

JANUARY 7, 1914

poor man believed them to be his best friends. Finally, at the mission given by Father Bontemps, after many years of neglect, they approached the Sacraments again. Divine grace moved their hearts to repentance, they made their peace with God, and discharging their obligations of justice, received forgiveness from both God and man.

MR. POMPOUS vs. MR. PEACEFUL.

Religious Encounter in a Street Car Which Furnished Amusement and Edification.

From St. Michael's Calendar.

The following incident is vouched for by a friend who lately saw it happen. Nevertheless we have a faint recollection of seeing the answers among our old acquaintances. We give them, however, as related: The crowded Second street car had just turned the corner of Jefferson. A man took off his hat as he passed St. Michael's Church, whereupon a pompous fellow-passenger seeing it and desiring to be funny, called to his neighbor in a loud voice:

"Say, Bill, have you heard the latest news? The awful! The bottom has fallen out of purgatory and all the Catholics have dropped into hell!"

"Too bad, too bad!" said the gentleman of the hat in a clear voice. "I pity the unfortunate Protestants underneath; they must have been crushed to atoms!"

The novelty of the remark and the response at once caught the ear of the passengers, who were now all attention to hear what might follow.

"Ah," said Mr. Pomposus, smarting under the retort and anxious to turn the laugh from himself, "I see you are a Catholic. You belong to that superstitious set that ignorantly doff their hats to churches and crosses, that believe in what they don't see and are in fear of what can't hurt them, the blind idiots! See here. Now show me the devil and I'll give you \$50."

"Not so fast, my friend," said Mr. Peaceful, with a genial smile. "Don't condemn your neighbor without a hearing! If you know who came off for Him also. Neither should you accuse me of believing what I don't see, for you yourself believe you have brains, although I am convinced that nobody ever saw them; and as for showing you the devil, keep your money, wait a while and take my word for it, you'll see him for nothing!"

A general titter was heard all over the car. No one was anxious to leave; even two old ladies with pusses for Girard avenue concluded to keep their seats in order to hear the result.

"Don't take me for an infidel, sir," said Mr. Pomposus, getting quite excited. "I am a liberal Protestant, who respects every honest man's religion. But I have no respect for idolaters who make little gods out of men. There, for instance, is your Pope. The power you attribute to him makes him a god upon earth. You even address him as Holy Father. Why can't you do as we do in our Church and have no head but the Lord God in heaven?"

"That's what puts you where you are," said Mr. Peaceful. "The want of a visible head leaves you in a heap of error and confusion. Don't you see that no organization here below, whether bank, railroad or other society, can exist without a head? The Pope is no god with us. If he thought we believed it, he would be the first to condemn it. But we believe he is a divinely appointed teacher of the whole flock, and we have good grounds for our belief. But what's the use in giving sensible arguments to a fellow like you? Mick Mooney's argument on the necessity of a head for the Church is the best for your comprehension. 'The Holy Scripture tells us,' said Mick, 'that our Saviour commanded us to hear the Church. Now how could we hear her except she spoke, and how could she speak without a head and a mouth?'

A hearty burst of applause was the response to this rejoinder. The conductor even joined in it and Mr. Peaceful felt that he had the sympathy of the audience.

But Mr. Pomposus came quickly at him with a large string of charges, many of them apparently so serious that it was feared he could not answer them successfully.

"I attended your services one evening of late," said he, "and was horrified at what I saw and heard. You had some kind of devotion going on in which you offered ten invocations to the Virgin Mary for the one that was offered to the Almighty God, and you concluded the whole thing by a prayer for what you suppose are souls in purgatory! You also have candles, crosses, vestments and the Lord knows what in your worship. You won't allow flesh meat on Friday, though you can eat the eggs and drink the milk that come from the meat on Friday! These and many other contradictory and unscriptural practices you cannot deny. They are proofs that your Church cannot be the true one."

"Wait a bit," said Mr. Peaceful. "Don't shout till you are out of the woods. You attended no principal services of our Church, but an evening devotion of the rosary. The prayers were as you described, but you should have known that no irreverence to God was there; for you must remember that our Father is equal to more than a thousand Hail Mary's! You don't like purgatory, it seems. Well, you might go farther and fare worse; or, as Father Tom Burke said to the preacher, 'if you don't believe in purgatory, you can go to hell!' You also were dazzled at the vestments and did not understand the use of them. Of course not. However, if you were

housekeeping as long as we are you would have all these things yourselves, for you must not forget that the older the house and more respectable the family, the more costly and expensive will be the furniture! And regarding the meat on Friday I have this to say: I agree that it is sometimes pretty hard to abstain on Friday when the meat is good and a fellow is hungry, and if I had the making of my own religion as you had, I would have put meat in it for every day of the week; but I must differ with you in your assertion that drinking the milk and eating the meat on Friday are one and the same thing. For you know very well that although when a boy, you often nourished your chubby little cheeks at your mother's breast, that was no reason for eating her!"

"A good hit!" said a base ball player, who attentively listened in a corner, a sentiment which was applauded by every one in the car.

As the car stopped at the crossing on Willow street a Jewish rabbi got on board. Mr. Pomposus spied him at once and presumed he saw a friend who would help him out. But he was woefully disappointed, as the result made evident.

"Friend Moses," said he, "this gentleman and myself have a dispute about religion, each of us claiming to have the true one. Now we three represent what can be called the three great religious churches of the world—the Catholic, the Protestant and the Hebrew. Which of these is your opinion is the true one?"

"Well," said Moses, "if I must answer, I will, but I am sorry I can't give your side much comfort. My belief is this: If the Saviour did not come, I am right; if the Saviour did come, the Catholic is right; but whether He did or did not come, you are wrong: your Church came upon earth about fifteen hundred years too late!"

When every shot Mr. Pomposus received once more the nail in farther and held him up to ridicule, he resorted to the weapons of all defeated fighters—mad throwing. He opened, there fore, with a broadside of abuse and charged the Catholic Church with all kinds of abominations.

"Why, sir," said he, "I have known Catholics who left your Church because of its tyranny over their consciences. I have known Sisters and priests to leave it because celibacy and confession were sources of corruption and convents were sinks of iniquity. I heard it from their own lips and I believe every word of it."

"No doubt you heard it," said Mr. Peaceful, "and I sincerely pity your ignorance for believing it. But who were the Catholics whose consciences were oppressed? I'll tell you. They were the people who follow the Ten Commandments of God were a burden and who lost their morals before they lost their faith. Who were the nuns and priests who made the vile charges? Did they lead pure lives before they left the Church? No! The history of such characters show they were unclean birds! They were the weeds that were pitched out of the Pope's garden: they were in nearly every case lamentable victims of either Punch or Judy! But (and here he softened his voice) when their bad conduct had made them unworthy to live amongst us, ye were glad to get them and they made first-rate Protestant ministers. Beware of them, however, for they are not after your souls, but they are seeking your dimes and your dollars. They well know that in appealing to people like you, they have soft ground to work on, for, as the darkey preacher well said, 'whar de hen scratch dar she spec to find de bug.'

In spite of themselves the passengers commenced to clap their hands and a general shout of laughter responded to the reference to Punch and Judy, but Mr. Pomposus, who was now red in the face and greatly excited, came back with a final thrust that generally appeals to a prejudiced audience.

"Your Church is both cruel and uncharitable," said he, "and excludes all from salvation except its own members. 'Out of the Church there is no salvation' is an article of your creed you strongly insist on preaching and you can't deny it. To test it, I will ask you a plain question and I demand a plain answer: Do you believe that I will go to hell?"

"Not at all, not all, my friend," said the smiling Mr. Peaceful. "I believe nothing of the kind, though St. Paul is very strict on the necessity of faith and our Lord commanded all men to hear the Church."

"Well, then," said Mr. Pomposus, thinking he had cornered him, "what will exempt me or what quality do I possess that will save me from the fate of all the Protestants?"

"Invincible ignorance!" said Mr. Peaceful, stepping off the car and waving good bye to his crestfallen antagonist.

The chuckling and laughing that followed could be heard for many minutes. Those who did not fully agree with Mr. Peaceful were delighted with his wit and repartee and could not help applauding him, while those who did agree with him were enthusiastic in their admiration, both sides candidly confessing that Mr. Pomposus got his just deserts for provoking a religious discussion in a public conveyance.

Mr. Pomposus himself left the car at Washington avenue, accompanied by his friend Bill, who was grinning all over at his discomfiture. The conductor and motorman spent most of the day, no doubt, in recalling the arguments of the two contestants and rehearsing them at the depot. They both agreed, however, that the discussion was a novel treat, and that Mr. Pomposus would think twice and look around

before he again announced any special news from purgatory.

NATURAL RELIGION IS NOT SUFFICIENT.

Lecture by Father Calmer.

Western Watchman, St. Louis. "Natural Religion Not Sufficient" was the theme on which Father H. M. Calmer, S. J., preached at St. Francis Xavier's Church, Lindell and Grand avenues, last Sunday night.

"The principle," said the speaker, "under which the indifferentist in matters of religion strives to shield himself is the 'sacredness of the individual conclusion.' If the meaning of the much used phrase were simply that the individual conscience is sacred; that each man's conscientious conviction must be his final ultimate standing ground, no one would have anything for it but commendation and applause. That conscience is and must be paramount has never been maintained with more force and clearness than by Catholics.

"But, in fact, this phrase, as generally used, does not mean anything of the kind, and as a rule the non-Catholic of to-day who says that the individual conclusion in matters of religion is sacred means only that a man may believe as he feels like believing. It is a convenient method of protesting against being disturbed. There are a large number of excellent people who have the natural virtues; who are benevolent, good neighbors, honorable, upright and kindly men, but who do not want to take the trouble of studying and investigating matters of doctrine.

In a former lecture we distinguished between a natural and a supernatural religion. A purely natural religion teaches truths attainable by the unaided light of reason, and admits those truths on the grounds solely of the evidence as presented to the individual judgment; but we know there are truths which, even if they do not of themselves exceed the natural perception of our rational faculty, we admit on account of the authority of God revealing; that is, our motive of belief is supernatural. A religion which teaches these truths is called supernatural. Barring this distinction in mind, the deduction is logical, that religion in general must be either natural or supernatural. Which of these two must we embrace?

"As regards the exact position of the question, I must add that a natural religion is essential to man's moral being and welfare, and this has been more or less rigidly demonstrated. But that a revelation is also essential as a supplement to natural religion some will not admit.

"Still must it not be plain to all practical men conversant with life and history that, the necessity of doing God's will being granted, it is a most anxious and earnest question whether that will has not in some special and articulate way been revealed to us?"

"Take the mass of religious humanity and giving it naught but natural religion, it will be found that instinctively and inevitably it asks for more. Such a religion by itself excites more longings than it can satisfy, and raises more perplexities than it can set at rest. The natural law may supply men with a sufficient analysis of the worth they must attach to life; it may tell us 'do good and shun evil,' but when men come practically to choose their way, do they not find that such a religion is of little help to them?"

"This insufficiency is borne out by the fact that a purely natural religion, with no organs of speech, and without power for making its spirit articulate, never has ruled men, and never possibly can rule them.

"Again this practical insufficiency of natural religion is borne witness to by the very existence of all alleged revelations. For if none of these be really the special word of God, a belief in them is all the more a sign of a general need in man for a revelation.

"To make it in any sense an infallible revelation, or in other words a revelation at all to us, we need a power to interpret the testament that shall have an equal authority with that testament itself. This argument appeals to the common sense of every thinker; still simple as this truth seems, may have been a long time in learning it. But at this moment, upon all sides of us, history is teaching it to us by an example that we can no longer mistake it.

"That example is Protestant Christianity, and the condition to which, after three hundred years, it is now visibly bringing itself. Protestantism is at last beginning to exhibit to us the true result of the denial of infallibility to a religion that professes to be supernatural. It still adheres theoretically to a revelation and the sacred book that maintains it. Religion, it is true, we shall still find in it; but it is a religion from which not only the supernatural element is fast disappearing, but in which the natural element is fast becoming nebulous. It is indeed growing into a religion of dreams. All its doctrines are growing vague as dreams and like dreams their outlines are forever changing, and, strange to say, some of its preachers boast of this very vagueness.

"Examine this for yourself and the present status of Protestantism will give you the proof of the truth of the assertion. The divinity of Christ, the nature of His redemption, the constitution of the Trinity, the efficacy of the sacraments, the inspiration of the Bible—there is not one of these essential points of doctrine, once so fiercely fought for, which are not now among Protestants getting as vague and varying, as weak and as compliant to the

caprice of each individual thinker as is for instance the doctrine of eternal punishment. And why should it not be thus if the fundamental principle of private judgment in religious matters is correct and there is no certain or infallible guide or teacher to lead aright those who have been thus led astray.

"There is chaos and there is no denying it; one sect holds one point of doctrine and another defends as strenuously the very opposite—nay the same sect does not believe to-day what their forefathers adhered to fifty years ago. There is constant change going on until some have no faith left save a general, indefinite belief in Christ. Hence, says one of the thinkers of England, Protestantism is at last becoming explicitly what it always was implicitly, not a supernatural religion, which fulfills the nature, but natural religion, which denies the supernatural."

THINGS A MOTHER SHOULD NOT DO.

She should not forget that if she sends her boy as a gentleman, she will do much towards making him a gentleman.

She should not treat her boy to perpetual frowns, scoldings, and fault-finding. "Sugar attracts more flies than vinegar." Love wins her boy to a noble manhood.

She should never be so busy or hard pressed for time that she can not listen to him. If he lives to be a man he will all too soon leave her. She should make the most of him while she has him.

She should encourage out-door exercise or sports, and she should not get to train him with proper regard for his personal appearance.

She should never allow him to form habits as neglecting his nails or teeth, or carrying soiled handkerchiefs about with him.

She should never nag him, or forget that he is a creature of reason, not an animal that requires to be driven.

She should not try to break her boy's will, but be thankful that he is manly enough to have a mind of his own, and devote herself to training it to the noblest uses.

She should not fail to instill in him a distaste for all that is vulgar.—S. H. Review.

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