

The Catholic Record.

"Christianus mihi nomen est, Catholicus vero Cognomen."—(Christian is my Name, but Catholic my Surname.)—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

VOLUME XVII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 1895.

NO. 861.

TRUTH FOR NON-CATHOLICS.

What Father Elliot's Experience has Taught him

In the splendid Easter number of the *Catholic World* magazine, the Rev. Walter Elliot, of the Paulists, has the following article on missionary work among non-Catholics:

In reading the Missionary Notes published in this magazine some might think that the missionaries are over-anguine. "You make too much of the friendly reception given you," it might be said. "For it is curiosity rather than deep religious feeling that brings Protestants to hear you. It will be a long and weary work to convert this people, or any large portion of them." In answer to such thoughts we say that we have not to render account for the future. Our responsibility is limited to fulfillment of present obligations. And for the present we can get an audience of non-Catholic very where, and in most places a numerous one. Hence we are missionaries.

The writer has given over forty missions to non-Catholics during this and the preceding winter, always obtaining good attendance and in a majority of cases overflowing audiences.

Let us realize as an actual fact that we can get a hearing. Accept our evidence, accept the evidence of many other priests from all sections of the country: we are witnesses who have tried the experiment and who have succeeded. The condition of things is therefore this: the Catholic Church in America is among a non-Catholic people who are willing to listen to Catholic truth. Stop at that fact and square your conscience with it. As layman, priest or prelate, reckon with God thus: I am a member of the one true Church, and I can get a hearing for its claims from non-Catholics: what should I do about it?

The ears of our separated brethren are open to the truth; such is the actual fact. It may be said that the open ear is not always the open heart; and that is true. The word of truth is sometimes, nay often, permitted to enter in at the ear but refused an entrance to the heart. Men hear and do not believe. They hear willingly enough in some cases, attracted only by a sense of fair play, by mere admiration of the style or substance of the lectures, with no thought of accepting and assimilating what they often admit to be theoretically true. No doubt the word of God frequently lodges on the surface of the heart, to be allowed to wither there by neglect or to be overgrown by worldliness and passion. But there are heart missionaries as well as ear-missionaries. And it is great gain to win only a hearing. In doing that much one is certainly God's instrument. In moving hearts one cannot tell what instrument the Holy Spirit will use. But the undoubted fact that we can get a hearing is a valuable (if perhaps an unwelcome) element in making up an account of conscience; and this is true whether I am layman or clergyman.

The duty of a Catholic is not confined to making converts outright. It is to remove bitterness, to set aside delusions, to overcome prejudice. If you cannot make converts of your Protestant neighbors you can at least make good-natured Protestants of them. Is there no obligation to set about doing this? If you can get a hearing, it may be that you cannot gain an immediate victory, but you can reduce the warfare to a friendly contest, you can put an end to polemical scalping. To establish our belligerent rights is half the battle. To secure a hearing for Catholicity as one among the religious claimants is an immense advantage. As to positively converting particular persons, two influences are most necessary: one is God's secret inspiration, and the other is the piety and intelligence of Catholic friends and relatives. But both of these are aided by public lectures which frequently are necessary adjuncts of inner grace and outer edification.

The outlook is favorable. Not every one perceives it, any more than every one understands the outlook in the business world; the eye for business opportunities is in the business man's head. So the missionary prospects are known by those whose vocation or whose inner light has led them to study the matter. Such observers perceive that prejudice is not nearly so strong as once it was, allowing for exceptions in particular places or among particular classes. Many Protestants are now met with who will not take it for granted that Catholicity is totally wrong, has no foundation in reason or in revelation. Converts are an appreciable part of many of our congregations. The press dare not openly attack the Church, and in large part has no desire to do so, and it is quite accessible to the publication of articles on the Catholic side. And, especially, judicious attempts to gain a public hearing for Catholic claims secure a non-Catholic audience. Furthermore, practical and zealous Catholicity is not deemed a bar to social intercourse.

Nor is this open door merely the idle curiosity of a worldly or vicious people. Although worldliness and vice are prevalent enough among our separated brethren, antagonism to revealed religion is comparatively rare. And as

a worldly Catholic still holds fast to his faith, so does a worldly Protestant adhere to his, allowing for many exceptions and admitting that his faith is vague. The non-Catholic people of America, good and bad and taken as a body, are religious in their tendencies. They believe in God as their maker and ruler, in Jesus Christ as their teacher and Saviour, in the Scripture as God's book. And, taken again as a body, their aversion to Catholicity is not passionate. On religious subjects of every kind, not excepting Catholic doctrine and practice, they will converse much, read some, and will listen to competent lectures. May it not be affirmed that this condition of our countrymen places us in the position of the Apostle?—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

I am by no means implying that infidelity is unknown, or that there is no peril, no threatening sign, of unbelief growing general among non-Catholics. Doubt is among them, and doubt is an infectious disease. All I mean to say is, that Protestants generally hold truths which are introductory to full Christianity, to use the happy expression of the Pope in his Encyclical to the American Church. Of the future we know nothing, however much we may conjecture. What is evident is that Christ yet stands before the American Protestant people as their accepted teacher; he is to them their Saviour and their God. And what think you, is the duty which His Church owes to such a people?

Our proposition if put into another form might be stated thus: There is satisfactory evidence that the majority of our non-Catholic countrymen are persuaded that if a Catholic lives up to his religion it will make a good man of him; they now agree that Catholicity can make men virtuous, that it does not hinder their being good citizens: in a word, it is a religion worthy of respect: that means worthy of a hearing—an admission on their part of incalculable missionary value, and of most serious import to our consciences.

This takes practical shape in a missionary tendency in the ordinary ministrations of religion. Every parish priest should be something of a missionary. Every parish church should have an Apostolic side; as to doctrine, by lecturing, preaching and distributing literature; as to devotion, by introducing extra liturgical services which non-Catholics can understand and are likely to attend. Elsewhere (see *American Ecclesiastical Review*, September, 1894.) I have enlarged on this part of my topic, for the special attention of my brethren of the parish clergy. Every function of the parish church can, if the pastor wishes it, be made a medium of communicating truth to non-Catholics.

But let us hope that a band of Bishop's missionaries may soon be introduced into every diocese, as we already have one in the diocese of Cleveland—a limited number of the diocesan clergy set apart, each for a term of years, for missions to non-Catholics. Let such missions once become part of the routine of a diocese and even routine men will rise to a missionary level. The assignment to this work of competent members of the secular clergy, while stimulating all missionary influences of the regular parish services, will, in addition, give a public name and life to the apostolic side of religion.

Divine Providence has so shaped men and things in the universal Church that both in spirit and method we are now well fitted for Apostolic undertakings. Pope, Bishops and priests are drawn nearer together now than for many ages heretofore. The Pope is more the Bishops' Pope than formerly; and, especially here in America, the Bishops are more the Pope's Bishops than during the fading era of established churches and cordons; and that makes the Bishop's priests more an apostolic priesthood than formerly. It makes all the people, whether they be Catholics or non-Catholics, sheep within the fold, or "other sheep not of this fold," the people of the Bishops and the Pope.

But meantime some of us wait for ecclesiastical legislation. The unready man converts the spur of the law—until he feels it, and then he clamors for freedom. Priests say, Why don't the Bishops take up Protestant missions; and then the people say, Why don't the priests take them up? And we all say, Why don't the Catholic press do it? And, again, Why don't the religious orders do more of it? All of which means let anybody set to work converting Protestants—except poor me.

Missionary movements do not originate by law-making. The suggestions of Providence can rarely be made compulsory, least of all those for winning souls. In this sort of campaigning the soldier would rather run in the way of God's commandments because God has enlarged his heart than because the ecclesiastical Provost Guard would whip up the stragglers. Fruitful missionary activity originates in the voices heard in the inner chambers of men's souls. Apostolic zeal flows from the springs opened in our hearts by the touch of the Holy Spirit. When he smites the rock abundant waters flow forth, when he lifts the rod the Red Sea of obstacles is parted asunder.

Authority is indeed necessary, but

rather as an aid to missions than as a creative force. And let me ask my clerical reader a few questions: Did your Bishop ever hinder you in any good work for Protestants? Have you done all the good for them he will let you do? Have you always treated him in a way to secure his affectionate trust? Can a Bishop be the manager of all-work for a hundred and fifty priests, and be the Holy Ghost besides to originate new departures? Let a zealous and competent priest first try his hand at public lecturing in places and under circumstances favorable to his purpose, and then let him form his plans and submit them to his Bishop.

For a priest a few years ordained no better fortune could be coveted than some time spent in apostolic lecturing. And at the end of life, no thanksgiving will be more heartfelt than that of the priest who can say: "Thank God! He gave me the grace to win souls from darkness to life."

The career of the priesthood is placed in public life, not in a hermitage. Our great High Priest went about doing good, and so worked and taught that the people pressed upon him in vast multitudes. His moments of solitude were stolen from his hours of labor. Some good priests forget this. "Who built the church in this spot, away outside the town?" I once asked an active pastor, and he answered: "One of my predecessors, an excellent man but timid. His successor and my immediate predecessor, also a devout man, was never seen by the general public here, except once a day as he walked solemnly down to the post office and walked solemnly back again. The rest of the time he was invisible to all but his own people. Out of his sanctuary and his residence he acted like the Lord's ticket-of-leave man—and all this he boasted of as the right course of conduct. So that when I came here I found Catholicity a sort of hermit church."

This peculiarity is sometimes varied by the most bitter public attacks against Protestantism, both doctrinal and personal. The following from the *Life of Blessed Grignon de Montfort*, who certainly was not a minimizer of doctrine, is here appropos: "It is interesting to note that in dealing with the advice of many, he avoided all controversy, which too often has no other effect than to place the mind of the hearers in an attitude of defence, if not antagonism. He contented himself with setting before them the Catholic doctrines, in their simple beauty, and pointing out the marvellous connection of one with the other. He was convinced that the revelation of God in Christ as delivered to men by the one Church, which is his body, is so beautiful and luminous as before long to approve itself to every truly unprejudiced mind. His chief effort, therefore, was to remove prejudices, and to free the minds of his hearers from false conceptions of Catholic truth." And although this great servant of God preached his extreme devotion to Mary as well to Protestants as to Catholics, yet his kindness and his freedom from controversy enabled him to make many conversions, some of them being notorious haters of the faith." (vol. ii., p. 122.)

Nothing in the way of controversy can equal the direct statement of the truth by a man esteemed by his hearers for his virtues; nothing but wilful prejudice can fail of receiving some good influence from it. We can certainly count on a movement in many minds towards conversion as the result of Catholic sermons and lectures well prepared and well delivered by public-spirited priests. The temptation to attack Protestantism, we must admit, is great. For example, it makes one's blood boil to think of honest people being fooled with such a preposterous delusion as that the private interpretation of the Bible is the divine rule of faith. And there are so many outright self-contradictions in distinctive Protestant doctrines, that all one's logical faculty rises to indignation. The very sense of the humorous which is aroused by incongruities and inconsistencies is embittered by the lamentable sight of so many millions of good souls kept from the peaceful unity of truth, the joy of certain pardon for sin, the participation in the divine life of the Eucharist, the fullness and security of union with the Holy Spirit in the interior life of prayer as practised in the Catholic Church.

But it will not do to attack even delusions which are associated with all the pious thoughts of a life-time. Locate holiness and truth where they belong, in God's Church; and the intelligent classes will sooner or later perceive that what they revered as Protestantism, was but Catholicity impoverished and in exile. Let us resist the temptation to attack Calvinism, for it is being put to death in the house of its friends, and its very slayers will resent your interference. Among Protestants themselves there is an active and universal movement against the errors peculiar to the Reformation era, such as the private ownership of God's word, justification without works, total depravity, religion without church. Let these agitators have a monopoly of exterminating error—they are numerous, active, and every way competent. The day will come

when spoil and spoiler will both be brought into the Church. But oh! let us get into men's minds our positive doctrines. Let us do it at once. Let us work and pray and teach and lecture, let us print and distribute these holy truths, let us converse about them, and truths whose restful knowledge is the seat and foundation of all our joy.

How many times do we not hear something like this: "Father, up to a year ago a good many Protestants used to attend our church, and we were beginning to have some conversions. But a mission came along (or we had some lectures), and the fathers so abused our friends and neighbors and called them such hard names that since then we can't induce them to listen to us at all."

The conversion of this Republic rests on our souls. The American people belong to Jesus Christ and to His Church. Even if ninety-nine out of a hundred of them were safe in the fold He bids us leave the many to take care of themselves and go forth and seek and save the few that are lost. But it is just the reverse. It is a small portion of the flock who are safe. Who, then, shall blame a priest if he steals away occasionally from his "ordinary duties" to take advantage of his missionary opportunities? Who shall blame a Bishop if he allows one or two parishes to remain for a season vacant, that a million of immortal souls may not cry out against him at the day of judgment?

One of our Lord's most famous miracles was expedited because it was in favor of a Gentile, of whom the disciples said: "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." Precisely so with many good Protestants all over America. They love our people, they admire their virtues and are patient with their faults. And where there is a Catholic church in the United States which has not Protestant money in it?—not to mention our charitable and educational institutions. What! shall we send missionaries to cannibals in the South Seas and none to these our brethren?

Would that only a quarter as much money and a little of the zeal expended upon evangelizing the red men and the black men among us were given to missions for white non-Catholics! There is almost a positive distinction made against the whites in missionary matters, a distinction founded on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." If a black man or a red savage were so much as hindered admission at the door of a circus tent for racial reasons, the whole power of the American Union would, if necessary, be used to set the wrong right. Yet you seem willing to bar out the whites from the tabernacle of the Covenant on account of the unhappy accident of being members of the Caucasian race, the imperial blood of the world. There are newly-founded and already flourishing orders of missionaries of both sexes wholly set apart for our black Protestants and our red heathen, there are splendid seminaries and colleges and novitiates and schools to train Evangelists for the Protestant "boilers in kitchens and stables and for the miserable remnants of our Indian tribes; and what is being done for their cultured and powerful masters? Nay, if you say charity demands our first care for the ignorant, the poor, the outcast, I reply by asking if there are none such whose skin is white? Are there no "poor whites" in the South? Is there any ignorance denser than that of millions of Northern whites concerning the truths of Christ's religion? Are there no educated Protestants gone totally astray in religion? A man who knows everything but Christ's true religion is only the more ignorant for his knowledge. "I hold everything as dung save the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Black, red, white, tawny—our standard, is of every color. "My beloved is white and ruddy." "I am black but beautiful"; yes; but do you mean that black is the only beautiful? Not long ago I was equally amazed and edified at the account of hundreds of noble priests who had died of malaria on the African missions, the average life of the Fathers, as my informant who is a provincial of a missionary order, assured me, being hardly seven years after arrival at the missions. But when I spoke to him of the American mission to the whites he was evidently the recipient of thoughts wholly new. Now I say this: If you will send your hundreds to an early death from African malaria, why not give at least a few of your heresies to apostolic labors here in America, where they may die after many years of hard work in lecturing and catechizing and interviewing and converting kindly fellow-citizens? No one wonders that the ends of the earth are searched for souls to be saved, for that is our Church's mission; but I wonder at being thought eccentric for appealing for missionaries to save souls right at our own doors.

In the many non-Catholic missions which we have given, nearly all of them in public halls, we have learned many strange things, but the strangest of all is the ripeness of the harvest. The fruit is so ripe that it is falling from the trees and is being carried away by every passer-by. Even the religious perplexities among our countrymen, their very divisions and

sub-divisions, spring from their eagerness for the truth. They want to be holy with the holiness of Christ, and that makes them enter and then makes them leave one and now another denomination. They are a religious people who are accessible to Catholic argument—would that all Bishops, all provincials of communities, all priests and nuns, would write this fact on their hearts! Let it be posted up at every recruiting station of our Lord's peaceful army, that the American people can be drawn to listen to His Church. Let it be announced in the seminaries, let it be placarded in the novitiates and colleges and scholasticates the world over: Beloved, the Great Republic: it is a Field White for the Harvest.

KING SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT, AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

EI. CATHOLIC RECORD:—Dear Sir—In Father Young's recent work, "Catholic and Protestant Countries Compared," under the title, "The Judgment of Solomon," we find an exceedingly apt illustration of the Catholic position in regard to the education of children as contrasted with that taken by the enemies of religious teaching in the schools. I feel confident that the extract will interest your readers.

The Catholic maintains that religious and secular education should go together, that the whole child should be educated: that religious teaching, being more important than the knowledge of things secular, requires at least as much care in the imparting as does the latter, while of those who desire to abolish religion in the schools, some perhaps would prefer that no religious teaching should be given at all, but the majority are not opposed to religion in the schools, if they could only force their own religious views upon Catholics. As the latter class cannot do this, their opposition to religious teaching arises from the fact that it is Catholic teaching to which they are opposed. They are willing to sacrifice their own children—to see them educated without religion, and let them grow up without the knowledge of God—if they can only by doing this prevent the education of Catholic children in the faith of their parents. Thus, like the false mother before Solomon, they are willing to "divide the living child in two" in order to prevent Catholics from bringing up their offsprings in the way they should go.

Father Young puts the matter thus: My readers will recall the Scripture story, how King Solomon the Wise gave a judgment which at once discovered the true mother of the child claimed by two women: "Divide the child in two, and give a half to each woman" was the decree. "I am content," said the impostor. "Nay," cried out the true mother, "pot so, do not kill the child, but give it to her, that it may live." Then said the wise King: "Give the child to her, and let it not be divided, for she is the true mother thereof."

What application has this wise judgment of Solomon to the present contention between Catholics and Protestants as to who shall have the child, all of the child, so that it may receive proper intellectual, moral and religious education, a whole, true, living education?

That which goes to make up a true education is composed of two elements, well distinguished as religious and secular. To-day we hear a popular, insincere clamor, all the more self-condemnatory in those who use it, which distinguishes those elements as sectarian and non-sectarian. Given together, both these elements combine to unify the educational vitality of the child and they mutually strengthen each other. To divide them is as fatal to the true mental and moral being of a child, as it would be its certain death to force a separation between its soul and body, to divide the spiritual from the material element of a living man.

This has not only been the constant assertion of the Catholic Church, but until the late rise of Nullifidian (no faith) secularism in politics and education, threatening a violent disruption of the political and social order, such was also the common sentiment of all religious-minded Protestants. . . . Who does not see that the popular Protestant cry to day is: "Divide the child in two, we are content!" And what is enough to make one shudder with horror is to hear, in effect, the insane clamor from the Protestant multitude: "Divide all the children in two with the sword of the State! Sooner than that the Catholic children shall live, let the sword fall as well upon our own!" But let us look further, in order to see even yet more clearly which is the true mother in this rivalry for possession of the child. As yet the sentence of Solomon—"Give the living child to this Catholic woman for she is the mother thereof"—has not been pronounced, and as the impostor came before Solomon's judgment-seat in possession of the child, so Protestants are now, practically, in possession of the children, as a body, in this country. Now for the test.

Thus the Catholic woman: "I pray thee, O just and wise State, to grant unto me thy servant that I may give suck unto my child. Behold how it languishes and faints for want of

nourishment, and my bowels of compassion are moved upon my child as I witness its sufferings. Behold my breasts are full, and this other woman's are dry. Therefore suffer me to come unto the child that I may suckle it."

"Nay, I will not that she come near it!" cries out the Protestant woman. "Keep her off, O King State! Deny her all access to the child. 'No sectarianism in the Public schools!' Is not that the law which the protectors of American institutions would fain make, O King State, if they could? It is true I have little or no 'sectarian' milk to give the child, for my breasts are dry, or so nearly dry that the child will not suck. But then neither shall she suckle it, however full her breasts. Keep her off; for if once she be permitted to nurse the child before thine eyes, O State, and in the sight of all the people, then will her fruitfulness be shown and the shame of my barrenness be made manifest."

"Then I pray," still pleads the Catholic woman, "that I may, at least, take the child under my own roof-tree and there minister unto its wants."

"Forbid her also this," cries the other; and there is a dog-in-the-manger wrath in her eyes and fury in her hands as she looks around for her friends and neighbors—her Evangelical Alliances, her National Leagues for the Protection of American Institutions, her A. P. A.'s and her Loyal British Orange-men, who have come over to help protect(?) American institutions—who all troop forward with a goodly display of banners inscribed with, "No foreign domination," carried by the British Orangemen; "No Church and State," carried by the Evangelical Alliance, which labored hard in Congress to establish the Protestant religion, and failed; "No State Aid to Sectarian Schools!" carried by the National League for P. A. I.; and, in place of a banner, an old hangman's noose formerly used in Ireland to choke the Catholic woman's brothers who were schoolmasters, carried by the A. P. A., and the United Order of American Mechanics.

And as they all stand face to face round about the king's judgment-seat King State saith to his officers: "Bring me a sword!"

"And the friends of the Protestant woman bring him a sharp sword they have themselves prepared—the sword of the '16th Amendment to the Constitution.' And when they have brought the sword to the king—"Divide," saith he, the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." And the woman whose child is alive saith to the King (for her bowels yearn upon her child), "I beseech thee, my lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it, but grant me leave to come unto it, so that it die not; I will stand without her (school) house all the day, and when she and the child shall be weary of each other, then thy servant craves to be let come near unto the fruit of her own womb for the space of a brief half hour, O King State, and in haste will I suckle it that it die not, and go my way." But the other cries out: "Let it be neither mine nor hers but Nullifidian, and be divided, though it die."

Shall not the King State answer and say in the words of Solomon the Wise, "Give the living child to the Catholic woman, and let it not be divided, for she is the true mother thereof?" And shall not all America "hear the judgment which King State shall judge, and fear the King, seeing that the wisdom of God is in him to do judgment?" Yours etc. J. F.

A Beautiful Example.

Le Rosier de Marie states that *La Gasotte de France* has lately published the following incident:

Some days ago—in a city, which we will not name, two French Generals met privately to have a little confidential conversation on the war of 1870. It was the anniversary of a date which brought sorrow to their hearts but a glorious one in the terrible year. After recounting the events in detail around their cheerful fire the two generals spent the greater part of the evening reciting the Rosary for their companions in arms who had fallen on the field of honor. At 4 in the morning they assisted at Mass in a private chapel; they served the Mass on their knees and received holy Communion, thus no doubt following the example of the great Sobieski on the morning when Vienna was freed from the enemy. That is all. But the statement of this simple fact will perhaps cause to some of our readers the same emotion that we ourselves experienced when it was communicated to us in confidence.

Parents owe their children good example—the example of saying their morning and night prayers, the example of abstaining from meat on Friday, the example of hearing Mass on Sunday, the example of frequenting the sacraments, the example of all the virtues suitable to their state. And if the children fail in the practice of the faith for want of that example, the delinquent fathers and mothers shall not go unpunished.