

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1925

"THE PRIVATE MIND"

We have already drawn attention to a discussion going on in the Forum from which we may hope many non-Catholics will get a clearer notion of Catholic principles and practice; that some, at least, of the popular misconceptions of the Protestant tradition will be cleared up; for these traditional prejudices strangely and strongly survive even when all positive religion has been abandoned.

Mr. John Jay Chapman thus states his case against the Catholic Church:

"The Roman Catholic question in America is an aftermath of the Reformation, which was essentially a struggle against two opposing forms of thought, one of which relied on Authority and the other on the Private Mind. The struggle will probably go on indefinitely."

Passing over for the moment this estimate of the Reformation it is unquestionably true that the Reformers justified their revolt from the authority of the Catholic Church by the appeal to Private Judgment. They substituted the authority of Holy Scripture for that of the Church and to make good and sufficient the authority of the Bible they were driven to assert the principle of Private Judgment in the matter of the interpretation of Holy Scripture. It is interesting to note that Mr. Chapman abandons the time-honored historic term, Private Judgment, and substitutes that of Private Mind. Why? Private Judgment connotes the authority of Holy Writ; and countless thousands of Protestants so-called reject the authority of Holy Scripture as completely and unreservedly as they do that of the Catholic Church. "Private Mind" then, in our day, is the more accurate and appropriate term.

In the May Forum there is an article on Common-Censorship which illustrates admirably the reason for substituting Private Mind for Private Judgment; and for that matter Private Mind is the necessary offspring and legitimate successor of the old Private Judgment with its implication of Scriptural authority.

In this article on Censorship, Mr. Washington Pezet protests vigorously against the exercise of any sort of authority over the individual Private Mind. In this he carries the Reformation principle of Private Judgment to its rigidly logical conclusion.

He inveighs against the disease that vitiates the full and free play of the Private Mind—"the Puritan moral code."

"This Puritan moral code," he continues, "which we have inherited from a pre-scientific age is a code that holds to the reality of abstractions. It believes that there are such things as Right and Wrong, Good and Bad, capitalized."

So far have we progressed with this glorious liberty of Private Judgment!

Mr. Pezet continues: "In the April Forum, John Jay Chapman maintained that the Catholic Church is un-American because it stands for external Authority in religious and moral matters, whereas the essence of Protestant 100% Nordic Americanism is to be found in reliance upon the Private Mind. Heretofore we have thought the Private Mind, exercising its freedom of choice at the box office, a sufficient guardian of public morals as exhibited on the stage. Now we have abandoned our historic attitude, shackled the Private Mind, and accepted the Catholic doctrine of external Authority—for by derivation, a censorship means an authoritative guardian of morals and manners. "The irony of it is that this surrender to Catholic principle has

not been brought about by the priests of Rome,—it is not they who have shrieked for censorship,—but by our Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, the spiritual descendants of the men who first fought the good fight of the Private Mind."

The men who fought the good fight of the Private Mind were not concerned with freedom. Acts of Supremacy, of Uniformity, the crime of Recusancy, the Penal Laws, deprivation of citizenship, outlawry, imprisonment and death imposed by the civil power on those who refused to follow the Reformers surely show that freedom of the Private Mind was not their chief concern. The Reformers substituted the authority of the civil power for that of the Church. And for the civil power to exercise spiritual authority is the extreme of tyranny.

The Reformers would have accomplished little or nothing if politics had not come to their aid. The history of the Reformation might lead one, at first sight, to assert that the fundamental principle of Protestantism was the supremacy in spirituals of the civil power. To that it owed its success. Why then be astonished that Protestants invoke the civil power today to suppress whatever they think is wrong and to uphold what they think is right? Their ideas of Temperance, their notions of Sunday observance, their decision as to how much or how little religion may be taught in the schools, their legislation against the teaching of Evolution, these and many other things they impose on all without exception when and where they can by means of civil enactment and the police power of the State. So far from being a matter for astonishment, it is in strict keeping with the methods by which their spiritual forbears "fought the good fight of the Private Mind."

But the modern champions of the untrammelled Private Mind as the supreme "authority in religious and moral matters" are entirely right in tracing their denial of all external standards of right and wrong, good and bad, to the Reformation principle of Private Judgment.

Let us have a few more samples of the logical development of Private Judgment from Mr. Pezet's article:

"Today we know that as an abstraction morals have no existence. There is no absolute good or bad, right or wrong. . . ."

"If we are to progress morally, if we are to develop a new code to fit the needs of this scientific age, it must have its roots in science and not in superstition. . . ."

"It is the most arrant absurdity to say that the present-day public finds only clean plays. The public finds some clean plays acceptable and others merely dull. People want to see risqué plays. They want plays with a dash of pornography; and the proof is that they pay to see them and they don't walk out. . . ."

"What this common-censorship actually accomplishes is to substitute the Private Minds of a chosen few for the Private Minds of the majority of theatre goers. Since there exists no moral standard for them to judge by, they will base their judgments upon their own opinions, and inevitably their own opinions will be colored by the self-consciousness due to their roles as censors. They will represent not the public taste as it is but public taste as they think it should be—that is, public taste dressed up in the tawdry raiment of its hypocrites. . . ."

"I believe this censorship marks only the beginning, only the initial triumph of that minority which is trying ceaselessly to establish the supreme authority of its narrow unscientific moral code. . . . If I am wrong in this conjecture, it is small consolation. If this censorship really exists in response to the will of the majority, it means that most of us have abandoned the faith of our fathers, that we have so far degenerated that we are willing to establish a moral tyranny among us. . . ."

There is something revolting in all this as there is something saddening in the disintegration of Protestantism in so far as it stood for the positive in faith and morals. But how confidently the neo-Protestant appeals to the basic principle of Protestantism! What Protestant can deny his claim to be the true heir to the heritage of the

Reformation? Logically, Protestants are utterly inconsistent; historically, they are absolutely consistent when they appeal to the civil power to enforce their own peculiar views of religion and morals.

By way of comment on this latest and most logical development of the Protestant principle we shall quote a passage from Brownson written nearly eighty years ago:

"But Private Judgment itself is not, strictly speaking, ultimate; and therefore, though it be the principle of Protestantism, is not its ultimate principle. The ultimate principle of Protestantism lies a little farther back. Rights are never in themselves ultimate but must always, to be rights, rest on some foundation or authority. The right of Private Judgment necessarily implies some principle on which it is founded. Every judgment is by some standard or measure; for when we judge it is always by something, and this, whatever it is, is the principle, law, rule, criterion, standard, or measure of the judgment. In every act of private judgment this standard or measure is the individual judging. The individual judges by himself, and to judge by one's self is precisely what is meant by private judgment. In it the individual is both the measurer and the measure—in a word his own yard-stick of truth and goodness. But rights to be rights, must not only be founded on some principle, but on a true principle; for to say they are founded on a false principle is only saying in other words that they have no foundation at all. The right of all men to unrestricted private judgment, then, necessarily implies that each and every man is in himself the exact measure of truth and goodness. In laying down the principle of Private Judgment as the principle of dissent from the Catholic Church, Protestantism, then, necessarily lays down the principle that each and every man is in himself the exact measure of truth and goodness. . . ."

"This conclusion is undeniable, for the acutest dialectic will find no break or flaw in the chain of reasoning by which it is obtained. . . . There are few things more disgusting than the cowardice which shrinks from avowing the legitimate consequences of one's own principles. The sin of inconsequence is, as the celebrated Dr. Evariste de Gypendole justly remarks, a mortal sin,—at least in the eyes of humanity: for it is high treason against the rational nature itself; and he who deliberately commits it voluntarily abdicates reason, and takes his place among inferior and irrational natures. If your principles are sound, you cannot push them to a dangerous extreme; and if they will not bear pushing to their extreme consequences, you should know that they are unsound, and not fit to be entertained; for it is always lawful to conclude the unsoundness of the principle from the unsoundness of the consequences. . . ."

The logical analysis of Private Judgment by "the master mind of America" is borne out today by countless thousands who openly, proudly, claim the right to push the principle of Private Judgment to its logical conclusion regardless of consequences.

Principles good or bad, once accepted, have a way of working themselves out in practice. **THEY HAVE LEARNED SOME LESSONS** A change of government in France is not an event, that usually calls for much attention. For there they have not the two-party political system which seems almost an essential condition for the satisfactory functioning of the parliamentary form of government. Consequently a majority must be secured by combining several more or less conflicting groups into a "bloc"; each group thus has a disproportionate influence in shaping the government policy; and a disgruntled leader of no national weight or importance may at any time by withdrawing his group's support bring about the downfall of the administration. . . .

But the shameless revival of anticlericalism by the Herriot government caused a profound feeling of resentment throughout France. The pre-War supine attitude of French Catholics in the face of political persecution gave place to a

vigorous determination to assert their full rights as citizens of France. They left no room for doubt as to their high resolve to insist on justice and equal treatment. Nothing like their monster meetings of protest, in which ex-service men everywhere took a leading part, had been hitherto known in France. Herriot's ineptitude became patent and unpardonable; and his downfall a mere matter of time and expediency.

The inclusion of Caillaux, anti-British, pro-German, who had only a short time before been restored to civil rights, has received much attention and comment. But his eminent financial abilities are conceded even by his enemies—and he has implacable enemies; so the exigencies of national finance demanded the services of the country's greatest financier. The anticlerical policy is definitely abandoned; the embassy to the Vatican will be maintained; that the anticlerical policy with regard to the schools, which so profoundly stirred the restored provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, is also reversed is assured by the appointment of Mr. de Monzie, a staunch and ardent Catholic, as Minister of Public Instruction. . . .

All this is the more arresting and significant when we bear in mind that the new Government is not formed from the groups politically opposed to Herriot, but from the same cartel des gauches, the Left bloc, which supported Herriot and his policies. The orderly and law-abiding, yet virile and vigorous protest of French Catholics has achieved a victory for justice and decency, unprecedented in the political annals of modern France. **HERRIOT DROPS OUT** BY THE OBSERVER

Premier Herriot of France has resigned. A premiership in France is a very tottery and uncertain position. Advocates of the group system in politics may find in the quick ups and downs of political life in France matter for grave reflection; for France is par excellence the home of the political group.

But Mr. Herriot has had more than the usual amount of political trouble in the group whirpool of the French Parliament. He took up a policy of antagonism to the Catholic Church; possibly as a sop to the more extreme groups from which he drew his support. He evidently did not reckon sufficiently with the changes that have taken place in public opinion and the temper of the people. Like other countries, France has failed to learn the lessons of the War in their full extent; but she has not failed to learn some of those lessons. The years of fighting for freedom have not wholly failed to stir the conscience of the people in what concerns individual liberty and fair play. Thus it is that Mr. Herriot has found that his policy of renewed aggression against the Church left the general public cold. The old embers were not dead; but they were slow to rekindle; and in fact he failed to make a fire out of them.

Besides that, the old, easy-going submission of that large body of the people who are still enthusiastically and practically Catholic was found to be a thing of the past. The politicians who had become accustomed to see the first whisper of the magic word 'law' still the voices of millions, saw to their great astonishment, that submission to a law, merely because it was a law, could no longer be depended upon if that law was flagrantly unjust. All over France immense throngs of people openly announced that henceforth they would distinguish between just laws and unjust laws, and would hold themselves free to disobey laws which were persecutory, cloaked; and that they meant to have, and to enjoy, the freedom for which they had fought and bled. In vain the persecutors raised the old cry of "treason to the Republic;" in vain they called bishops and priests by the old opprobrious names; in vain they denounced them as disturbers of the public peace. They found that a people who had not been frightened by the Germans could not be excited much by the dangers of a rising of bishops and priests. As to the Church of England, which Newman once spoke of as a "breakwater against errors more

fundamental than its own," its trouble is now that it does not know what it stands for. And while conservative churchmen are seeking a remedy for the prevailing chaotic state of religious belief others seem bent on accentuating it. The most trenchant criticism that comes from their own ranks is that their leaders no longer guide thought but confuse it with conflicting and vague words. "It is not the rival attraction of Sunday golf," writes "M. A. Oxon" in the Review of Reviews, "not the doctrine of evolution or the other advances of science that are keeping the more intelligent and educated classes of Englishmen and women out of the Churches and out of sympathy with the clergy, but the profound and growing belief that the Church of England has ceased to have intellectual honesty. The logic of its priests, the sense in which they use words and phrases, the overt and esoteric significance which they attach to ceremonies, convey the impression that they prefer a superficial conformity to an identity of doctrine. If the Church of England is Christian, let us know, but in clear intellectual statement, and not in terms of vague emotion."

It may not last, this revival of real patriotism; and France may again support a persecuting policy. But Mr. Herriot and his associates will not be the persecutors.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

OVER HALF a century ago (or, in 1870, to be exact) Sir John Skelton, so well-known to the readers of polite literature a generation ago as "Shirley," hailed Newman's "Grammar of Assent," then just given to the world, as the "strongest intellectual food," which "by reason of its logical splendor," was "one of the most interesting of books." He also thought it "one of the most distressing of books," because of the "intellectual havoc which it disclosed."

JUST WHAT he meant by the latter may be inferred from the lament to which he gives expression later on, that, as against Newman's remarkable treatise, there existed no "Grammar of Dissent." "Never," he says, "was a Protestant theology—a theology constructed on the basis of Christian experience and the human conscience—more urgently needed." For, he affirms, "it cannot be too often repeated that the Protestant apologists who deny the validity of consciousness and the veracity of conscience, cut the ground from beneath their feet." "The Protestant who puts an infallible book in the place of an infallible Church, is disloyal to the principles of the Reformation, if not to the practice of the Reformers."

If "an infallible book is disloyal to the principles of the Reformation" what possible sheet anchor is left? And on what foundation is the constructive theology for which Sir John Skelton longed, to be reared? If it were conceivably possible in his day, it is certainly impossible now. Bishop Butler tried his hand at it in the eighteenth century and the Oxford Tract writers of the nineteenth essayed to build upon the foundation that great man had laid. But they too failed in this heroic endeavor, and in the eighty years that have since come and gone the trend has been all the other way. Protestantism as a theological system has made gigantic strides towards disintegration. One now never hears of the formulation of a constructive theology; it is all an explaining away. Viewed in its most favorable light the so-called Church Union of which we read and hear so much is but an attempt to save the shreds and patches of revealed religion to which four centuries of rationalistic teaching have reduced the flimsy garment of the Reformers.

ON THIS subject Mr. G. K. Chesterton, always as interesting as he is illuminating, thus writes in the New Witness: "I am firmly convinced that the Reformation of the sixteenth century was as near, as any mortal thing can come, to an unmixed evil. Even the parts of it that might appear plausible and enlightened, from a purely secular standpoint, have turned out rotten and reactionary, also from a purely secular standpoint. By substituting the Bible for the Sacrament it created a pedantic caste of those who could read, superstitiously identified with those who think. By destroying the monks, it took social work from the poor philanthropists who chose to deny themselves and gave it to any rich philanthropists who chose to assert themselves. By preaching individualism while preserving inequality, it produced modern capitalism. It destroyed the only League of Nations that ever had a chance; it produced the worst wars of nations that ever existed; the wars in which not only the man but even the gods were enemies. It produced the most efficient form of Protestantism, which was Prussia. It is producing the worst part of paganism, which is slavery."

NEW YORK WILL RAISE \$1,000,000 FOR CHARITIES

New York, April 22.—The Archdiocese of New York opened its annual drive for Catholic Charities of the archdiocese on Sunday afternoon. The following report was made by Catholic Charities of last year's activities: The amount realized from the drive was \$1,121,773.47. This sum was appropriated as follows: Boys activities \$66,462.29; for girl's activities, \$31,251.98; health, \$81,028.81; family relief, \$169,296.04; care of children, \$63,398.05; Newman Clubs, \$11,908.54; protective care, \$140,806.21; Summer vacations, \$26,194; education, \$240,689.97. The number of persons helped during 1924 were: Health division, 55,797; family division, 36,588; social action, 43,711 and otherwise classified 45,903—a total of 181,889.

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IN OUR review of Raymond's "History of Somerset" last week reference was made to the work of the ancient monasteries in the preservation and fostering of learning. On this subject, and on the debt which the printing art owes to the monks the following extract from an article in the La Salette Missionary is timely: "What the printing industry owes to the fostering influence of the Catholic Church is indicated by the old ecclesiastical terminology still used by the craft. Printing was developed by the Church in her monasteries, scriptoriums and universities. The first printing-press in England was set up by Caxton and Benedictine monks in Westminster Abbey. Caxton still remains an honored term in the craft to denote superexcellence in printing. As a result of being fostered in the abbeys and monasteries, it is curious to observe the churchly and Latin terms that still survive on the lips of printers. The composing-room is still called the 'chapel'—the first composing-rooms were monastic chapels. The foreman of the chapel is 'the Father. There are 'aisles' or runways in the chapels. A case of type or a particular style of type is a 'font,' because the old holy water fonts were convenient receptacles for wooden blocks which formed the letters. 'Brevier' type was originally reserved for setting up breviaries. 'Copy' of old was, and among old-fashioned writers yet is, 'manuscript'—most of the ancient terms were in Latin. The printer was the 'compositor' or man who placed the types together. Laying out type in orderly arrangement is still 'imposition.' The 'hell' box—or 'hell'—is the receptacle for bad type. The old prentice boy who raised general hob around the premises was happily dubbed 'the devil.' In proof-reading we have such Latin terms as 'caret,' 'dele' 'asterisk.' A slug or square of metal is a 'quad,'—it is 'quadrate,' or four-sided. In book-binding we have 'folio' (folium), 'quarto,' 'octavo,' 'duodecimo,' etc., to designate the different foldings of the original sheet of vellum or paper. Latin came naturally to the lips of the monks, hence their terminology survives to the present in the art preservative as a curious but interesting reminder of how much the world owes to the Church in scholarship as in other things."

THE STORY OF YESTERDAY As boys, John and Thomas D'Arcy must have borne but little resemblance to each other, save in one feature—those brilliant, penetrating, yet at times thoughtfully-sombre eyes that an Irish cradle has a million times lulled to rest. In one more year Mr. McGee will be just double the age at which his brother was martyred, but, as he reminisced this morning, he was telling of only yesterday.

It was not a brother flaunting the glories of his own blood; not a kinsman flinching warmth from the radiance of another kinsman that was outstanding in the quick memories that came back to John J. McGee.

A GREAT CANADIAN It was just an Irishman, a Canadian, who had drawn deep confidences of a great statesman, of a fiery patriot, of a militant gospeller of tolerance, and he told the story in that way. He did not speak of "Tommy" nor of D'Arcy. He thought only in terms of McGee. History and posterity have stolen the Christian name. The blood of brotherhood no longer belongs to mere family unit, even that family unit had come to see in "McGee" a bond of brotherhood, or perhaps of parenthood that has become nation-wide and political.

"Yes," he said, "McGee brought me here and he tried to bring my other brother, James, here from New York. McGee was a great Canadian and he wanted us all here, but James never would come. He stayed in New York and when the Civil War broke out he joined Meagher's brigade and later won its command. Our other brother Laurence was a sea captain who sailed from Wexford to Boston, and who died as the result of his ship being drifted and waterlogged for nearly six months in the Atlantic. When he was rescued he and the crew were waist deep in water. He died as a result of the experience."

TWO AT BEGINNING

"But, of course, that has nothing to do with what McGee means to Canada. I really don't see why they go so far back into his life anyway. McGee stands only for what he was in Canada, and that was the last ten years of his life. His life was his work for Confederation. There were, of course, others associated with him in his work, but the idea was his and it was not a very popular one at the time. Why, I remember there were but two of them really at the beginning, himself and George Brown. Sir John A. Macdonald was not in favor of it by any means then."

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HE WENT TO ROME

One incident that remains prominently in Mr. McGee's mind is the battle waged by Thomas D'Arcy for the establishment of a separate church in Montreal for the Irish Roman Catholics. As the bishopric was overwhelmingly French-speaking, there were innumerable difficulties to overcome. "But, he did it, as usual," smiled his brother. "He just went to Rome and, of course, when he was heard why he won. They have the church now."

MR. JOHN J. MCGEE "LISTENS IN"

Ottawa Evening Journal, April 14 While a hundred thousand listened in on the pangyric of Thomas D'Arcy McGee as it filtered through the ether, broadcast from the Chateau Laurier last night; while others flipped radio dials in the attempt to tune in on outside jazz programmes; in the front room of a Wilbrod street home a snow-white patriarch's eyes were brilliant and moist as he listened to the eulogies of his beloved "Tommy."

IN THE UNSEEN AUDIENCE

The listener was Mr. John J. McGee, youngest brother of the martyr-patriot, and, as he listened, sixty-years topped back as an avalanche and made for the time a living present of those days when the flaming meteor of D'Arcy McGee's genius dazzled a continent and lighted the hopes of millions two thousand miles across the Atlantic.

At the Chateau the audience of more than 500 punctuated the orations with bursts of applause in the front room at 183 Wilbrod little audience of some dozen listened in eloquent silence. They were the intimate friends of Mr. and Mrs. McGee.

HEARD IT ALL

At the McGee home this morning there was but one topic of conversation—the speeches of last night. The radio instrument was silent on the table but the message it carried until near midnight was still alive. "They had it installed for us," Mr. McGee explained as he surveyed the apparatus. "We couldn't go out but we heard everything wonderfully. And it was wonderful, wonderful."

Though well before noon, Mr. McGee suggested that he had deserted his bed many hours previous. His 55 years have served him in the main to the building up of a treasure chest of the lore of his illustrious brother.

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