

Protestant Controversy.

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

CXIV.

We have seen that in his instructions to priests and people Tetzel taught no such heathenism of self-salvation as Doctor Hodges describes as having been the prevalent system of this time. He keeps the grace and compassion of God through Christ in the foreground as the fountain, and true repentance and confession as the channel of all spiritual benefits. In other words, he teaches precisely as the Catholic Church had always taught, and as she teaches to this day.

The same is true of his answer to Luther's sermon on Grace, which had been drawn up in twenty articles, and directed entirely against indulgences. Luther does not yet attack them as of no value, but as of little value, chiefly useful to the spiritually lazy, and something with which mature Christians will do well to have nothing to do. I shall give some of the points on which he does not touch heathenism, but Catholic Christianity. I number not consecutively, but according to such points of Luther and Tetzel as I need to notice.

(1) Luther denies that Scripture or the early Doctors teach that the sacrament of penance consists of three parts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Tetzel, in opposing him, simply teaches the established Catholic doctrine.

(2) Luther, says Tetzel, insists that the confession which is required as a condition of obtaining (meriting) an indulgence is not understood to require genuine contrition. This Tetzel emphatically denies. The holy Council of Constance, says he, requires contrition as indispensable, and so do all the Papal Bulls and Briefs of indulgences.

(3) Luther maintains that a Plenary Indulgence is harmful, because it dispenses from subsequent good works of penance or mercy. Tetzel reminds him that indulgences, directed against inordinate desire, remain as necessary as ever, and that good works of every kind increase merit, and so heighten the glory of heaven, whereas the effect of an indulgence is purely negative, diminishing retributive pains. He reminds him also that if we had never sinned at all, yet our very relation to the Creator would imply the duty of expressing our reverence for Him in those works of love which are intrinsically agreeable to Him.

(4) To Luther's objection, that indulgences make men spiritually slothful in the performance of good works, Tetzel replies that it is a matter of common note that, usually speaking, those who are most solicitous to procure indulgences are precisely the God-fearing, devout and charitable. No one, he observes, can procure a valid indulgence unless he is in the love of God. Now the love of God in the soul, by its very nature and necessity, continually impels to the performance of the works of love. Such a man, therefore, he says, in procuring an indulgence, can not possibly procure it as an excuse for neglecting works of mercy. He does these with the very necessity of the love that is in him.

Of course Tetzel does not think of denying that many abuse indulgences to the end of spiritual slothfulness and of hardness of heart towards the needy. No way has yet been discovered by which selfish men can be wholly restrained from abusing the gospel of God to their own destruction. He would simply say that such persons obtain the form of an indulgence, but not the fact. The Church is not responsible, for she does not pretend to know the secrets of the heart. The strange declaration of some German writer, that God gives a confessor infallible knowledge of the state of every penitent's soul, is certainly very bad Catholic doctrine. Among other sins, says Cardinal Manning, let a penitent beware of the sin of deceiving his confessor.

(5) No one, says Tetzel, can make satisfaction to God for a mortal sin without the concurrence of the sufferings of Christ. Yet God will not forgive a mortal sin, unless the sinner is duly disposed to render a suitable satisfaction. As this is simply Saint Augustine's teaching, there is nothing in it peculiar to Tetzel or to his time.

(6) Tetzel here renews his remark, that an indulgence can not take away the necessity of medicinal penances, and confirms it by the authority of Innocent III.

These answers of Tetzel are sufficient to show, as his instructions to the people had shown, that he founds all the virtue of indulgences, as he every where declares on the pure mercy of God expressed in the Passion of Christ, and conveyed to the soul by means of genuine (wirkhafte) repentance and confession, or the act purpose of confession (Voratz der Beichte). All spiritual benefits are available only to one who is in the love of God, and the love of God can never excuse itself from works of mercy under pretext of an indulgence. These teachings of the Commissary and Inquisitor are certainly not cast in a Protestant mould, but they are cast in the mould of immemorial Catholic doctrine. Now as Dr. Hodges is very far indeed from believing that the Roman Catholic Church has, throughout the ages, lapsed from the substance of the Gospel in the person or time of Tetzel, Tetzel leaves us free to prefer the clarified and moderated Protestantism of

to day, but does not leave us free to treat the crude semi-antiquarianism of Luther as a renewal of Christianity out of paganism. It would be quite as easy to treat it as a lapse into paganism from Christianity. No wonder John Wesley, who detested loose living under the name of filial freedom, calls Luther's commentary on the Galatians "that dangerous treatise."

It is known that while the Church insists that no one can avail himself, on his own account, of an indulgence, not being in a state of grace, yet some maintain, although against the general current of Catholic opinion, that, even though not in a state of grace, he can obtain a valid indulgence for a soul in purgatory, since the benefit is not for himself. Unhappily, says Dr. Groene, Tetzel took this less probable position, and the equivocation arising out of it gave Luther the opportunity of insinuating that he offered indulgences without repentance. He did offer them, where they were to avail others, but never where they were to avail the one that obtained them. Tetzel naturally felt indignant at this, and Luther should have equivocated so, but then that was a trick of Luther's. Any accusation against a friend of the Pope, he finally avowed, he held to be lawful.

Savonarola, at this time, had only been dead nineteen years. He was therefore an earlier contemporary of Tetzel. His "Triumph of the Cross" has been declared by the Holy See, like his writings generally, wholly sound and Catholic, and has been reprinted by Propaganda as a missionary tract. Now I have read this from beginning to end, and do not hesitate to say that the only difference between this and Tetzel's remains, allowing for its much greater length, is the difference between the work of a very great, and of an ordinary mind. There is not the slightest difference of doctrine, with one secondary exception. I do not remember now whether Savonarola mentions indulgences, but his whole basis and fabric of doctrine is precisely the same as that of the German Inquisitor, a Dominican like himself.

The secondary exception in point of doctrine is, that Savonarola, like many Catholics and many Protestants, but against Protestant teaching generally, ascribes a certain disposing value to good works done before justification. Tetzel does not contradict this opinion, but nowhere mentions it. In his remains almost, of every kind and degree, appears only as the fruit of justification, never as a preparative. So far as appears then, he is decidedly nearer to Protestantism than Savonarola. Yet Tetzel has become a Protestant reformer, while Savonarola is continually described as "an inchoate Protestant," and "a forerunner of the Reformation!"

Happily all Protestants are not fools in this matter. Mr. Howells is not, nor Dr. Herrick, and I understand that even the bigoted and virulent English Methodist, Dr. Rule, who has written Savonarola's life, is equally decided in refusing to call him a Protestant in any sense. As I have long ago said in the *Andover Review*, the rise of the great Italian Dominican, but the Counter-Reformation. In this I believe Dean Hodges would agree with me.

Charles C. Starbuck.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

To the sinner the Sacred Heart appeals: for him He came into this world and suffered and died. His most earnest appeals are to the sinner. He says He came to save the lost sheep. With what tenderness and love He sees them to come to Him. The whole grand act of redemption for the sinner. All we have to do is to respond to His pleadings, and return to Him who has loved us so much as to give His life for us.

To those who are abandoned, who are without a friend, the same Heart appeals most strongly. If they will only receive Him, He will be a friend indeed: and will comfort them in all their sorrows and afflictions. Daily we read accounts of people who are driven to despair and take their own lives. If they only knew how the Sacred Heart longs to comfort and console them, how different it would be!

To the poor, the Sacred Heart gladdens and makes them realize that He while on earth was poor and destitute; He will teach them to appreciate and even love poverty, so their souls will not be tangled up with the thoughts of this earth, but left free to worship their Lord and their God with their whole heart and soul.

To the sick and afflicted, the Sacred Heart offers to come and console and to strengthen them to bear their trials; it enables them to turn their trials into real benefits, and make of them means of receiving most abundant graces and blessings. He teaches them to look beyond the mere suffering of the moment to the beauty and happiness of life eternal, thus raising them above their sufferings in this life.

First and Foremost

In the field of medicine is Hood's Sarsaparilla. It possesses actual and unequalled merit by which it cures all diseases caused or promoted by impure or unwholesome blood. If you have rheumatism, dyspepsia, scrofula or catarrh you may take Hood's Sarsaparilla and be cured. If you are run down and feel weak and tired, you may be sure it will do you good.

The favorite family cathartic is Hood's Pills. You cannot be happy while you have constipation. Then do not delay in getting a bottle of Hood's Corn Cure. It removes all kinds of corns without pain. Failure with it is unknown.

FIVE-MINUTE'S SERMON.

Second Sunday of Advent.

TAKING SCANDAL OF CHRIST.

"Blessed is he, that shall not be scandalized in Me." (Matt. 18, 6)

Who would imagine that any one could be scandalized in our Blessed Saviour who taught only divine truths, worked divine miracles and led so holy a life? And, yet, it has happened. The very nation from which our Lord took human nature, viz: the Jewish, and upon which He bestowed so many inestimable benefits, was more than any other scandalized in Him, refused to accept Him as the promised Messiah, to believe His doctrine, and did not wish to hear of penance and self-abnegation. What was the reason of this hard heartedness? The gospel tells us, my dear dear Christians, that it was caused by the pride and vicious life of the majority of the Jewish people.

The first cause was pride. How could men almost defying themselves, as it were, with vain-glory, believe in a Redeemer who taught humility, practiced humility and promised the kingdom of God to the humble? How could they bend their knee before a God who did not appear with sceptre and crown, but who with trembling steps carried His cross to Calvary's height and there was crucified! The same demon of pride, who nineteen centuries ago caused the Jewish people to reject the Messiah, to lead thousands to be scandalized in Christ and cast them into the arms of infidelity. Although Christ has proved His divinity and His divine missions by incontestable miracles, although millions of martyrs have testified to the truth of the gospel by shedding their blood, although the Church of Christ, His bride and representative on earth, has survived after eighteen hundred years of persecutions such as hell alone could invent, during which time she proved by the lives and deaths of numerous saints, the divine origin and mission of her Founder, Jesus Christ; how are these great truths considered by those whose minds are filled with pride? As nothing. They do not wish to believe; their pride prompts them to say: How can I accept these incomprehensible doctrines, as for instance, the Crucified Trinity, how believe in a Blessed God, in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament? 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