

Sacred Heart Review. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCXXCVIII.

Professor Foster, or rather the Presbyterian church, which, by publishing his book, makes herself responsible for the truth of its main propositions, is very indignant at having it said that Luther, and the other Reformers, deny that salvation can be found in the Catholic Church.

As I have shown repeatedly, the British Protestants, English and Scotch, were enraged to hear it said that "Papists" could be saved. The continental Reformers were less severe. Calvin, for instance, censures those who say that any particular Catholic, even the great leader of the League, is lost. How, he asks, can the Pope be anti-Christ, if he does not sit in the temple of God? Therefore there must be many true churches and true Christians among the Papists. Accordingly, he directs, if there are no Reformed ministers at hand, let our people take their children to the priests to be baptized.

Following Calvin, the Huguenots allowed that Catholics could be saved. Therefore, although they excommunicated Henri Quatre on his turning Catholic, they could not pretend that they had thereby cast him out of the kingdom of God. They might have said, indeed, "So libidinous a man as Henry is not likely to be in a state of grace now, and he was not likely to be in a state of grace when he was with us. His real religion is probably summed up in his reported exclamation: 'Paris is worth a Mass!'"

As Luther also held that anti-Christ must be found in the church, not outside, and would have it that the Pope is anti-Christ, he was logically bound to treat Catholics as possible Christians. And in fact in his later years he does say: "Many and mighty saints have remained under the Pope." Also: "The Papists have the authentic Creed, the authentic Sacraments, the authentic Christianity. Moreover, we have derived these from them."

However, in the height of his career, he says: "I will not have my doctrine judged of any man, not even of angels; whoever does not accept my doctrine, can not be saved."

Now since, as Professor Foster rightly says, in Johnson's Cyclopaedia, the Catholic doctrine of justification is sounder than Luther's, and since Baxter declares that he can not discover the essential difference between the Catholic and the Calvinistic doctrine of justification, an opinion to which Mohler also seems to incline. (On the contrary, Mohler says that Calvin "perfectly coincides" with Luther.—Ed. Review) it follows that Luther, in his prime, sent to damnation the wiser part. If he did not hold out in this perverseness, so much the better for him. But Professor Foster ought to have stated that he came to this more reasonable charity only in his old age.

Let any one read Luther's glorifications of a faith "before love and with out love," a faith entirely compatible, as he declares, with concubinage and manslaughter, and public falsehood, and then read the General Laynez's exposition of justification before the Fathers of Trent, and I think he will be well disposed to agree with Foster in putting the Jesuit, as to this point, above the Reformer. No wonder Luther talks about "my doctrine." It certainly is not "Christian doctrine." As to Luther's declaration that it was lost after Paul's death, and had been afresh revealed to him, that is simply a specimen of his incomparable impudence. It is not strange that he is not willing to have his doctrine tested, either by men or by angels, for it would stand the trial very ill indeed. John Wesley is fully warranted in describing Martin's famous commentary on the Galatians as "that dangerous treatise."

A Methodist friend of mine, who detests the A. P. A. and all that rabble, but who evidently thinks it a point of religion to stand by Luther through thick and thin, contends that Wesley did not get Luther's real point of view, that if he had, he would have admired his work on Galatians as much as Protestants generally have done.

True, give to Luther's words a "non natural sense," of which a very large part of them stand so fearfully in need, and you may make him agree with Calvin or Baxter or Laynez or Paul, or anybody. However, John Wesley is too clear headed a man for that style of proceeding. He takes to Luther's words in this work for what they mean; and what they mean, as concerns justification, is anything but edifying.

Moreover, Wesley had been so much in Germany that he had had a good opportunity of learning what the results of Luther's teachings really were. He finds the fruits of loose living everywhere in the German Protestantism of that time. Even Zinzendorf and the early Moravians, although Wesley nowhere charges them with ill-living, yet, standing on the doctrinal basis of Luther's teaching, even aggravated his theoretical Antinomianism. Zinzendorf was a much better man than Luther, a man of saintly face and saintly life (although Oetinger declares that he is nobody alongside of Ignatius Loyola), but he even outgoes Luther in declaiming against the law of duty as being held binding on Christians. True believers, he explains to Wesley, in the conference at London, do nothing because they are bound to it. As if filial obedience, in man or angel, can ever be a mere form of self-pleasing, divorced from reverent regard to the laudable and Perfect Will!

Whatever fault may be found with John Wesley, he has at least saved the whole body of his followers, exiles and later, from any faint doctrinal Antinomianism. His early socialism, although afterwards moderated, always retained a saving salt in his influence. The best Methodists remind us of him, but they do not remind us in the least of Martin Luther. The type is wholly different. The more completely they hold themselves aloof from the burly

blackguard of Wittenberg (admiring always, of course, his great genius and such works of his as "The Freedom of a Christian Man" the better it will be for their reputation. After all, while they have a right to recoil from the "horrible decretum," they belong to Calvin's wing of Protestantism, not to Luther's.

Either alternative, of course, still leaves them the inestimable privilege of vituperating "the Papists" to their heart's content—a privilege, it is true, which my learned friend is by no means inclined to use.

It is lamentable how sometimes, when people are committed to some one as a saint, who is not a bit of a saint, whatever else he may be, they will defend them in him from which they would recoil with horror, if they were said or done by another man.

For instance, if, when this friend took his wife, some one had suggested that, if she should ever fall, say into leprosy, or into hopeless insanity, he would have a right to put her away, as being no longer his wife, and to take another, so that if by some miracle she were recovered she also would be free to take a new husband, he would have struck down the vile prompter of an evil thought. Yet, when Luther says the same thing, he finds in it nothing amiss! He explains that in such a case the wife is to be regarded as dead! This he says, not of himself, for he would rather die than forsake a wife whom he has taken "for better for worse, in sickness in health," but as being under the temporary obsession of an evil spirit, known on earth as Martin Luther. What he may be known as now, I can not say, not entertaining intelligence with Pandemonium.

I may remark that when I communicated this thesis of Luther's to another friend, also a clergyman, but who, not being a theological professor, was free to use his moral judgment, he only replied, "What inhumanity!" and turned away in disgust. So would any one who does not reason in this way: "Luther is a saint and apostle; the true Gospel, after being well nigh lost for ages, was revealed anew to Luther; therefore Luther, though possibly capable of some trifling slips of opinion, is not capable in a vital manner of saying anything evil or substantially false. Therefore, although our humane and Christian instincts, left to themselves, would abhor any man who should give us leave to repudiate a wife for involuntary maladies, yet, when this otherwise detestable doctrine is propounded by the canonical and canonized authority of Martin Luther, we must humbly submit ourselves to it as wholesome and sound."

I have read Dr. Sheldon's defense of Luther's behavior in the matter of the Landgravo's bigamy, and must say that while it does not make matters one whit better for Luther, it does make them a good deal worse for Dr. Sheldon. He actually thinks (and so does my friend) that Philip would have done much better had he followed Martin's advice, and concealing his bigamous marriage, have left the world to believe that the young Margaret was not his wife, but merely his concubine! And this is supposed to be a vindication of Luther! Bigamy, declared by Luther to be very undesirable, but not sinful, is to be covered from the scorn of the world by the pretended immorality of an evangelical prince, who declares that he has resorted to polygamy in hope of escaping from his promiscuous unchastity, but who is urged by the two Martin Luthers and Bucer, to pretend to the world that he is still involved in the immorality, as he is in fact in the resulting disease, from which he is struggling to escape. Moreover, he is not merely to leave the world to misinterpret him if it will, but is to protest solemnly, as before God and men, "that he knows that Christ has abolished polygamy, and restored the original covenant between one man and one woman, and that it is a foul sin and to suppose that he, a Christian prince, could think it lawful for him to resort to polygamy. No; Margaret is simply his concubine, such as God of old allowed his friends to take." This lying and shameless declaration Bucer had drawn up and urged on the Landgrave, and when Philip refused to sign it, Luther scornfully remarked that a Protestant who would shrink from "a good plump lie" for the benefit of the true religion, was a contemptible creature.

And this is supposed to be a vindication of Luther and Bucer and Melancthon and Bugenhagen!

CHARLES C. STARBUCK. Andover, Mass.

THOUGHTS FOR LENT. I O Christian, thou hast but one soul! If that be lost, all is lost; there is but one death; if bad all is bad. II. Thou hast only one Judge; from Him there is no appeal. III. Thou hast only one sentence to hear; it will be either "Come, ye blessed," or "Depart, ye cursed." IV. Thou hast but one eternity awaiting thee; if this be not happy, then thou shalt be unhappy forever. V. There is but one heaven; excluded from this hell will be thy inevitable doom.

All created things could not fill your heart, for its capacity is greater than anything which is not God. The will of God, alone shall be your fulness, and it shall leave no void in your soul.

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS. A. McTAGGART, M.D., C.M. 75 Yonge Street, Toronto. Reference is made to Dr. McTaggart's profession of abstinence and personal integrity permitted by Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice Hon. G. W. Ross, ex-Premier of Ontario. Rev. John Potts D.D., Victoria College, Rev. F. C. Coffey, President of St. Michael's College, Toronto. Right Rev. A. Swainman, Bishop of Toronto; Hon. Thomas Coffey, Senator, Catholic Record, London.

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FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS. Palm Sunday. SPIRIT OF HOLY WEEK. Think diligently upon him that endured such opposition from sinners against himself. (Heb. x. 33.) The week which we this Sunday enter upon, my dear brethren, is called Holy Week; and of all the many sacred seasons which the church has set apart, this is by far the most solemn and sacred. Everything which it is within the power of external rites and ceremonies to do has been done by the church in these services, in order to bring home to her children the great lesson which this holy season should teach. And while it is true that the church has not made attendance obligatory under pain of mortal sin, yet it would argue a very poor and ungrateful spirit, and one but little in accordance with that of the church, if any one should without good reason neglect to be present.

Now, what is the truth which these services have it for their object to impress upon our minds? No other than that fundamental, distinctive truth—the Passion and death of Christ, its reason and effects. The church this week excludes from commemoration everything else, and applies herself exclusively to tracing the steps of her Lord and Founder from His entry into Jerusalem in the midst of acclamations and rejoicings, to the entombment of His dead and blood-stained body in the Sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. Now, every one must have, necessarily has, in these events the greatest interest—an interest which surpasses every other.

And, first, as to those who are in the habit of going frequently to the sacraments, who understand their great value, and feed in these means of grace their chief consolation in the midst of the troubles and cares which surround them. For these the commemoration of the Passion and death of Christ cannot but be profitable. The author of "The Following of Christ" tells us that we ought not to consider so much the gift of the lover as the love of the giver. And we all know that we esteem the trifling present made by the lover which we have ourselves bought, far more than the more costly things which we have ourselves bought. Now, the sacraments are not merely inestimable treasures in themselves; they are also tokens and pledges of the love of Him who instituted them, bought by Him at the cost of His own most Precious Blood, given to us to show us His love to us. Every time a man goes to confession, every time he receives Holy Communion, he is receiving that which we have instituted, and established, and bestowed upon him, out of love; and if he wishes to know how great that love was he ought to have a lively sense of what it cost our Lord to merit those graces for us—namely, His bitter passion and death.

But there are many who neglect the sacraments, who come to them but seldom, perhaps only to their Easter Communion; perhaps not even to that. What is to be thought of those who act in this way? Certainly, however they may be, or fancy themselves to be, in lower matters which are nearer to them and fall beneath their senses—in money getting, in trade, in art, in literature—such men show but little sense and understanding about things which are of real importance and value. In what way may these duller and obtuser minds learn to appreciate the price given for a thing by a prudent man is a good means of learning what it is worth. Now, if those who neglect the sacraments, who make but little of them, would during the week apply themselves to the consideration of the price paid by our Lord to those sacraments, I have but little doubt that they would be led to form a truer notion of their value and importance.

I wish to conclude without alluding to another class which, though I trust it is not numerous, yet does exist—I mean those who do not neglect the sacraments, but those who do worse; who profane them. Those who make bad confessions, who conceal mortal sins, who have no sorrow for their sins and no purpose of amendment, who make the indelible mercy and goodness of God a reason and pretext for wallowing in vice and sin—what shall be said of these? We know that our Lord is reigning now gloriously in heaven; that nothing which we can do can cause him less or pain; yet it is also true that those who act in this way do all that lies in their power to trample under foot that Precious Blood which was shed for them. But while there is life there is hope, and if even those would devote this week to meditation on the Passion of our Lord, they might form a just estimate of what their souls cost our Lord, and turn to Him while there is yet time.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

The Rev. Louis S. Walsh, D. C. L., Supervisor of the Catholic Free School of the Archdiocese of Boston, gave the notable sermon on Christian education at the laying of the cornerstone of St. Mary's School, in Fall River, Mass., the Right Rev. Bishop Stang, on Sunday, March 18. Granting even that the secular public school does all for the pupil's temporal well-being that its advocates claim, the duty of Catholic parents, as Father Walsh urged with emphasis, is still to provide an education for their children in which the latter's spiritual interests are not jeopardized for any worldly consideration. Said Father Walsh: "The Puritan and Pilgrim deserve credit for giving to our noble state such a foundation, but they were not the originators of the idea, for it was one of the many fine ideas that they brought over from old Catholic England, hence it was and is a Catholic idea."

"The non-religious—or so called, but misnamed, non-sectarian—system was adopted about seventy years ago. Two or more generations have been situated under it, and with what result?"

"I will put the Catholics in a group by themselves, the people, men especially, of the state and country are no longer a church-going people. Where and when do legislators now consult the rights of God and of religion in making the capital laws of the land? Is the Christian idea of Sunday not fast disappearing? Who hesitates to sneer at the majesty of the law on statute book in court or in trade, unless the strong-armed hand is there to inspire fear of transgression?"

It is but fair to prelude Father Walsh's answer by the statements of two representative Protestant clergymen on the self-same day.

The Rev. S. S. Seward of New York, preaching in the church of the New Jerusalem, pleaded for the restoration of "the missing link" (religion)—which makes earth life the preparation for Heaven.

"While disclaiming pessimism and boldly declaring that divine forces are already at work that will reform and regenerate society, he pointed out that the millennium has not yet arrived—there seems to be something rotten in Denmark," and that God seems to be forgotten in these days as an active factor in the affairs of men. He illustrated this by the tendency to resort to legislation, and a multitude of outward reforms to right the wrongs of the world instead of appealing to moral or spiritual principles."

The Rev. Charles Stelz, secretary of the church and labor department of the general Presbyterian body, speaking at the First Presbyterian church in St. Louis, made these significant statements: "Who has not been appalled by the tremendous growth of Socialism? In our own country the growth in the last four years has been seven fold. If it increases in the same ratio in the next eight years the Socialists will be able to elect a President."

"Whatever one may think of the economic value of Socialism, this fact remains—that Socialism is becoming to thousands of workmen a substitute for the church. The labor question is definitely and morally a religious problem."

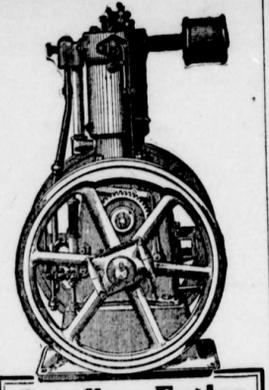
The Socialist may retort, however, that his tenets receive encouragement from the equally irreligious worship of money and material success which prevails among us, and will grimly indicate the eminent Sunday school man, John D. Rockefeller, of Standard Oil notoriety, with his billion dollar fortune.

Father Walsh, with even keener eyes for the evils of the time, and not less love for his country, does not hesitate to put the blame squarely on the seventy years of secularism in the public schools, by which two generations at least have grown up in an atmosphere from which all positive Christian ideas are excluded.

All if the old church had not kept and held firm that cornerstone of old Massachusetts; in that golden inscription had not been written over her school houses; if that invigorating spirit had not been the sap and life of her system of education, to day Christian civilization in any tangible, visible form would be a by-word in our noble commonwealth and the ancestors of Puritan days would rise up to rebuke, perhaps even to curse the degenerate sons who removed the cornerstone from the sacred edifice of school and college and university."

Oh, the ineffable peace that is ours when faith has taught us thus to see God through all circumstances as through a transparent veil! There is nothing that does not penetrate and overcome, it passes beyond all shadows and through the darkest clouds to reach Truth; clasps it in a firm embrace, and is never parted from it.

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