemned as such by a competent tribunal. But here is to be noted a singular anomaly. When a member of the Presbyterian Church publicly denies the validity of infant-baptism,—a doctrine always held and taught by that communion, and refuses to retract when invited to do so by the highest authority therein, he is *ipso facto* considered guilty of heresy, and in consequence guilty of a grievous sin. But when a member of the Baptist persuasion denies the validity of the self same sacrament when administered to infants, he is accounted guilty of no heresy, and consequently of no sin. In like manner the Methodist Church would excommunicate as a heretic the minister who would dare in the pulpit to deny the divinity of the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity. The Unitarian, under similar circumstances, would expel as a heretic the minister who would dare to affirm it. Can the wildest imagination picture this mass of confusion and contradiction to be the religion founded by Christ to teach mankind the true worship of God, and the way to eternal happiness? If the gospel as preached by St. Paul was deemed foolishness by the Gentiles, what other opinion could they have formed of a system like modern Protestantism, a system without cohesion, divine mission or authority. "Hear the Church" was the emphatic command of its Founder. Hear not—listen not to the Church says Protestantism, but read and study the Bible as the "sole rule of faith and practice." Now I contend that the Bible can no more replace the Church than can the promissory notes and bills of a defunct bank replace that institution, or the photograph, however true in expression to the original, replace the dear friend whose remains lie buried beneath the sod. Hence I am irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that without the official sanction, seal and prestige of a true living Church, the Scriptures of the old and the New Testament become at once relegated to the domain of ancient history, profitable, if you will, for instruction in many points of morality, but as a whole no more to be relied on as a basis and rule of supernatural faith than the Koran of the Mussulman or the Vedas of the Buddhist.

The institution founded by Jesus Christ being the "pillar and ground of truth," to which He recommended all His followers to look for guidance and instruction, it again becomes evident that the Scriptures cannot be the "sole rule of faith and practice." "Hear the Church," said Our Lord; "Let him that will not hear the Church be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Who ever heard a sermon preached from that text in a Protestant pulpit? I venture to say—never. But amidst the vast and ever increasing variety of churches, where shall we find the one that Christ commanded all his disciples, without exception, alone

to hear. If still in existence, it cannot fail to be easily distinguished from every other. For most assuredly its divine Founder would never have insisted on hearing a church that could not readily be known by certain unmistakable marks. Has it a visible head duly appointed, whose faith is guaranteed never to fail, whose duty is to feed the whole flock and gather them into one sheepfold? Has it fulfilled the command "to teach all nations whatsoever He commanded." If the Catholic Church has not accomplished the task, what other Christian society has done it. From what source did all the countries that now glory in the Christian name originally receive the faith, if not from her envoys and ministry. When in the sixteenth century they threw off what they termed her yoke, she was neither disconcerted nor dismayed. No sooner was the way open than she dispatched devoted men to the far East and to the newly found world in the far West to proclaim the glad tidings to nations hitherto unknown, proving thereby her title to the mark of Catholicity. Other marks there are in profusion pointing her out as the chosen messenger of God. When John the Baptist sent to Jesus two of his disciples to inquire if He was the Christ, the following was the sign given: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen; the blind see the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them, Matt. xi. 4, 5." The same mark or sign is to all unprejudiced minds stamped on the Church of the present as of all the preceding centuries of her existence. If other marks be demanded, there is inherent in her constitution the power of binding and loosing, and the power of forgiving sins. If it cannot be shown at what period these powers were withdrawn, annulled or forfeited, they must still remain in force; and if the Holy Spirit was promised to guide her into all truth, she alone, *ex officio*, must be the judge of what is truth and what is heresy. The decision of aliens, the growth, as it were, of yesterday, to whom were granted, and who—I must say—honestly lay claim to no special powers—is binding on no one, should it even be correct. What they may choose to stigmatize as heresy is no more than a difference of opinion, which, if not tolerated in one communion, is accepted in another as Christian truth.

Such being, in my opinion, the logical aspect of the question, it is earnestly to be hoped that we have heard the last of heresy trials for a long time to come. These trials can have no other effect than to unsettle the minds of many pious and earnest souls who sincerely profess, if but a partial belief, in the great truths of Christianity. Better that, most assuredly, than none at all. Better that than agnosticism, or the dreary outlook of the disciples of Payne and Ingersoll. Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, &c., have retained many important truths. They have begun, though at the eleventh hour, at the cost of many sacrifices, and with laudable, though mistaken zeal, to promote the glory of God, and the extension of His kingdom on earth. Many Catholics could well take a lesson from them on the better observance and sanctification of the Lord's Day. Behold their numerous charities—their munificent asylums for the poor, the sick, the aged and unfortunate—their ardent longing for the unity for which Christ prayed. May we not charitably hope that all the excellent qualities and Christian virtues of our separated brethren, when thrown into the scale of the great trial balance, may go far to compensate for their lack of the fulness of faith.

A. G. G.

PILGRIMAGE TO STE. ANNE'S.

Most of our readers have doubtless heard of the miraculous cures effected at the shrine of the good Ste. Anne. From all parts of the country pilgrimages are being made there, and almost every day fresh crowds of worshippers and sight-seers are to be found in and about the beautiful church of the little village of Ste. Anne de Beaupre, a few miles below the city of Quebec. On the 31st of July next, Rev. Father Stanton, of Smith's Falls, with the sanction of His Grace Archbishop Cleary, of Kingston, will take a pilgrimage there which promises to be one of the biggest excursions ever run over the eastern division of the C. P. R. It will be the only all rail excursion from Ontario, and such is

the splendid accommodation furnished by the Railway Company that the trip may be made with even more comfort than an ordinary railroad journey. Sleeping cars will accompany the excursion and a refreshment car will also be sent along. The cheap rates extend as far east as Dalhousie Mills. Tickets from Green Valley, Apple Hill, Avonmore and Dalhousie Mills, \$3.75; children half fare. All communications addressed to Rev. Father Stanton, Smith's Falls, will receive prompt attention.—*Com.*

THE LIFE OF DE MAISONNEUVE.

(CONTINUED.)

The fort was to consist of an enclosure of pickets surrounded by a trench. The Governor claimed the honor of felling the first tree; and during the entire year the colonists, who were joined by twelve men recently arrived from France, worked to finish the fortifications and storehouses, in which they placed the supplies of all kinds needed for the new colony.

On the feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15th, of the same year, 1642, the consecration of the island to the Blessed Virgin, which had been made in the Church of Notre Dame de Paris on the 2nd of February of the preceding year, by the members of the Society of Our Lady of Montreal, was spontaneously ratified and renewed by the pious colonists; at a solemn Mass celebrated by Pere Vincent, all received Holy Communion with great fervor; the names of the associates were placed on the altar, that they might, so to speak, be present at this touching ceremony, and the booming of the cannon announced to the surrounding country that the new city had for Queen and Patroness the august Mother of our Saviour.

The following December an unlooked for event afforded a striking proof of the protection of God over the generous colonists so lately arrived in this new country. M. de Maisonneuve had not foreseen that the place where he had established the fort would be exposed to inundations; a few days before Christmas the water began to rise and continued to do so until it threatened to cover the enclosure where the colonists kept their supplies of clothing and other things that were indispensable for the winter. Animated with heroic confidence, the governor, with the approval of the fathers of the Mission, drove a cross into the ground before the entrance to the enclosure, and promised that he himself would carry another cross up to the summit of Mount Royal, if God would deliver them from the threatened calamity; the waters stopped at the threshold of the fort, and then receded, permitting the colonists to celebrate, with great joy, their first Christmas in Canada.

On the 6th of January following a large cross was ready; faithful to his vow M. de Maisonneuve took it upon his shoulders, and accompanied by all the colonists, carried it unaided to the summit of the mountain, where it was solemnly erected as a trophy of salvation dominating the empire of paganism and barbarity.

For more than a year the infant colony enjoyed profound peace; the Iroquois seemed to ignore its existence. But then there began a war which seldom ceased except during short intervals of truce, which were no sooner concluded than they were violated. It is on these occasions that we shall have to admire the intrepid courage and the admirable prudence of De Maisonneuve.

(To be Continued.)

In the different denominations, when the hot summer months come on, there is generally a falling off in Church attendance; a kind of religious vacation as it were. Catholics must remember that there is no exception made for any season of the year. In summer's heat and winter's cold the same precept of the Church is there, and each one—who has not a reasonable excuse—is obliged to attend Mass at least once on every Sunday. God must be adored at all times and the Church does not change with the seasons—her precepts are ever the same.

If we take all things as from God, and behold all things as in the light of the brightness of His coming, all shall be well.—*Cardinal Manning.*

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ST. ANN'S T. A. & B. SOCIETY'S EXCURSION.

The St. Ann's T. A. & B. Society have completed their arrangements for the annual excursion of the Society on Dominion Day.

The society has secured the elegant new steamer Rocket, of the Montreal and Cornwall Navigation Co., which is unsurpassed for comfort. The steamer will leave the Canal Basin, foot of Dalhousie street, at 9 a.m., and will make the entire trip through the Lake, thus affording a magnificent view of the beautiful scenery of the St. Lawrence and the vast waters of Lake St. Peter, returning by moonlight.

The society has spared no pains to make this the trip of the season, both for those who wish to enjoy the fresh air and beautiful sail on the river during the whole day, as well as those who take part in the other pleasures. The society expects a large attendance on Dominion Day, and hope that their former patrons will still be with them on this occasion.

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recently knocked down a burglar and held him until the arrival of assistance. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is a medicine that checks the frightful inroads of Scrofula, and, if taken in time, arrests the march of Pulmonary Consumption. It cures indigestion and dyspepsia, chronic diarrhoea and similar ailments. This wonderful medicine has also gained great celebrity in curing fever and ague, chills and fever, dumb ague, and like diseases.

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