

God in His tender mercy, and in answer to the real prayer that has ascended concerning this thing, is going to teach the great Church some simple foundation lessons as to the possible uselessness of money and numbers as missionary forces, and the pre-eminence of the prayer of faith.

"If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, least haply ye be found even to fight against God."

31 Bloor St., E. Toronto, Dec. 22nd 1904.

The Pope and the Popular use of the Bible.

The standing charge that the authorities of the church of Rome are on principle opposed to the popular use of the Scriptures has lost some of its validity, in view of recent events. The Vatican seems to have inaugurated a new policy in this direction, and has shown special favor to the popular translations of the Gospels that have appeared in Italy during the past few months. Protestant Journals acknowledge the significance of this fact, and a late issue of the German *Nachrichten über die Ausbreitung des Evangeliums in Italic* (Reports of the spread of the Gospel in Italy) furnishes the following information:

Excellent translations and explanations of the gospels in the Italian language are being printed nowadays by the authority of the St. Jerome Association. It has recently become known that the translator of these works was Professor Cleventi and the commentator Father Genochi. Soon after the present Pope had entered upon his office these two scholars were received at the Vatican. They fell upon their knees; but when the Pope entered he at once bade them arise and permitted them to kiss his hand. When requested to bestow his blessing on the new work and the spread of the gospel, the Pope answered:

"Gladly do I give my blessing, and that with both hands and with a full heart, for I do not doubt that this work will produce the richest fruit and is already blessed by God. The more we read the gospel, the stronger our faith becomes. The gospels are writings that are valuable for everybody and under all circumstances. I have lived among the common people and know what they want and what pleases them. Tell them the simplest Bible stories and you will have attentive listeners and effect blessed results. Your purpose is to spread the gospels. You are doing a noble work. Some people think that the peasants, with their plain, everyday way of thinking, would not profit by the reading of the Scriptures. This is incorrect. The average peasant is a shrewder thinker than we may suspect and knows how to draw the correct lessons from the Scriptures, often, even better than many of the preachers. But it is not only the common people and the lower classes who will profit by the reading of the Scriptures. No matter how many prayer-books and books of devotion there may be for the priests, none are better than the gospels. This is an unsurpassed book of devotion, the true bread of life. I grant an especial apostolic blessing upon all those who preach the gospel, who hear and read it, whether on a Sunday or a week day. I bestow my blessing on all the members of the St. Jerome Society and all who cooperate in the sacred work of spreading the gospel."

The Reformation, one of the most pronounced Protestant Journals of Germany,

comments on this utterance as follows:

"No Roman ecclesiastic has ever before spoken such words. If we consider the pious and evangelical notes that have been added to this popular edition of the Bible we must recognize the fact that a new influence is at work in the Roman Catholic Church. Not a few priests in Italy seriously doubt the wisdom of the new policy in spreading the Scriptures among the common people. They refrain from participating in the papal blessing that has been pronounced on the venture, and, in consequence, there are many thousand copies of these cheap gospel editions left unsold. But fully 250,000 have been sold. A new era has been inaugurated since the day when a Protestant missionary reported that he had examined the book-stores in fifty Italian cities and had found only one copy of the Bible complete—and that in 10-folio volumes—and one copy of the four gospels."

Warning Against Profanity.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain," was the theme of Rev. A. W. McIlroy's sermon on a recent Sunday morning in Stewarton church.

The text, he said, forbids perjury and profanity, but is more extensive in its scope than this. It forbids all irreverence in worship and all irrelevant use of God's word in the pointing of flippant jokes or embellishing worldly conversation. To the Jews the name Jehovah involved such a degree of reverence and solemnity that they refrained from saying it. The flippant manner in which so many people in those days take God's name in vain, and use God's word irreverently in conversation, is simply appalling and marks a disregard for the "eternal fitness of things" which is simply shocking to all who believe that the words that fall from their tongues should be respectful, clean, reverent and pure. Using God's name unworthily and irreverently, making formality and insincerity conspicuous in acts of worship, using God's name or God's word in a jocular manner, are all a clear violation of the third commandment.

The sin of perjury is an atrocious crime against the Eternal. It is an awful thing to make false statements under the solemnity of a judicial oath—so solemn a thing that the Quakers misinterpret the Savior's language when He said "Swear not at all," and refuse to take judicial oaths under any circumstances, holding that a simple affirmation of the truth should be sufficient. There is something very sacred in a judicial oath. It cannot safely be trifled with.

In this city of Ottawa, the political and judicial centre of Canada, which should set an example in law, morality and righteousness to all other cities of the Dominion, the sin of profanity in its many forms is terribly prevalent. Oaths and blaspheming in every day conversation, often greet the ears of passersby, and yet the men (and boys) who so thoughtlessly and flippantly use forbidden language with their fellowmen, claim to be gentlemen. What a grotesquely absurd claim. Real gentlemen never use profane language. No well bred young man or boy who has respect for himself, his family or his superiors, will ever think of indulging in the vice of profanity. The practice is wholly unreasonable and a solutely useless. It does good to nobody. It gives no emphasis to what one says. It evinces a lack of confidence in one's own veracity. It involves the imprecation of curses upon the profane man

himself, upon his family, his fellowmen and upon his property, and it destroys the divine in man, demoralizes other lives and leads to the commission of other crimes.

The preacher pointed out the futility and hollowness of the excuses by which men seek to justify their profanity and appealed to his hearers to avoid and spurn this wide-spread and crying sin, for the names and the laws of God cannot be mocked with impunity.

An Immortal.

When Nicodemus left his home on the night he paid his visit to Jesus, the young Galilean who was visiting great Jerusalem, he little knew the act would make him immortal. He did not know that the interview would be the greatest single interview in the history of the world. Nor did he know that he would listen to the greatest discourse that ever fell from human lips. But it was so. Nicodemus was not the greatest man of history, but he was great enough to accept the truth which he heard that night, and that greatness adds to the immortality of salvation.

There is a wide difference between earthly and heavenly immortality. The first comes from human action with reference to the world alone of a kind that cannot be forgotten. Julius Caesar achieved it. He has not been forgotten in nineteen years; he will not be in nineteen hundred if the world will last so long. He did things in the world for the world, and to the world. Two great empires perpetuate his name in their imperial title. The calendar and the code are marked by him imperishably. But his was the immortality of power; of brain, of eye, of hand; when one thinks of it, or of him, there is never a thought of love in the heart. No one to-day does or can love Julius Caesar.

But every Christian heart in this world from William II, Rex et Imperator, as he signs himself, to the young woman, fameless and to remain fameless, who last went out bearing her commission as missionary of some Board of Foreign Missions, loves Nicodemus. Three pictures of him hang on the wall of every Christian life. One is of the night scene. One is of him speaking in the Sanhedrim in defence of Jesus that he might not be condemned unheard. One is of the sepulchre where he stood with spices to embalm the body of the Great Martyr. Nicodemus the Seeker, Nicodemus the Defender, Nicodemus the Lover. We have never seen his statue in any of the world's galleries, but if ever a hall is dedicated to the Immortals, this man should be in it, with the title, "Nicodemus: Friend of Jesus, and Master in Israel."—Philadelphia Westminister.

It is never well to limit an expectation. There are forms and conditions that belong to the present, but not the future. Had the Jews confined themselves to a promise, they might have accepted the Christ, but they limited the Holy One of Israel, and failed to see in the Rabbi a possible King.

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