

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

Sacred Heart Review.
PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

LVI.

The reproaches addressed to the Papacy by such men as this James O'Connor, and by vulgar Protestants, for its claims of spiritual authority, bear at first seeming a certain resemblance to the warnings addressed by some great saints to certain medieval Popes. On examination, however, we find them utterly different and opposed.

In the height of papal power and resources, in the Middle Ages, various holy men and women, St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Bridget of Sweden, perhaps St. Antonine of Florence, and many others, were possessed with a haunting, almost a tormenting sense of the dangers to which frail mortality (for Popes are but earthly clay) was exposed under the weight of "the great mantle." Dante, indeed, makes Adrian the fifth to declare in purgatory that he himself, until he reaches the height of the Papacy, had never apprehended the insufficiency of the world, and had then first learned to turn his thoughts savingly to eternity.

The exaltation, however, might work the other way, and unless the newly-elected was already deeply rooted in the life of God, there was great fear of the result. The temptation would be mighty, to commit the greatest of all sacrileges, by degrading the supreme spiritual power into an instrument of worldly aggrandizement, even of sensuous and vulgar pomp and gratification. Therefore these saints spared no urgency of admonition, of warning, even of salutary reproach, to remind the Pontiff what untold and eternal interests, for himself and for the Christian people, hung on his worthiness or unworthiness.

These lights of the Church did not fall into the error of the Fratricelli, or of the Arnoldists, and imagine that absolute poverty was obligatory on the priesthood, high or low. They had no doubt that the world, become Christian, ought to provide the means of a becoming dignity of living for its spiritual guides, especially for the Bishops, and most of all for the Pope. They did not jealously measure the amount of treasure that should be laid out upon his household and retinue. They did, however, insist that a certain noble simplicity of living ought in him to bear witness to an inward detachment from worldly cravings, and to a remembrance of that humility of outward circumstance from which the Supreme Pontificate had risen.

These admonitions of the saints were most acceptable to the Holy See. The Popes seemed hardly able to have enough of them, and the sharper they were the better they seem to have liked them. St. Catherine was plain spoken, but St. Brigitta used words that fairly make us shiver. She had her reward in being canonized only seventeen years after her death. The Popes seem to have viewed these two holy women especially as, so to speak, the wardens of their salvation. Indeed, they were also the guardians of the Apostolic See itself, for through their inspired monitions chiefly the Babylonian Captivity of the Church had an end, and the Pope was brought back from Avignon to his own bishopric. But for this, thinks Emil Gebhardt, the Church would have flown all to pieces, and something much nearer a miracle than the Council of Constance would have been needed to restore her unity.

Now it was precisely because these saints had so deep a sense of the spiritual prerogatives of the Papacy that they were so solicitous to clear it of all delilement of terrestrial mud. They wished that the pure effulgence of eternity should shine forth from it, encompassed with only such a modest dignity of outward aspect as should better interpret its inward greatness to the ruder multitudes. Such a Pope and Papacy as the world has now seen for twenty one years was their ideal, although in a fiercer and tawdrier age, concessions had to be made to its temper which are now needless.

Now, these frank representations and expostulations of the saints, addressed to the Holy See, taken *ad litteram*, often sound astonishingly like the reproaches showered upon the Papacy by popular Protestantism, and by such men as this O'Connor. In reality they are quite the opposite. Besides that they date from a time when the extreme unrestrainedness of language greatly discounted from its force, so that, as was afterwards said of Luther, out of every hundred words he meant about five, this frankness was used by those who were indissolubly devoted to the central See and who had the most exalted conception of its divine endowments. What they deprecated was, not the fullest exercise, in wisdom and love and in personal humility, of its great attributes, but all complication of them with mundane plotings and schemings. And the Fratricelli themselves were driven into their extremity of opposition by the very intensity of their apprehension of the spiritual greatness to which the Papacy was called. Just because this vocation was so exalted, the extremest of the extravagant among them, and among allied parties, beginning with the orders, would at the last have stripped the whole priestly office and its chief of even the most modest investment of visible greatness.

Now, see the exact opposite of this in popular Protestantism, as illustrated in a thousand ways, and among them by this article of the man O'Connor, who, although not trained a Protestant, shows an adroit readiness to catch the temper of his new associates. He

does not attack the Pope for any assumed extravagance of living, which, indeed, would be rather ridiculous as applied to Leo XIII., a man whose bed-chamber, perhaps, is not so much like a cell as his predecessors', but who is of marked simplicity of habits and tastes. O'Connor makes no attack on the Pope's manner of living. His reasoning is as follows. Take it as I give it, and it has a meaning. Take it otherwise, and it has none. This is its tenor.

Christ is called the Nazarene. The Nazarenes were much despised. "The Nazarene," therefore, practically means, "the Despised." Jesus was *abhorred* because He taught doctrines that threatened the overthrow of Judaism. He was *despised* because He was not a trained rabbi, and because He was very poor. He, in turn, appointed apostles who were, as O'Connor says, "poor and dishevelled." The Pope claims to be their successor. Therefore, unless he too is despised, he is not in the true line. If he prefers any claims, or does any acts, which procure him reverence, he has broken the succession from "the Nazarene."

This sounds monstrous, and is monstrous. Yet it is by no means without meaning. It bodes forth, better than its propounders know, one side of Protestantism.

I believe the Reformation to have wrought great good, and to be still working it. Yet when we say that Catholicism on one side is of Christ and on the other of Satan, we say what is certainly true, in a narrower range, of our own narrower and shallower system. The Reformation, essentially a Teutonic movement, took the form of a revolt of the laity, but especially of the nobles and princes, against the clergy. It must have leaders, and where should it find them then but among the princes and nobles? It therefore, from the very first, gave itself up, in the first two of its three chief forms, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, to an almost unbounded obsequiousness towards the secular power, which has drawn after it, even in theory, an extraordinarily exaggerated conception of the Christian value of secular interests. We are fond of talking about the blasphemous language used in the Middle Ages towards the Popes. Such there doubtless was, but how could it be worse than Cranmer's declaration of it as a merit, "to love the King as much as we love God," or Bucer's, that the subject must follow the will of that prince whether for evil or good; or Filio's (much later, indeed) that only a personal revelation can excuse a man from professing any religion which the magistrate may impose; or Luther's, that what the princes must care for is, that they shall not come short in "hanging, heading, burning, breaking on the wheel," or Melancthon's, that so long as a lord does not absolutely press his vassals out of life, he has a right to burden them as grievously as he will, and that if the prince chooses to reduce them to bondage, it is un-Christian in them to object?

We will consider this further.
Charles C. Starbuck,
12 Macnamara street,
North Cambridge, Mass.

THE UP-TO-DATE MINISTER

Must combine the Gifts of an Impresario, a Commercial Traveler and an Auctioneer.

Ian MacLaren writes of "The Candy-Pull System in the Church" in the October Ladies' Home Journal, and after describing the tendency of the up-to-date Church, designates the qualifications of a pastor for "this kind of institution." "The chief requisite demanded," he contends, "is a sharp little man, with the gifts of an impresario, a commercial traveler and an auctioneer, combined with the slightest flavor of a peripatetic evangelist. Instead of a study lined with books of grave divinity and classical literature, let him have an office with pigeonholes for his programmes and endless correspondence; cupboards for huge books, with cutting from newspapers and reports of other organizations; a telephone ever tlingling; a set of handbooks: 'How to Make a Sermon in Thirty Minutes,' or 'One Thousand Rare Anecdotes from the Mission Field.'

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FIVE-MINUTES' SERMON.

ON DELAY OF REPENTANCE.

"Pray that your flight be not in winter, or on the Sabbath." (Matt. 24, 10.)

The abomination of desolation spoken of by our Divine Saviour in its literal sense, the destruction of the temple and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and according to the fathers of the Church, it is also a figure of mortal sin which desecrates the soul and delivers it to eternal destruction. In this sense, the winter of which our Lord speaks is the close of life, the last sickness, and we are expressly warned not to postpone the flight from sin, namely repentance, to the winter, that is to advanced age and the uncertain time of our last illness.

Verily, any procrastination might prove fatal. We know not whether we shall have a winter of life, if we shall arrive at old age or die after a lingering disease. Death can come to us at any moment and as suddenly as the lightning from Heaven. But this we know, if we appear before God in the state of mortal sin, we are lost forever.

The careless sinner consoles himself with the thought that sudden deaths are exceptional occurrences and that he will not meet with such a fate. If the frequency with which they occur and which, according to statistics, are on the increase, can still lead you to think they are rare, I leave to you your own judgment. Supposing, however, for argument's sake, that they are exceptional, if you meet with such a death, what then? The possibility is there. Or, if such a death should surprise you in the state of mortal sin, in the state of enmity with God! Can you imagine this fate without being filled with terror? You would burn eternally in the fearful flames of hell, eternally weep and lament, eternally despair without hope of relief. You would be damned as long as God exists, and that is forever. Do you desire so terrible a fate? Unfortunately, you are not so indifferent about matters of little importance, of which the gain or loss is perhaps a few dollars.

Let us, however, waive the possibility of a sudden death, and presume that, by divine inspiration, you have been assured of dying after a long illness. Are you therefore certain that you will be reconciled to God by a good confession? You desire this, but may not your hope be delusive? May it not be that in you will be verified this warning (quasi vita, mori). As one has lived, so he will die.

What is the ordinary course of a person's death? At some time scarcely to be remembered, there is a slight indisposition. As it continues, the physician is called, but he, as well as friends and relatives, makes little of it, and all hope it will soon pass away. Suddenly, without any premonition, the illness assumes a dangerous phase. The physician now looks serious, and the first signs of the mind's wandering are perceived. It is only now that the patient is asked if he wishes a priest. Ah, picture to yourself the consternation of the poor sinner, who did not expect anything of the kind! Perhaps twenty or thirty years have elapsed since he went to confession. Reluctantly, he gives his consent. The priest arrives but finds the patient unprepared for confession, unable to remember his sins. Perhaps he has even lost his speech or consciousness, and is now called upon to perform a duty which every pious Christian, even in the best of health, considers a most difficult task. This poor man, must now correct the errors of a lifetime, his sins and negligences towards God! What think you, my dear Christians, will he accomplish the task satisfactorily? Will he, weak in mind and memory, consumed by fever, tortured by pains, struggling for breath, confused with the fear of death, the grave and eternity, will he be able to make a good confession?

This, however, is not the greatest difficulty, for God asks no impossibilities in the hour of death. He is satisfied if the dying person tries his best, and does as well as his strength permits. There is one act, however, which he must perform and from which he can never be released, and that is an act of sincere, supernatural contrition. Will he, with one effort, be able to cast off the garment of sin which he has worn for twenty or thirty years? Will he be able to love immediately that which he has hated during his whole life long? Ah! my dear brethren, these are most serious questions. The Church teaches that without a sincere contrition proceeding from motives of faith, viz: because we have offended God, lost His grace, deserved hell, or from other supernatural motives, every confession is sacrilegious. Now, it is the opinion of experienced and pious confessors—and of its truth I am also convinced—that the contrition of a number of those converted on their death beds, does not proceed from motives of having offended God, but from a natural fear of death. Experience proves the truth of this conclusion, by the fact that of those who recover, so many usually fall back into their old habits. Whether these tardy death-bed confessions bring about reconciliation with God, I cannot say. I, however, should not like to die and appear before God with no other hope of forgiveness than this last confession in obtaining burial in consecrated grounds, but have my soul buried in hell. There are, of course, exceptions; for example, the penitent thief, who on account of the sincerity of his contrition was, even the same day, with his

Lord and Master in Paradise: but these may be called miracles of grace, and should we risk our salvation on such exceptions?

This, my dear Christians, is the end of those who postpone their flight from sin, that is, their conversion to their death-bed—to the warning of our Lord. Let us heed the warning while there is time. Cleanse your heart from all sin. Do now that penance which you would then so gladly perform if time were given you. Prepare now for death by a life of virtue and good works that when the Eternal Judge approaches, you may meet Him with a glorious Hosanna, and be worthy of partaking of His eternal glory. Amen.

CONVERTS TO THE FAITH.

Following is the list of the recent conversions to the true Faith, both at home and abroad:

Rev. F. W. Adams, formerly of St. Paul's Episcopal church, Pomona, Cal.; Mr. Charles W. Wright, son of Hon. John K. Wright, ex-Senator and Republican leader in Kansas; Stanley Matthews McMullen, nephew of Stanley Matthews of Cincinnati; Mr. Enoch James, a prominent citizen of Montreal, and Mme. Boisvert, well known in social circles in the same city; Mark W. Harrington, formerly President of the Washington State University and recently connected with the United States Meteorological bureau at Porto Rico; Miss Mary Heimke, daughter of one of the Secretaries of the United States embassy at Mexico (Senora Diaz, wife of the President of the Mexican Republic, was one of the sponsors at the baptism of Miss Heimke); Miss Gertrude Bigelow Dawes, of Melrose, Mass.; Mr. George C. Williamson, doctor of literature at a college in Guildford, England, a well known writer on art and at present editing Bell & Son's handbooks of the great masters in painting and sculpture; Rev. A. E. Gledhill, an Anglican curate of Hooesee, England; Mrs. Dowdeswell of Worcestershire, England, widow of Mr. P. E. Dowdeswell, who was once M. P. for that place; Mr. Stewart Coats, a member of the Coats family of Paisley, thread manufacturers.

Nineteen converts were recently received into the Church by Right Rev. Bishop Maes of Covington, Ky., which with seven baptisms a month previous to this, made a total of twenty-six conversions within a month or so at that place. During three months Archbishop Ka'in of St. Louis administered confirmation to two hundred and forty-six converts, many of whom were prominent in business and social circles in that city.

Father Dunne of Eau Claire, Wis., who is associated with the work in that State, is mentioned as having received fifty-two converts, and has now twenty-two under instruction. Father Younan, in his account of the work among the Mormons, reports forty four conversions and three hundred in his inquiry class.

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