

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCXCIV.

We have seen how Eastern monasticism may indeed fairly be charged with having, from time to time, in the doctrinal disputes which absorbed so much attention for several centuries in the East, exercised, not merely influence, but a turbulent control over general society. However, as it then, at least within the Empire, lapsed into somnolence, and has had virtually no history for a thousand years or more, we need not dwell upon it.

In the West, we have seen how Irish monasticism, and Benedictinism following it, converted Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland, and re-animated the Christianity of Italy, Spain and Gaul. We have seen also how these great converting and civilizing orders did, indeed, profoundly influence society, through the reverence felt for their piety, zeal and learning; but how far it is, not just to charge them with having controlled society, in any illegitimate or violent way, allowing, of course, for local and temporary aberrations. We have seen how unreasonable it is to reflect upon monasticism, or upon the Church, any special credit or discredit for the individual characters of ministers of state supplied from the orders or from the secular clergy. Becket, while still Chancellor, no more represented the Church, for good or evil, than Richelieu long afterwards, whose policy, indeed, Bishop and Cardinal though he was, was purely political, and almost Huguenot.

At the same time we may well acknowledge it as a healthy development when the wider spread of education supplied a larger proportion of laymen for the hierarchy. As a strongly hierarchical writer says: "A Bishop may inherit a peerage, but it is hardly well to make a Bishop a peer."

That great reformation of Benedictinism, the Cistercian order, which was largely concerned in the somewhat later conversion of the three Scandinavian kingdoms appears to have been still more distinctly potent in the spread of the civilizing arts, especially of agriculture and architecture, than the mother-order itself. Here, in the person of that greatest of Cistercians, St. Bernard, we may mark the essential difference between a legitimate, however powerful influence, over the secular world, and an intriguing or violent control. Before the word of the great Abbot, kings, princes, bishops, nay, Popes, bent like reeds. Bernard's pupil, Eugenius III, does not take umbrage that his master is commonly called "the Pope's pope." Neander shows how prodigious, and for the most part how deeply beneficent a power he exercised over universal society. From this eulogy, so extreme a Protestant as Paul Sabatier does not except his share in extinguishing the sullen and irrational system of Albigensianism.

Yet all this wonderful influence of the Abbot of Clairvaux, as shown by Neander, and by Dr. Storr in his delightful little book, seems to have had the least possible alloy of control. It does not compare in this with Calvin's government at Geneva, even though his control also, as distinguished from his influence, is greatly exaggerated. As Macaulay says, while it is the glory of freedom to be impatient of a yoke, it is equally their glory to submit themselves to the lead and moral influence of great men. This is more especially true when their leaders are both great and good. They are included among the saints, and, as Dean Farrar says, the twenty-five thousand names in the *Acta Sanctorum* are twenty-five thousand heroes and heroines of disinterestedness. And, by the best of all possible rights, disinterestedness is in the end irresistible. More even than His miracles, the disinterestedness of Our Lord has conquered the world, for "God is Love."

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries Europe was honey-combed with wildly fermenting opinions, of the most extravagant, and largely of the foulest kind. As is said in the *Divina Commedia*, "Christ's army was marching scattered and slow." There was a wide impression that the world was about to sink into moral chaos. From this God saved it by the agency of Francis and Dominic, guided by Innocent and Honorius, and aided in time by the other mendicant orders. Macaulay, whose opinions about "Popery," though not virulent, do not seem to differ much from those of his countrymen, nevertheless freely allows that had it not been for the great victory secured to the Church through the Minorites and Carmelites, Europe might very probably have sunk under the sway of systems even grosser, and far wilder, than Mohammedanism. Certainly these four orders seem to deserve something else than a petulant reference to them as having unconsciously controlled society in the past, which, except by a freely accepted influence, they can hardly be said to have done. It would be an unfair interpretation, so to explain this gentleman's language, but his general tone suggests distinct disparagements from others.

Gioberetti, although a priest, and a firm believer in the Roman Primacy, and in the definitions of the Church, is a Liberal of the Liberals. Yet he pronounces a detailed and eloquent panegyric on the Franciscans and Dominicans especially, and on their absolutely incalculable services to religion and civilization. His temperate but keen animadversions upon those who seem blind to their great place and work in the former world may well be pondered by those who are inclined to let fly at them. Whether or not they are now "decaying relics of the Middle Ages," as a somewhat incautious Jesuit has allowed himself to call them, is another question. Every order has extended its birth long after Christ's first Coming, and may conceivably have its end long before His second. *Dies declarabit.*

Yet we should not be too ready to de-

clare that this or that monastic order has had its day, reflecting that, after their great achievements of the thirteenth century, and after they had sunk into a certain apathy and degeneracy, the mendicant orders revived in such energy as to Christianize the West, and to stay the exterminating ravages of Spanish adventurers. For this noble work former jealousies between the orders were forgotten. It was the Franciscan Ximenes who created the high office of Protector of the Indians and placed in it the inebriated Dominican Las Casas. It was the Minorite Zamarraga who carried on the work of Las Casas in his diocese and province of Mexico, in the face of viceregal wrath. Whatever the dissensions of orders at home, Bartholomew knows them in the New World only as his unanimous helpers. This second illumination should deter us from too impatient a decision that there is no room for a third.

The sudden rise and spread of the Jesuits, and their extraordinary achievements, have for a long time thrown criticism on the other orders into the background, although now the French and Anglo-Saxon applauders of Combes begin to call for the decree of universal annihilation, until matters shall be ready for the destruction of the Catholic Church itself, in the Latin lands, and after that for the more leisurely extinction of such other fragments of religion as may be left in France and the two peninsulas. I notice that one farseeing Jacobin already projects enactments, not merely against religion, but against "the religious spirit." In due time, if this pious campaign of impiety goes on prosperously, we may look forward to seeing the tumble-bells rolling on their grisly march filled with men and women "suspected of being suspicious," as showing touches of the religious temper. M. Combes signifies his wish to put down, in every form—and we are safe in saying, by every means—this intolerable "recrudescence of religious faith."

To revert to the Jesuits, their case is *sui generis*. It would be most unjust to treat all who dislike them as disliking the other orders. On the other hand, there are admirers of theirs who would care little if every other congregation vanished out of the world. We remember that once, when the Parliament of Paris asked them whether they were monks, friars, regular clerks, or what, they answered: "You must take us *tel quels*, 'for such as we are.'" However, their cause now seems likely to be merged in the general case of religious intolerance. I might not be fond of Methodism—indeed I am not—but how could I act if I discovered that its adherents were beginning to be persecuted, not as Methodists, nor even as Arminians, nor even as Protestants, but as Christians?

I may remark that even in their prime, while the Jesuits certainly wielded a tremendous power over general society, it was not a control. They assumed no jurisdiction in secular matters. Their power was one of influence. And the *Outlook* to the contrary notwithstanding, any man, and any body of men, has a natural right to use influence, to the full extent to which it may be freely yielded. Against this the only remedy is the sword, or the axe, or the gallows, and England has shown that this is often inefficual.

CHARLES C. STABBUCK. Andover, Mass.

"LADY DAY."

ENGLISH NAME FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

Lady Day is the name given to the feast of the Annunciation in England—a gentle, reverent, chivalrous name which ought to make all women feel very joyous and very humble.

Do you like it that this beautiful feast day falls in Lent?—for you know it almost always does. Lent is a time set apart for repentance and self-examination, and yet into this stern season—sometimes at the very middle of it, in mid-Lent, or *mi-careme* as the French say—comes the message of the angel: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!" And suddenly, above the chanting of penitential psalms springs the triumphant hymn, the Magnificat: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour."

Sometimes Lady Day falls on Sunday, which is always a feast day; but I like it better when this particular feast has a day to itself and stands apart from the quietness on each side of it. Do you think this joy seems out of place, and ill-timed? No, surely not! If there were no feast of the Annunciation, it would be no Christian Lent for us. In these years of the twentieth century (which would not be the twentieth century at all) the message of the angel had not yet been delivered, we should indeed be in very great darkness. There would be no Easter, no promise of eternal life; there would be no Good Friday, no way of being delivered from our sins, for we could not deliver ourselves from them by our own feeble strength. There would be no earthly triumph for the Son of Man; and of course there would be no Christmas, and no Christianity. What a strange world to live in if that were true!

So we see that this joyous feast does not come simply to give us an extra day of relief from prayer and fasting; the Church is not afraid of letting her children stay too long on their knees. This feast day blossoms like a flower in our wilderness, that we may remember to give thanks for these forty days of penitent quiet which have been given us, and which can only be a help and a strength to us because that prophecy in Genesis about the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent has been fulfilled. For, if there were no feast of the Annunciation, we should be kept in a perpetual un-Christian Lent in a perpetual wilderness, and there would be no way out. Let us rejoice in Lady Day.

We love justice greatly, and just men but little.—Abbe Roux.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Palm Sunday. SERVING GOD FROM THE HEART.

"Hosanna to the Son of David." (St. Matt. xxi. 9.) To-day, my dear brethren, we are reminded of that hour in the life of our Lord on earth in which He was receiving from the people of His own nation all the honor that could be rendered Him. He then entered the chosen city of God in triumph over all who had opposed Him. Thousands surrounded Him, went before Him and followed after Him. They paved the road before Him with their own clothing and with the branches of trees, that they might thus make His entry into Jerusalem as glorious as possible.

In a few days, when He had been arrested by His enemies, who were this great crowd? Where were those who had cried out so fervently, "Hosanna to the Son of David?" But few could there be found. The rest had either deserted Him or joined in with the crowd that mocked Him even while He was dying on the Cross. Nearly all had abandoned Him in the day of His adversity. The first test of their faith in Him, the first trial that He found the strength of their love for Him, found them entirely wanting in that characteristic of true love, fidelity to the end.

Is it impossible for us to do as they did? No; it is not impossible, for many who are Catholics born and bred do the same thing now.

But who are these? They are those who fail to keep the Ten Commandments of God and the precepts of His Church. Every Catholic who breaks the Commandments of God and refuses to obey the laws of the Church does worse than those who deserted our Lord when He was condemned and crucified. With their lips they declare they are Catholics, and in this way cry out "Hosanna to the Son of David," but in their hearts and lives they live and associate with the enemies of Christ.

But why are these men worse than the others? Simply because they received the graces of Christ in their baptism, in their confirmation, and in their First Communion, as well as in their many Communion thereafter. In Communion they receive our Lord Himself, the Lord of eternal glory who is eternal life itself. These have been, in truth, members of the kingdom of heaven, but have cast themselves out, by not keeping the Commandments of the Church. Truly does the Scripture say of many of them: "He that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead." For dead many of them are apparently—dead eternally. They seem to be in the spiritual slumber of eternal death. They appear to be eternally judged; their eternal fate already sealed.

Why do I say this? Because nothing can move their hearts to return to God. Missions, sermons, exhortations, threatenings, warnings, counsels, the prayers and entreaties of fathers, mothers, kindred, and friends are all unheeded by them, are all in vain. Even the tears of their fathers and mothers, and the blushes of shame whenever they are called upon by friends, have no effect upon them, none whatever. They will not return to God.

Poor souls! Remember that whatever excuse you make to yourselves, this is true, that those who keep the Commandments and the laws of the Church show they are true friends of our Lord; those who do not keep these show to all in heaven and earth that they are His enemies. We have but one sure and positive test of our love for our Lord. The Ten Commandments and the laws of the Church constitute that test. All who really love Him keep them faithfully. "If you love Me," said our Lord, "keep My commandments." All who do not love Him break them and disregard them. God Himself is not their friend. They have no part in the triumphs of our Lord on this day. It is true they cry out with us "Hosanna to the Son of David," but in their lives they side with His enemies and crucify our Lord.

What, then, is to be done? Let those who are faithful profit by the terrible examples of these abandoned souls. Let them dread and tremble lest they also be brought into the same state by their increasing tepidity and neglect. Let them care to secure to our Lord a complete triumph in their own souls that He may rule these in the Kingdom of time and eternity. "If you love Me," said our Lord, "keep My commandments." None but faithful or truly repentant souls can cry out to-day, in all sincerity, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

Can do Everything.

Education cannot do anything. Something is demanded from the one educated. One young man will go through college and become a useful citizen, a comfort to his relatives and an ornament to society. Another will receive the same educational opportunities, and will develop ornamental facilities only; in fact, he becomes an ornament and nothing more. A college training only imparts to him the faculty of loafing more gracefully.—Sacred Heart Review.

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TROU SHALT NOT STPAL.

To make the enjoyment of our neighbor's rights the more secure, God in His Seventh Commandment forbids us to wrong him by stealing, robbing or cheating him. The provisions of the law embrace every species of injury done him in his property. Consequently the commandment is far-reaching, and because of the penalty entailed deserves a most careful consideration. To do this, we must extend the review into a second article. Here we shall call attention to the kinds of wrongs embraced by the commandment, in the second, we shall direct attention to restitution.

By the ordinary term stealing is meant the clandestine taking of our neighbor's goods without his knowledge. This is theft. Then there is the open and violent taking of the same, which is robbery. And, lastly, we violate the commandment when by deceiving him we secure his consent to his own wrong. This is termed fraud.

Under these three general heads may be grouped the sins against the Seventh Commandment. The common methods of modern commercialism as well as conditions of society warrant the assertion that there is but little observance of the law among men to-day. It is evidenced by many facts and substantiated by many practices. But for the protest.

Measured by the admissions and methods of those engaged therein, what is business but a system of over-reaching; a system of deception in buying and selling; the obtaining of our neighbor's consent to his own wrong without his knowledge? Then there is the light weighting and short measuring of only a little to each of many customers, but which in the aggregate bring a large profit. What is this but fraud?

LENTE PRACTICES.

We earnestly recommend to our readers an attendance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass every morning during Lent. Maceration of the flesh is good, as a help to interior mortification when performed in a spirit of obedience; and, with equal earnestness, we urge all to attend the Lenten evening services in your churches. We recommend the recitation of the rosary every evening in the year, especially should it be repeated every evening during this holy season.

Any of these exercises should not be omitted, but in the order of merit the attending at Mass is incomparably superior. O most compassionate Lord, engrave upon my heart the memory of precious passion and death, which no forgetfulness may ever erase, and grant that I may live during this holy season of Lent in the spirit of penance and self-circumcision!

GRANT'S GRANDSON A CATHOLIC.

One of the most noted acquisitions to the Catholic Church in St. Louis recently is the conversion of Capt. Algernon Sartoris, grandson of Gen. U. S. Grant. He was baptized in the chapel connected with St. Louis university by Rev. Father Conway S. J. Most Rev. J. J. Glennon, Archbishop of St. Louis, acted as sponsor. Capt. Sartoris was a former member of the Episcopal Church. He went to St. Louis about two months ago. He had been under instruction with a view of becoming a Catholic for some time prior to his going there, and continued his studies after his arrival with Rev. Father Conway, S. J.

Capt. Sartoris won his title during the Spanish-American war. Since his arrival in St. Louis he has been living with his mother, Mrs. Nellie Grant Sartoris, at the Grand Avenue hotel. The other members of the family are non-Catholics. Capt. Sartoris is twenty-four years old and unmarried.

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