

No class of enemies of Christ is more frequently represented in our day than that of scoffers of hell. What hell? What an eternal place of punishment? Who would be imposed upon by such a fable? Never yet has any returned from hell! How could a merciful Father reveal one of His children eternally unhappy? Language like this may be heard every day from the mouths of sinners, young and old—I say sinners; for only sinners have reason to fear hell, and it is fervent Christians believe in its existence.

And yet, what says the Judge of living and the dead to such mockers? Does He not utter the terrible doom given in the conclusion of his gospel: "Seize this man, his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall weeping and gnashing of teeth be." And yet this fearful sentence is one of the fifteen repeated expressions of the gospel, wherein our Saviour speaks in the clearest and most terrible terms of a place of punishment, of everlasting despair, of a fire, where the worm dieth not and the flame is not extinguished. Recall to your mind only several of these declarations: "The just," says our Lord in Matt. 25, 46, "shall go into life everlasting; the wicked into everlasting punishment." Again the same evangelist says: "It is better for thee to go into life everlasting than to be cast into everlasting fire." (Matt. 23, 33.) And what, according to the dictation of Jesus Christ, will be the sentence of the damned on Judgment Day? You well know the terrible words: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which you prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25, 41.) Behold, dear Christians, thus speaks Jesus, the Saviour, thus the Judge of the living and the dead, announces in the most terrible terms the existence of an everlasting fire of vengeance, of the divine fire of punishment. Whom will you believe? Those scoffers, who deny they have reasons to fear, or who is God's only begotten Son, Way, the Truth and the Life?

You reply, perhaps: Far be it from me, to refuse crediting my Saviour; but it is not possible that these sentences should be taken literally; can not be, it would be too horrible. Therefore, call into question the interpretation of the words of our Lord who can explain your doubts clearly than the Apostles, who three years were with His pupils and received all His holy doctrine. His divine mouth? Listen. John in the Apocalypse: "The living," says he, "the murderers, the whoremongers shall have their portion in the pool, burning with brimstone." (Apoc. 21, 8.) Again the same Apostle says: "The smoke of their torments shall ascend up forever and ever; neither shall they rest day nor night." (Apoc. 14, 11.) Referring to the old Testament, find in Isaiah, the prophet, which I can pronounce only with trembling. "Which of you dwells, exclaims the prophet, devouring fire, which of you dwells with everlasting burning? (Is. 33, 14.) Beloved Christians, I still continue to quote this sacred text to prove that the hell of which Jesus speaks, is painted one, but one of fearful Ah, no, there will be no necessity, will certainly admit that he longer believes in hell cases Christians.

If not a Christian, what, then? Perhaps a Jew? Ah, no, I would immediately expel him from their synagogue as a blasphemous man, believe in hell. He is a pagan? But no, even he would disown him; they, too, at all times, acknowledged a punishment for the reprobates, though according to their ideas, they pictured it in ways. Where, then, will we deriders of hell? I can only say: They have their place among of humanity, among those of their manner of life reprobates. Show me one faithful band, one virtuous young man has ever denied the existence of hell. No, not virtue, but vice has privilege to maintain such principles, which, should they be animously accepted, would throw the earth into a den of robbers. It is only when life has suffered shipwreck, forced by horrid crimes upon the divine justice and count among the reprobates, that we are acknowledged which would even a pagan to blush. To how little these scoffers, who principles they maintain, it witness the death bed scenes adherents! How suddenly change! What! I think that this rebel before he died embraced all the tenets of holy religion, or at least so flattered? Ah! no, this is not it. It is solely the circumstance now stand before the Truth about to judge them. The impure troop of passions take flight, and the conscience re-awake. A majority of cases it does not penance, nor to approach God, but to the death of reprobates convinced that there is where there will be eternal and gnashing of teeth.

PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

The Rev. Isaac J. Lansing, on p. 424 of his book, informs us that of the priests exercising parochial functions 99 per cent are men of evil life.

Am I to believe this? Say that I were wholly ignorant of the Roman Catholic Church, was confronted with such an affirmation, what would be my first duty? Plainly, to inquire into the intellectual and moral qualifications of the man who makes it. Now it needs but one reading of his book, or of a third of it, to discover his shallowness, his illiterateness, his ignorance. Equally evident is his incapability of straight reasoning. I have given various proof of this already, and shall have a great many more to give yet. Morally, if I were as ignorant of the whole subject as a new arrival from Mars or Venus, I should not have to read far to discover that his principle of proceeding is, to reverse St. Paul, to rejoice in iniquity, and never to rejoice in the truth, when he can misinterpret the course of his calumniousness. If this were merely personal to him it would signify little. But in this, as in everything, he is thoroughly representative of the lower stratum of controversy.

Having thus discovered him to be both intellectually and morally unfit for the solemn and awful function of sitting in judgment on this vast body of Christian ministers, diffused throughout the whole world, I should be fully entitled to dismiss this odious imputation, and the author of it, without further attention or regard. Yet this lies within my own choice. I am not bound to let him off from the shame of a confutation and exposure, and I have not a thought of doing so, in any point, great or small. I wish him, and all his kind, to understand that this, with me, is a war to the knife. I neither accept nor give quarter. It is not to be supposed but that I have made blunders, and shall make others. Let them search them out, and make the most of them. They will render themselves a service, and me a greater. I attack no man's personal honor, or private life. "That were an intemperance to be punished by the judges." Happily, there is no temptation to that in this case. This person's private life is beyond reproach, as I have already said. So, also, I am told, he is good to the poor, and deeply concerned in their wrongs and prospects. This is excellent. Assuredly, however, it does not excuse so fearful a misinterpretation of Christ's words as he is guilty of. The Saviour says: "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you." Assuredly He does not mean: "Give alms, and thereby purchase the right to misinterpret and revile without measure the half of Christendom." Yet one would suppose that Mr. Lansing really distorted the Redeemer's words in this monstrous way.

Could anything be more fatuous than the half excuse sometimes offered for such people? "Oh, they are honest." It is enough to answer with Doctor Catus: "What shall the honest man do in his closet?" If an honest man acts dishonestly, what is he, then and there, but a dishonest man? Am I to forbear exposing him as a slanderer because I do not also accuse him of being a hypocrite?

I have lately heard something like this: "Oh, you really should not deal quite so severely with Mr. Lansing. He has his faults, no doubt. He is apt to be a little precipitate in bringing charges which he can not always sustain. He certainly would do well, in a good many cases, to prime himself a little better with knowledge before he lets fly. Yet you really, for all this, ought to treat him with more reverence and regard. Consider how devoted he is to the cause of progress. In this case, by the cause of progress. I infer, however, that it is principally meant that Mr. Lansing is a rearing, tearing teetotaler and prohibitionist. Now I myself am a total abstainer. So also I have repeatedly voted the Prohibition ticket. Indeed, I will venture to say that I have probably sustained quite as much inconvenience from doing so as has ever befallen Mr. Lansing. In fact, I have been surprised and amused to hear myself described, on very insufficient grounds, as a martyr to the Prohibition cause. Yet I must own that I am not as progressive as Mr. Lansing. I have not yet outgrown my awe of the Divine words: 'Thou shalt not revile God nor curse the ruler of thy people.' When an able and noble minded man has been set by my nation at my head, I have not yet made such progress as to hold myself free from the obligation of treating him with careful deference, and of regarding every unadvised affront offered to him as an affront offered to the whole land. I have not yet discovered it to be a service done to a good cause to hurry into the pulpit with a charge against the chief magistrate of the nation, and then, when I am obliged to make an apology of the evidence, to make an apology which the injured man is obliged to pronounce worse than the offence. Let us hope that we may all remain endlessly in the rear of such progress as this.

Have I stated this matter inaccurately? I have no reason to doubt of my substantial correctness. I have proceeded on the *fama clamosa* of public documents and declarations. Yet, if I have given any point loosely, let Mr. Lansing furnish me with his exact words of accusation and of excuse, and with the President's exact words of reply. They shall appear without delay in the Review.

How absolutely insensible some of these red hot zealots are to the rights of personal reputation! Thus, in the Methodist conference, which had been justly displeased by the connection with this scandal into which Mr. Lansing, when asked to address it, one member deprecated censuring him on the ground that what he had done, he had done out of his intense hatred of evil! In other words, a slanderer ceases to be a slanderer if it is brought forward out of a hatred of evil! Then, if I accuse an innocent man of murder, it is a sufficient defence to say that I hate murder so much as to find murderers where there are none! In truth, men like this defender of Lansing in the Conference, can no more be reckoned with than so many Comanches. They do not live in the same world as honorable men, and can not even understand the principles which actuate them.

Some eighty years ago there was a fierce sect of Mohammedans called the Wahabees. A European who visited them asked one of their sheikhs what was the greatest sin. "Adoring the creature," "Undoubtedly. And the next?" "Drinking the shameful." "And how that is, smoking tobacco." "And how about such sins as theft, adultery and murder?" "Oh! God is merciful." Even so, allowing for the vast superiority of Christianity to Mohammedanism, we have various sects of Christian Wahabees. One of the principal of them, if asked which is the first and great commandment, might well answer: "To hate the Papists." The second? "To revile everyone who is not a fiery teetotaler." "How about such sins as malignant and chronic falsification?" "Oh, God is merciful."

However, on that side of Mr. Lansing's activity with which I am chiefly concerned, I deny that he is progressive. I do not see but that his Protestant forefathers and mine of three hundred and fifty years back were quite as unscrupulously abusive as he is now. Indeed, I think they were more so. When he finds that he has brought an utterly unjust accusation I do not believe he is capable of explaining it away as Luther does. There had been a report, which for a while all the German Protestants believed, that the Catholic princes and the Emperor were secretly leagued against them, and meant to fall upon them suddenly and suppress the Reformation by violence. The most zealous Catholic prince was Duke George of Saxony. Against him, therefore, Luther poured out an unbounded torrent of abuse. Soon, however, it appeared perfectly clear, even to Luther, that there was not a word of truth in the whole story. Did he thereupon express his sorrow that he had so intemperately assailed Duke George? No word of it! On the contrary, he put out the following most extraordinary self vindication: "I am not bound to ask Duke George's forgiveness, for he rages against my doctrine, and I am bound to believe that any man who rages against my doctrine rages against God and His Christ. Now, if he rages against God and His Christ, I am bound to believe in my soul that he is possessed of the devil. And if he is possessed of the devil, I am bound to believe that he is plotting inwardly all manner of iniquity." Mr. Lansing, assuredly, is not capable of such a sublimity of impudence. Only a very great man can attain to such a height. He and I, not being great men, have to stop far short of this. I acknowledge his good-will to imitate the Saxon friar, but good will does not supply a sparrow with the wings of a hawk.

We will leave his foul imputation against the Catholic pastorate pending for the present, meaning before long to return to it, and to ascertain his authority for it. Let us now come to men who are competent to speak. Arthur Hutton, being the brother of Richard Holt Hutton, was doubtless, like him, brought up a Unitarian. I believe, at least, that the family, and not merely Richard, was Unitarian. The brothers then joined the Church of England, in which Richard remained. Arthur, however, next became a Roman Catholic. He thereupon took orders and became a priest of the Birmingham Oratory, under Cardinal Newman as superior. He has now, as we know, lapsed into agnosticism, or, in old fashioned speech, into atheism. Nobody, then, can dispute that he has seen the matter from every side. Moreover, as an able and highly cultivated man, and, as I judge, a widely read and a traveled man, he is thoroughly competent to express his mind. Now what says this scholarly agnostic out of his reading and various experience? This: "The Roman Catholic priesthood is far and away the greatest organization that exists on earth of good and able men working for the moral welfare of mankind." Before this expression of ample knowledge what becomes of Lansing and his abominable imputation? They shrivel up, like a spider in the fire.

It is an honor which such men as Lansing do not deserve, to be set alongside of men as eminent as Arthur Hutton. But I mean to be liberal of honors. Let us appeal to a far higher authority than Arthur Hutton, to Ernest Renan. His genius and learning have had few equals in this century. Moreover, he knows Catholicism far more intimately even than Hutton, for he was born and brought up a Catholic, in the most Catholic part of Catholic France, in the province of Brittany. Furthermore, he was far more closely connected with the priesthood than most, for he was trained for a priest. Yet this great man, after lapsing into pronounced unbelief, de-

clares that he never knew a bad priest. And, indeed, we know that even before the Revolution the French priest had a high reputation. It used to be said: Put together French priests and Spanish Bishops and you have a perfect clergy. The fiery furnace of the Revolution has greatly raised the previously high standard of moral worth among the French clergy. Father Hyacinthe, indeed, in a recent letter to me, while cordially acknowledging the wide diffusion of Christian excellence throughout the priesthood, excellence the French and the Irish priesthood as exemplifying this in the most eminent degree.

What an infinitely pitiful figure Lansing makes before such testimonials as these! Charles C. Starbuck. Andover, Mass.

"MARYOLATRY."

One of the most singular phenomena in modern Protestantism is the lack of respect and reverence shown by its ministers to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of our Lord and Saviour. Many of them how a disrespect for her belief in the divinity of her Son. If possible, they would remove her entirely out of sight in the divine economy of the new dispensation. This coldness, amounting almost to personal enmity, of many Protestant ministers towards the Blessed Virgin makes it difficult to think that they believe in the divinity of Christ, whom they profess to worship as God. They see nothing in these words in the Gospel of Luke, 1: 28: "The Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin * * * and the virgin's name was Mary."

And the angel said unto her, 'Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed are thou among women.' They see nothing in the fact that she was a prophet, and that her words make up a part of the Bible they venerate. Her prophecy is found in the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, beginning with verse 46: "And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour; because he hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name."

The Catholic Church has in all times and places realized this prophecy. Even the schismatic Churches of the East, the Greek, Russian and Armenian Churches, do, and have done, the same. It is only in Protestantism, and modern Protestantism in particular, that this veneration, foretold in the Bible, is denied. This is a very striking fact, one that should make the Protestant reflect, and realize that he stands out isolated in sentiment and belief from the whole Christian world, past and present.

Inspired by the spirit of opposition that would falsify this prophecy, Rev. W. M. Frynsinger, in a recent sermon at Carlisle, Pa., attacks Catholic devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and in his perverse zeal takes the part of prosecuting attorney against the Mother of our Redeemer—calling her "a sinful human being." The atheist who denies the existence of God, and the infidel who denies revelation and redemption, could do no more than this. Can Rev. Frynsinger imagine that his insult to the Mother can be pleasing to her Son? With the guilt of that serpent on his soul does he expect to look his Redeemer and Judge in the face with confidence?

These reflections have been suggested by a very able reply to Frynsinger's sermon by Father Henry G. Ganss, of Carlisle, Pa. It is entitled "Maryolatry: New Phases of an Old Fallacy." It takes up the sermon point by point, and exposes its falsehoods, misrepresentations, false quotations and blunders in a thorough, satisfactory and merciless manner; and yet in language so polite, gentle, and yet in language so proper to the occasion permitted. The reader of the reply can see all through its pages that the talented priest is laboring under heavy pressure to suppress his just indignation, that his refutation of the fallacies and falsehoods may stand out all the more clear and convincing. In this he has succeeded to a degree that commands admiration. And on this account his little book is one of the best specimens of polemic literature since Newman's "Apologia." We realize that this is saying much, but not more than the book justifies. We know of no book on the subject it treats to the Catholic who wishes to be prepared to meet the objections of the shallow and thoughtless who oppose the faith and practice of the Catholic Church concerning the Blessed Mother of our Lord and Redeemer. It is a handy book, and most readable—just the book the zealous Catholic should have on hand to lend or give to his inquiring Protestant neighbor.

The sermon to which it is a reply is given in full in the first pages. And, as this sermon contains about all that has ever been said against the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, the reply covers the whole ground on the subject. With the exception of the Church Fathers, it quotes almost exclusively from Protestant writers. As an instance, we take from page 69 the following quotation from John Ruskin: "I am persuaded that the worship of the Madonna has been one of the noblest and most vital graces of Catholicism, and has never been otherwise than

productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. * * * There has probably not been an innocent cottage house throughout the length and breadth of Europe in which the image of the Madonna has not given sanctity to the humblest duties and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women. * * * Every highest and loftiest achievement of the art of manhood."

Again, from the great American writer, Hawthorne: "I have always envied the Catholics their faith in that sweet, sacred Virgin-Mother, who stands between them and the Deity, intercepting somewhat of His awful splendor, but permitting His love to stream upon the worshipper more intelligibly to human comprehension through the medium of a woman's tenderness."

These are but two of the many we might quote from great English non-Catholic writers. Perhaps the most interesting part of the book is Chapter XXI, wherein Father Ganss quotes from the early Protestant reformers and confessions and formularies of faith. Thus, John Huss, in his dying confession, speaks of Mary: "I pray for my accusers to the most pure Mother of the Saviour, the restorer of the human race, the Queen of Heaven, endowed with a nature altogether angelic, more happy, crowned with more glory, more abundant in gifts of grace, than all the blessed, her Son alone excepted."

Luther wrote: "Therefore, all dignities are embraced in her when we call her the Mother of God: no one can speak greater things of her or to her, if he had as many tongues as there are leaves and blades of grass, stars in the firmament, and grains of sand in the ocean."

The Bohemian confession—speaking doctrinally of the Mother of God—uses this language: "Of the most Blessed Virgin, Mother of our Lord, elect of God among women before all ages, virgin before, virgin after our Lord's birth—she who, no less than others, redeemed by the blood and gracious merit of her Son, was a temple and shrine of the Holy Ghost, by whose great gifts, virtues and graces she was endowed. For God hath done to her great things; therefore, our Church celebrates her festival days to God's glory. They compose pious hymns concerning her, which are sung both at home and in church. They, in her, praise God, and exhort all to the imitation of her faith and other virtues, and commemorate her labors for the Lord. For with the whole Church of the saints they proclaim her most blessed."

The Tetrapolitan confessions says: "Our preachers teach that we are most highly to honor the Mother of God, the Most Holy Virgin Mary."

In the Leipzig Colloquy (1631) the Reformed theologians declare that Mary "was not merely the mother of man, nor merely the mother of Christ, but truly Theotokos, or Mother of God."

In the Declaration of Thorn it is said: "We acknowledge that she is above all to be celebrated and venerated, inasmuch as she is the Mother of God."

The confession of Basle says: "There are many apostles, but only one Mother of God. Here the Virgin Mary excels all other children of men, and stands alone next to her Divine Son, the pure Immaculate Virgin."

When we compare these early Protestant utterances with modern Protestant utterances, as illustrated in Rev. Frynsinger's sermon, we see how far the latter has drifted towards carping skepticism.

The book of Father Ganss is published by the Ave Maria, Notre Dame, Indiana. — New York Freeman's Journal.

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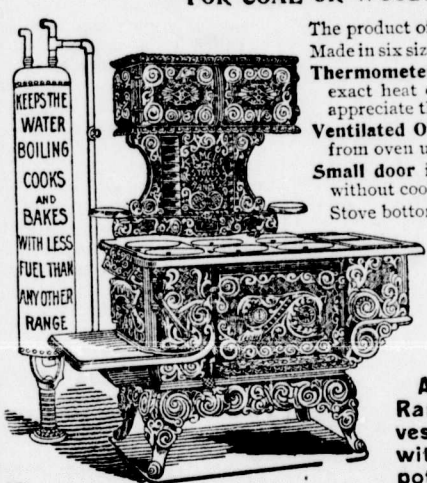
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