

THE TRUE WITNESS

AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1894

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

All outstanding amounts due to the late proprietor of the TRUE WITNESS, in connection with the publishing of this paper and all printing done by this establishment, are to be paid at the office of the TRUE WITNESS, 761 Craig street, to the present proprietors, who alone are authorized to grant receipts. We would respectfully request of all debtors to this establishment to kindly settle the amounts of our claims as soon as possible, so as to facilitate the business arrangements for the future.

THE DEVIL VS. THE CHURCH

We have seen how the Devil suffered defeat in all his attempts to upset the Church of Christ; we have seen that institution coming forth in triumph from the fiery furnace of pagan persecution; we have seen the failure of the early schismatics and their utter insignificance when contrasted with the greatness of the Church from which they separated; it is now time to come to a most fierce and terrible enemy that the genius of Satan conjured into existence.

Out in the desert of Arabia a fugitive resolved to return in triumph to the city from which he had been expelled; he raised the fiercest of all cries, that of a holy war; and this daring and able leader soon collected around him the nucleus of an army. With the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, he raised that chant which made the echoes of Europe ring for long years—"God is God, and Mahomet is His Prophet." We need not repeat the story of the rise and progress of Mahometanism, nor is it necessary to detail the wonderful triumphs of the Crescent. Suffice to say that by some miracle of propaganda the followers of the Prophet became as numerous as the sands of their native deserts. Eastward, the new and barbarous creed expanded; the places made sacred by the presence of Christ, the very shrines built over His sacred tomb and the spots rendered holy by contact with the Saviour, fell into the hands of the turbaned adorers of Allah; the vengeance seeking crescent waved over the cities where the mercy-speaking cross once stood. Westward along the "Swarth Afric shore" the Mahometans moved, and multiplied in moving; they swept into Europe, and the tramp of the Saracen horse was heard on the shores of the Manzenares, the trumpet of the Moor rang out by the Guadalquivir, and the very temples of Spanish devotion became the haunts of Moslem desecrators; the Alhambra arose in all the barbaric splendor of Moorish design, and the Christian beheld the Moorish moon glitter on the spires of Seville and the towers of Grenada. Over the Bosphorus swept the tide of Mahometanism; in the Byzantine capital, the follower of the Koran set up his tent and the Turk had come to remain. But we are rushing ahead of time. Let us return!

Yonder in Jerusalem, the city of sacred memories, of prophecies and of fulfillments, the temple of Solomon was

replaced by the Church of the new dispensation; but alas! even there the Mosque of Omar arose all beautiful upon the hills made sacred by every tradition and recollection cherished by the Christian. And while the spirit of the desert impostor was animating his frantic followers and inspiring them with a blind courage, originating in the belief that death on battle-field meant life eternal, while the Holy Land was falling a prey to the Saracen, while Paynim bands held fast the shrines of Christian devotion, other contingents menaced the very existence of the Church in Europe. It was, for a time, almost a battle of despair on the part of the followers of Christ. Once more did it seem as if the Devil was about to triumph, that at last his long-sought-for vengeance was to be satisfied and that he was to tear down that institution built by Christ for the salvation of man. But that same Christ had said, "that the gates of Hell should never prevail against" the Church; He also promised that He would be with His institution "until the consummation of the world."

Gloomy and forbidding looked the sky; the clouds that menaced the existence of the Church seemed to be clouds of dust raised by the feet of Saracen chargers. But ever has it been true that "the darkest hour precedes the dawn." As sudden as was the cry from Mecca that summoned the children of the desert around the standard of the Crescent, more sudden and more astounding was the cry that went up from Clairmont and Placentia, when Peter the Hermit, with Papal sanction, arose and went forth on his wonderful mission over Europe. The inspired voice of the mighty preacher was heard in the public places of every city, on the green of every hamlet, by the banks of every river, at the gates of the lordly, at the doors of the peasants, along the slopes of the Appenines, beyond the passes of the Alps, on the Rhine and on the Seine, across the British Channel, and even to the shores of the Thames. The cry arose: "It is the will of God;" and armies responded to the appeal of Peter; a mighty vow went up to heaven that the Holy Land and the Holy Places should be rescued from the grasp of the sacrilegious Mahometan. In those "Ages of Faith," monarchs as well as beggars were Catholic; there was but one faith, one church, one authority. That church had spoken by the voice of Peter the Hermit, and all Christendom responded.

Then did Richard Cœur de Lion don his armor, and with cross on breast and sword in hand go forth to join his royal brothers in the crusade. Then it was that Stephen of Blois, Bohemund of Torontum, and hundreds of others equally important called together their followers, and leaving home and wealth, and families, leaving all the allurements and happiness that wealth, power and ease could afford, they turned their faces to the east, and, three hundred thousand strong, they left Europe, crossed the Mediterranean, trod the wilds of Taurus, fainted under the burning suns of the Orient, and, at last, beheld, set in the emerald meadows that lue Orontes, the white turrets and the gray battlements of the Syrian Antioch. Crusade followed crusade, until the great object in view was attained and the stability of the Christian faith in the hearts of princes and people was made manifest. We need not go into the story of those eventful wars; but we refer to that period in order to show how, when least expected, the Almighty raised up the man to summon the Christian world to arms.

Satan finding that by Schism he failed to injure the Church resolved to try

other methods; he inspired Mahomet with the idea of appealing to the sword, and since the sword was raised to cut down the cross it became necessary that the sword should be unsheathed to defend that sacred symbol. But again the infernal monarch was doomed to disappointment; the Church was not to be overturned even by the power, the ubiquity, the ferocity and the numbers of her new enemies. As an evidence we have but to glance at the pages of history, to read of the Moorish wars, of the Turkish struggles; we have but to contemplate the world to-day. What has become of Mahometanism? It is synonymous with barbarism, or semi-civilization. The poor, untutored Arab makes his pilgrimage to Mecca and lives out a miserable life in dirt, rags, and obscurity; the Turk, although within the range of civilization is little better; he is a slave, a brute, a being without the semblance of a soul; his life is anything but one of grand aims. His fate is evidently sealed, and the first European crash of war that comes, his days will be numbered. But why point to the gradual decrease in Mahometan influence in the world? Let us turn to the Church that the Devil wished to destroy by means of this fierce foe! Where is the Catholic Church to-day—centuries after the first attempts of the desert fanatic to uproot her? She is there, seated upon the seven immortal hills, with the crown of perpetual life upon her brow, the sceptre of universal jurisdiction in her hand, and with the nations of the world, silent before her, each one listening most eagerly for every syllable that falls or may fall from the lips of her Supreme Pontiff. Mahomet's coffin is said to be suspended midway between earth and sky—at least the children of the Koran so believe; but the Vicar of Christ—not dead, but forever living—holds a place midway between heaven and earth; too sublime for this world he seems constantly elevated above even its greatest men; not yet prepared by Christ's second coming for the kingdom beyond the confines of time, he still remains within reach and hearing of the world beneath him. The Mahometan failed and the Christian conquered; the Koran sank into the obscurity from which it was drawn, and the gospel of Christ became more and more known throughout the world; the crescent was doomed to defeat, and the cross was, as ever, destined to triumph. In a word, the Devil is once more defeated and the Church of Christ has come out safely from the ordeal.

VENERATION, NOT ADORATION.

From the very first ages of the church the two practices of veneration for the saints and prayers for the dead have been sanctioned. There is a great distinction between the veneration which we pay to the saints and the adoration of them, as the Protestants always strive to call that mark of respect.

We will here quote from a work, already referred to in some of our previous articles, "an Irish gentleman in search of a religion." Having abandoned the Catholic religion he went wondering through the mazes of Protestantism seeking a creed and finding none.

He says: "There now remained little else to fill up the measure of what are called popish superstitions, but veneration of images and prayers for the dead; and to both of these I find Tertullian lending his sanction. In speaking of the wife who survives her husband, he desires that she should pray for her husband's soul, solicit for him refreshments and offer on the anniversaries of his death." In another place we find

him tracing this practice of apostolical traditions, not enforced, as he says, by the positive words of Scripture, but delivered down from his predecessors:—thus not only upholding the papistical usage of praying for the dead, but deriving his authority for it through that equally papistical channel, "Tradition!"

"With respect to images," says the same author, "the use of which, as memorials, was derived also by the early Christians from tradition, a passing sentence of Tertullian, in which he mentions, as though it were of common occurrence, the pictures of Christ upon the communion-cups, is a sufficient proof that the use of images had been, at the time he wrote, long prevalent."

In a curious work on the eucharistic cups of the ancient Christians (by Doughty), the author has collected, with much industry, an account of the different materials of which these vessels were formed, from wood up to crystal, onyx, &c., and among the images upon them he particularly specifies that of the crucified Saviour, and the good shepherd carrying the lamb on his shoulders.

"There appears little doubt, indeed, that reformed eyes would have been shocked by such 'idolrous' representations, not only in the second century of Christianity, but most probably from its very earliest periods." In the year 814, when Leo, the Armenian, assembled several bishops in order to induce them to break images, Euthymius, metropolitan of Sardis, thus addressed him: "Know, sire, that for eight hundred years or more since Christ came into the world, he has been painted and adored in his image. Who will be bold enough to abolish so ancient a tradition?" From the same fondness for religious memorials, we find St. Clement of Alexandria, in the same century, recommending to Christians to wear the figure of a fish engraved on their rings,—the fish being a symbol of the name of Christ. (Clem Alexand. Opera. Cura. Palleri. p. 288.)

"I had now," says the religious pilgrim, "to add to the six notes of Popery three more,—viz.:—7. Prayers for the dead,—8. Veneration of images, and 9. Crossing without end! Assuredly, any one less determined than myself to find Protestantism somewhere would have given up the chase in despair."

Upon this question of veneration of images, &c., we will quote from a little book written by Rt. Rev. J. J. Lynch, Archbishop of Toronto, entitled "Questions and Objections concerning Catholic Doctrine and Practice." It is a small volume, yet it should be in the hands of every Catholic. The copy we have is of the thirty-third thousand that have been published. We quote from page 27 and followin :

"Question.—Do Catholics worship images of Christ and His saints?"

"Answer.—No, but they cherish and honor them as representatives and memorials. All civilized people cherish and honor mementoes of their dearest friends, such as busts, pictures, and photographs, etc. To dishonor or spit upon the pictures of royalty, or the flag of a nation, would be considered a grievous insult to the sovereign or country. God himself ordered images to be made (Num. xxi., 8). And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign, whosoever being struck and shall look on it shall live." He also ordered cherubims to be made and placed around the ark of the covenant.

In Catholic countries images of Christ crucified, and His Blessed Mother and saints are erected in churches, on the highways and mountains, as an open Bible to remind the people of the love of Christ and His saints for us, and to urge us to love them and imitate their