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DANGERS TO WHICH CATHOLICS ARE EXPOSED IN THE UNITED STATES.

In an admirable article in the January number of *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, containing a notice of "Father Gury's Moral Theology," the writer points out the danger to which the faith and morals of Catholics in the United States are exposed from the contaminating influences of Protestantism, and indicates the sources from whence this danger flows—Mixed Marriages, and Godless or Infidel Education. We give the following extracts:—

There are not wanting Catholics who would never deny their religion, but who are ashamed of it notwithstanding. It is the religion of the poor; it is not fashionable; its members form a minority of the inhabitants; the prejudices of Protestants are so deeply rooted and so active, that Catholics are persecuted in every walk of life. Now every Catholic knows well that all these prejudices are based upon falsehood. He knows that all enemies of the Church should be Catholics, and would he if they were sufficiently humble to prefer the authority of Christ to their own private judgment. He knows that, as only the Church can guide man to the other world, so only she can teach him how to live in this. Hence, two modes of action are suggested with reference to Catholic bearing in Protestant society. The first is the defensive, apologetic mode. Through the mercy of God, Catholics are less familiar with it now than they were years ago. The Church is in possession. No Protestant has a right to attack it. When he does, his action is dictated partly by fear, partly by policy. His own ground is untenable—his own house is tottering; he knows it, and he knows that, when he is forced to stand on the defensive, he must be silent, or fly, or submit. Some Catholics, who do not clearly see this,—although they might if they would but open their eyes and pluck up a little courage,—pursue the defensive course. If they would stop here, less scandal had been given. But, in defending Catholicity, they not seldom made it Catholicism,—a term which some of the recent converts from Puseyism prefer to employ. Their preference of the term is not wholly insignificant. The Church, were she what some of her children represent her to be, might properly rank as an "insane." To return to our timid Catholics,—they seem, at times, to be ashamed of their religion. They wish it to be respectable and plausible in the eyes of heretics, forgetting that the Church can be so only when she appears as herself, and that she owes no thanks to those who strip her of her venerable garments, with which Christ clothed her, and present her arrayed according to the tastes of the age. It is a vain effort, for, after all their precautions, the air and gait prove her a being not of this world. These pliant souls lay great stress upon magnificent churches, fashionable preachers, full ceremonies, and fine music, things which certainly belong to Catholicity, but not in their sense. They do not like to hear of hell, or of any of the four last things to be remembered, heaven excepted; and this place, according to them, has a second and tolerably wide gate, through which our "Protestant brethren" may enter, on the plea of invincible ignorance. That is to say, heretics wilfully choose the road to hell, but finding themselves, by some mistake, at the gate of heaven, wherefore they must be admitted. The soft-hearted persons of whom we speak do not, of course, tolerate the use of the word *heretic*, and the doctrine revealed by Christ, and taught by the Church, that he who believeth not shall be damned, is explained by them to mean, that he who believeth not can be saved. All the doctrines of the Church which are supposed to be objectionable to Protestants are either never mentioned, or explained away. Great stress is laid upon those doctrines which are supposed to be like Protestant tenets. Sometimes, particularly in what is called good society, an inquiring and sentimental Protestant lady finds, to her no small astonishment, that she has been a Catholic for years; and that only the outward signs of Catholicity, such as attendance upon the Sacraments and at Mass, and a few other observances, are necessary to bring her within the fold. Coupled with this lubrication of what may here be fairly termed celestial machinery, one finds an excessive tenderness for Protestant prejudices,—a liberal acknowledgment of the inconveniences of the "Catholic system,"—an exceeding candor in admitting the force of many Protestant objections, and in blaming the conduct of Popes, bishops, and priests,—an extreme unwillingness to attack Protestantism, and a perfect willingness to accept, in behalf of the Church, the base and contemptuous toleration of her enemies.

Protestants, however, are seldom deceived by any of these devices. Otherwise, the plea of invincible ignorance might be put forward in their behalf. But they know well enough, that the difference between

Catholicism and Catholicity is total and eternal. The most ignorant among them are aware of this, although their ideas concerning it may be confused and obscure. They know that it is Catholic doctrine, that out of the Church there is no salvation, and no amount of reasoning or of concession will convince them that the Church will consent, by any possibility, to be ranked with sects. Hence they regard all those who endeavor to hide their Catholicity with suspicion or contempt. For the apostate they have no regard whatever, inasmuch as he seldom, if ever, fails to show, by his conduct, that his apostasy was caused by base motives. They hold what are called "liberal Catholics" in utter contempt also, and if they ever profess any regard for them or for formal apostates, it is only for a season, in order to use them as vile tools in their opposition to the Church. They know well that the Church does not tolerate this "liberalism,"—that she anathematizes it,—and that these "liberals" are taught by her to confess their faith, whole and entire, not only at the loss of their worldly goods, but even at the peril of their life. Neither can Protestants feel much respect for those Catholics who deny certain articles of Catholic faith, or conceal them, or explain them away for the purpose of converting Protestants, or, at least, of securing their good-will. The Protestant may always silence them with this dilemma: "Either you explain the doctrines of your Church correctly, or you do not. If you do, it is not what I supposed it to be,—it does not prefer such lofty claims,—it is a mere sect, and I need not join it to secure heaven. If you do not, I will suspend my judgment until I can meet another Catholic who will not be afraid or ashamed to tell me precisely what his religion is."

Both natural and supernatural causes are at work to make Catholics in America more numerous and powerful. They may, and do, attain a standing in political, civil, and social life. This result, as it becomes more apparent, will abate the anxiety of those who wish to see the Church respectable in a worldly point of view. One obstacle, upon which our enemies relied, will be removed. They hoped to prevent conversion among the higher classes, by representing the Church as a receptacle for men too poor and ignorant to go elsewhere. Every visit of a Protestant to Europe tends to dispel that notion. Nay, in Catholic countries, the tables are effectually turned. Protestantism appears mean and vulgar, as it is, and hence Protestants in Catholic countries, if they be not "professors,"—a class of persons rapidly growing small,—are ashamed of their Protestantism, and some of them, at times, almost fancy that they are quasi Catholics. But there are other "institutions" in America upon which our enemies rely as means for checking what they are pleased to term the "growth of Popery." Of one of these, and the chief, we have spoken. It is the necessity, under which a Catholic labors, of living with Protestants, of hearing their language, and of witnessing their example. He must be in the world, and yet not of it. Much, if not all, that he sees and hears among his generally unbaptized companions, is calculated to estrange him from his Church, and to make of him an infidel,—a result quite acceptable to our Protestant enemies, who care not if a man become a demon, provided he be seduced from the Church. The Sacraments, assiduously attended, are the obvious remedy for all Catholics so tempted. Yearly and semi-annual communions do not suffice in our times.—The other means upon which our enemies rely are mixed marriages, democratic institutions, and godless schools.

Marriages, when between Catholics and infidels, that is, unbaptized persons, are annulled, and when between Catholics and heretics are forbidden, by ecclesiastical law. Mixed marriages are not intrinsically evil, and the law forbidding them does not bind *semper et pro semper*. Father Gury, however, (Vol. II, p. 374,) regards the conditions without which such marriages are inadmissible as founded upon the natural law. The principal conditions are, that the Catholic party shall be in no danger of apostasy, and that the children, without exception, shall be baptized and educated in the Catholic faith. In this country, as we have already remarked, Protestants are rapidly becoming an unbaptized people, and consequently infidels. Hence, in mixed marriages, most of the dispositions are obtained for disparity of religion in a strict sense. Believers are yoked with unbelievers. The danger of perversion, to the Catholic party, or to the offspring, is as great as when the Protestant party is baptized; for infidels, in these times, hold the Church in deeper hatred than even those Protestants sometimes oddly called church-members. Father Gury, in a very few words, declares his judgment concerning these mixed marriages. Following Benedict XIV. he calls them *detestabile*. Benedict, in his decree *super Matrimonii Hæreticorum*, declares to be a most doleful thing,

that there should be found Catholics so shamefully carried away by *insane lust* that they will not abstain from these *detestable* marriages, which Holy Church has *always* condemned and forbidden (*perpetuo damnavit atque interdixit*.) The Pontiff goes on to praise, in the highest terms, the zeal of those bishops who deter Catholics, by the enactment and execution of severe laws, from uniting themselves with heretics by this *sacrilegious* bond. And he admonishes all persons having the care of souls to see to it, by opposing all honest obstacles, that Catholics do not enter upon these marriages, which bring peril or damnation to the soul (*in propriam animarum perniciem*.) This decree was directed to the bishops of Belgium, but it forms a part of canon law.

These are strong expressions, but no stronger than those which the Church has employed in every age. St. Paul had said, "Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath justice with iniquity? Or what communion is there between light and darkness? But what agreement is there of Christ with Belial? or what portion hath the believer with the unbeliever?" "This is a prohibition of intimate alliances with unbelievers, and especially of intermarriage."—Kenrick, in Epist. II. ad Cor., Cap. vi. ver. 14, 15.

We fear that some Catholics are half disposed to consider marriage with unbelievers as the rule, and not as an exception barely tolerated by the Church, unblesed, and tolerated with fear and trembling, seeing that such marriages are too frequently the result of "insane lust," or of some equally vile passion.—It is true that persons afflicted with this disease are in the habit of quoting 1 Cor. vii. 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, otherwise your children should be unclean, but now they are holy." "The children were lawful. He calls them holy, that is, not unclean."—Kenrick, *in loc. cit.* It is probable that they were called holy for another reason. It was understood that the conclusion, the offspring, contrary to the logical rule, should follow the better part, the Christian parent, and thus become baptized, holy. It is certain, that, in some mixed marriages, the unbelieving party is converted to God. But it is as certain, that, in a majority of cases, children born of mixed marriages come into the world, live in it, or go out of it, with all the signs of reprobation. So far as our experience extends, the Catholic party and the children are saved, if they be saved, so as by fire. We have yet to see or hear of a mixed marriage which turned out well. Sometimes temporal, and, humanly speaking, most unaccountable misfortunes, befall the family. More rarely, the Catholic party would apostatize. Very frequently the same party would grow remiss in the discharge of Catholic duties,—an almost inevitable result, inasmuch as "evil communications corrupt good manners," and no communication is more evil than that between an unbeliever yoked with a Christian, because it may be close, confidential, and uninterrupted. Few Catholics, who have intermarried with Protestants, can say that they have gone forward in the way of salvation. Many have sensibly receded from their first fervor. The most common result of mixed marriages is the perdition of the children. If the father be an unbeliever, his authority—if the mother, her slow, but sure influence—militates against the life of the child. Sometimes the infant is not baptized. More commonly, the children are suffered to acquire a dislike, which some demon seems to foster in them, of Catholic habits, and they are accustomed to prefer mere Protestant society. They are too commonly reared in such a pagan way, that they hold the Catechism and the Sacraments as of little account,—things well enough for the vulgar, but scarcely necessary for them. If a child, under these circumstances, be sent to a mixed college or school, his ruin is complete, a miracle apart. Indeed, punishment, always visible to the eye of faith, frequently to the common observer seems to be meted out to this sin, even in the present life. Why should it be otherwise? In a great majority of cases, the conditions without which mixed marriages are utterly damnable are not observed. There is danger of seduction to the Catholic party, or to the children.—This danger, everywhere possible, becomes in our country probable, in consequence of the comparative liberty claimed and exercised by American children, their early emancipation from parental control, and the pagan nature of the society into which the providence of God has thrown Catholics in the nineteenth century. Yea, why should it be otherwise? Mixed marriages are not blessed by the Church. Is there a medium between a blessing and a curse?—There are no prayers, no sacred rites, and the priest is not permitted to assume the signs of his office as minister of the Sacrament. He stands sadly by, an involuntary witness of an act barely tolerated by the

Church. It is one of the most dreary events of his ministry. He, the dispenser of the mysteries of God, knows well that the exhibition of human passages before him too commonly ends in the ruin of all concerned. He does not assist as a minister of God, for matrimony is a Sacrament of the New Law bringing grace to sanctify the legitimate union of man with woman, and to enable them to receive and to rear their offspring in piety and holiness. These things may be done in mixed marriages, and so may the dead arise.

Our enemies rely upon godless schools,—state education,—as a means of checking the progress of Catholicity. We must admit that they have laid their plans with infernal skill. The result will not equal their anticipations, however. The attention of the Catholic world has been directed to this subject by those whom God hath sent to rule over us, and a struggle, which will end in a victory for the Church, has begun between Catholicity and the State, to see who shall have the child. We translate a few paragraphs, in which Father Gury, as usual, pitifully states the Catholic doctrine.—

"Parents are especially bound to procure for their children sound spiritual education. . . . Man hath a most noble and rational soul, created after God's image, and for God, his final and supernatural end.—Hence parents are strictly bound to instruct and educate their children for God, their last and only end.—Hence matrimony was made a Sacrament, that the children might be born again to Christ, and become worthy of eternal life. For what saith the Apostle? 'If any one have not care of his own, and especially those of his household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' . . . Parents are bound, either by themselves or by good masters, to rear their children in good discipline, in the observance of the commandments, in faith, and in all things necessary to salvation. . . . They are strictly bound to procure for them masters distinguished for learning and piety, and to see to it that they be not corrupted by bad companions, discourses, and books. . . . Parents are guilty of deadly sin, at least generally, who send their children to heretical schools, or who suffer them, for the sake of worldly learning, to sit under an heretical, impious, or immoral teacher."

We refer the reader to the chapter on prohibited books, Vol. II. n. 754. In the first volume, n. 226, we find the following sentences:—

"It is never lawful to print or publish books containing matter against faith and morals, not even when they contain some good matter. . . . Printers should, in all doubtful cases, consult learned persons, particularly their ecclesiastical superiors. Such books cannot be indiscriminately sold, let, leased, or given away. . . . Obscene books are to be destroyed whenever they chance to fall into Christian hands. They are not legitimate property, and no man can honestly own or claim them. Like noxious creatures, they should be wholly extirpated."

Among the worst books in circulation are some which were written or compiled for the use of school-children, or for what is humorously called scientific reading. The inanity of many school-books, their multiplicity, and the atheistical character of some of them, are evils which are beginning to arrest the attention of even the Protestant community. Little heed is given to the character of the teachers, and not much to their qualifications. Normal Schools are established for them, with what success may be gathered from the fact, that there are not wanting among them persons who do not know how to spell. What is called Christianity is no recommendation to them; Catholicity is, awfully, a disqualification for which no degree of scholarship can atone. The consequence is, that the generation now educated by the State will become, not only pagans, but ignorant pagans. The chief aim of those who have the care of youth seems to be to erect palaces for school-houses, to multiply books and ornamental branches of study. Solidity is so generally sacrificed to show, that our school system reminds one of a thing which should be the head of a man, but which turns out to be an empty head, that is worthless except as a hairdresser's sign. Wait a little, and all Protestants who profess to believe in the necessity of religion, and all parents who care for more than the bodies of their children, will become convinced of the rottenness of our system of state education, and they will join us in praying for its restoration to its proper place, as a handmaid of religion. It has played the vagabond long enough.

The peculiar institutions of this country are frequently spoken of by our enemies as efficient means for the perversion of Catholics. When they are urged to describe the peculiar institutions upon which they depend for this result, it is usually found that their ideas are indistinct and obscure. State education is one of the first to be mentioned. This institution is rapidly committing suicide, and, if it is inimical to religion, as it certainly is, it cannot destroy Catholicity without burying all religion beneath its ruins. It will not destroy Catholicity, however.—The Church has witnessed the downfall of too many