

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

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PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY.

BY A PROTESTANT MINISTER.

Sacred Heart Review.

LI.

The hopeless scilism of those that, for the last century, have been attacking the formula obligare ad peccatum or obligationem ad peccatum inducere, as meaning "to bind to the commission of sin," is shown in its most aggravated form by their calm assumption that the phrase was a Jesuit invention, first appearing in the Constitutions of 1540. It never seems to have occurred to them to inquire whether it was a form of earlier use in the Church, and what its meaning had been. Even Ranke, although his good sense and right feeling soon ascertained the meaning of the phrase, does not, that I remember, conclusively establish this, as he could easily have done by reference to the earlier monastic rules. Even Doctor Carl Hase, a still more learned man, although acknowledging, most reluctantly and ungraciously, the erroneous-ness of the common Protestant interpretation, will have it that the formula is so placed in the context as to make it easy to persuade a brother of an evil sense in it, and that it is so placed for this purpose. Verily, great ability and wide knowledge, as they are mighty helps to defend the truth, are none the less powerful weapons of incurable malice. Had Doctor Hase adverted to the fact (which he surely must have known) that this formula was of old and familiar use in the Church, and of a perfectly ascertained sense, his malevolent insinuation would have lost its basis. Accordingly, he leaves his readers with the impression, (I can speak for one reader) that Loyola or Lainez invented the phrase, in a perfectly innocent sense, but to mislead the unwary, and make it serve a double turn, gave it such a place in Part VI., Chapter V., as that any superior can at any time push any brother over into the deepest pit of deadly heresy!

This is much worse than Littledale. He, and the other Protestant libellers, all assume that if their pernicious sense of the formula is disproved, the case goes against them. Hase concedes the point in dispute, yet tries to show that this makes no great difference, and that this is proved, not by the sense of the phrase, but by the place of the phrase. Certainly this is getting down to a very fine point. Henceforth, it seems, any one of us may find himself all at once shut out of the kingdom of heaven by an unlucky turn of style. "Parr's Greek is villainous," says De Quincey, ergo, Parr is a villain. Yet Parr's Latin is superb. What is to be done with the poor man? His Latin makes him too good for hell, and his Greek shows him too bad for heaven; there is nothing for it but to condemn him against all orthodoxy, to a perpetual purgatory. The Catholic Church knows nothing of such, but Mrs. Julia McNair Wright owns one—see "Almost a Nun"—and perhaps for a consideration would accommodate Doctor Parr with lodgings in it.

Really, I do not see but that the late Professor Seeley's opinion, that what this age wants is not religion but culture, is here ratified by Doctor Hase. Certainly, if the claim of the Jesuit Founders to go to heaven is to rest upon their literary excellence, I am afraid their case is hopeless. Literary excellence the Jesuit Constitutions have none. Cloudiness and awkwardness of style pervade them from first to last. In part VI., Chapter V., so many vital matters through style reach their climax. Yet any one, of competent knowledge otherwise, who will take the pains to study this fundamental chapter, and to coordinate its clauses, will discover the meaning to be perfectly ascertained. The most illiterate temporal coadjutor, that had learned his catechism, and come to know the meaning of sin and holiness, could not be here misled.

Let us go back now from the sixteenth century to the thirteenth. It was by doing this, and quoting from the Dominican and Franciscan rules, that Doctor Edward Steltz, about 1854—the precise date escapes me—gave the death blow to his obstinate enemy. It is long in dying. After ignorance of the slander has been rendered impossible, even among those who know no more than that editor of a great New York newspaper of whom I have spoken—not to mention editors still nearer Cambridge—then would come the turn of the conscious and absolutely criminal liars, propagating the evil thing in a still lower stratum of Protestantism run mad. Still, though it be not under a geological aeon, the truth will at the last burst them out, and this malignant head of the hydra will be done to death without restriction. Robert Bellarmine, at one stroke, cut off the heads of a hundred Catholic lies about Protestant doctrine. The Italian Bradburns, and Tappers, and Duns, and Lanings, and other such people, howled with rage, but the thing was done, and the Holy See smiled approbation.

Unhappily no Protestant Bellarmine then appeared, and now we on our side have no one divine of such prowess of arm. We must therefore depend on comparatively inconspicuous individual effort, continually repeated. This will accomplish almost anything in the end with patience enough. In the extreme hostility of Doctor Steltz to the Jesuits had of course even added weight to his vindication of them in this particular. Still, apart from this, his demonstration is complete. The blow is really worthy of Bellarmine himself.

The Franciscan Rule, we know, was given in 1210. It says: "We do not wish these precepts to bind the brethren up to guilt, but to penance." Non volumus haec praescripta obligare ad culpam, sed ad poenam. The disciples of the pure St. Francis, who is acknowledged by Protestants and Catholics alike to be more nearly Jesus redivivus than any one man that has appeared on the earth since his Master, were not asking him how many sins he would require them to commit. They would have swooned at the thought. They asked him, in view of human weakness, to what measure of accountability they would be bound up if they accepted his Rule. The answer was: Non ad culpam, sed ad poenam. ("Not to the point of guilt, but to the liability of penance.") A Brother Minor who should, by inadvertence or by stress of circumstance, neglect some precept of the rule, should not be bound to mention it to his confessor, nor even to charge his own conscience with it as a venial sin. Yet, to guard it as a venial sin, he was made liable, not to a sacramental, but to a monastic penance. The transgression was not to be accounted a sin, but an irregularity. See the noble Franciscan in I Promessi Sposi. Here we see even the mild Franciscans are more rigorous than the Jesuits, who, in such cases, make no mention of even monastic penance. On the other hand, the Franciscans, as quoted by Steltz, (I myself have never seen their Rule), do not appear to endure their Superiors with the occasional right of re-enforcing the precepts by communicating to them the power of binding up the negligent to sin. The Minorite Rule, given in simpler conditions, is less profoundly complex and elastic than the Jesuit.

As might be expected, the Dominican Rule, given in 1216, is sterner than the Franciscan. It does not say, "These precepts do not bind up unto sin," but "they do not bind up unto mortal sin," non obligant ad peccatum mortale. A Dominican therefore, neglecting some precept—not wanting, of course, to be held bound to it in the tribunal of Penance, but to own it in the tribunal of conscience with it as a venial sin. Yet, says the Rule, there are three classes of precepts which bind the brethren up to mortal sin, obligant ad peccatum mortale. What are they? First, all the precepts of Scripture. Now how can Doctor Littledale, who writes so magisterially on these matters, be possibly excused for not knowing this clause of the Dominican rule? His whole accusation would have collapsed at once before it. We will consider this question next week.

Charles C. Starbuck. Andover, Mass.

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S PARISH CLERK.

There has just joined the majority, in his eighty-fourth year, Richard Humphries, who was appointed parish clerk of Littlemore by Dr. Newman. He once went to see Newman at the Oratory, Birmingham, and was told that he could not see him. "Tell him that Richard from Littlemore has come to ask how he is. I hadn't to wait long," continued the old man, "I knew his step; he never even waited to put on his boots, but came along in his slippers and said, 'Come in and tell me all about my dear people.'" Richard went in and dined with the Cardinal and other members of the Oratory. Humphries bore his Eminence in great affection, and after his conversion always spoke of him as "our dear vicar." While at Littlemore Dr. Newman taught his clerk not only to lead the village choir, but to play the violin. It was Humphries who early one morning saw a man with bowed head and in tears leaning on the lych gate of the church. It was Newman, who, while staying with the community at Abingdon, had walked over by Sanford Lock to visit the scene of his past work.

THE DRINK EVIL.

There is to-day in the English-speaking countries no such tremendous, far-reaching, vital question as that of drunkenness. In its implications and effects it overshadows all else. It lies at the centre of all social and political mischief. It paralyzes energies in every direction. It has the neural form. It obstructs political reform. It rears aloft a mass of evilly inspired power, which at every salient point threatens social and national advance, which gives to ignorance and vice a greater potency than intelligence and virtue can command; which deprives the poor of the advantages of modern progress; which debauches and degrades millions, brutalizing and soddening them below the plane of healthy savagery, and filling the centres of population with creatures whose condition almost excuses the immorality which renders them dangerous to their generation. Can any political organization be said to represent the best aspirations and the strongest needs of the people while this abiding source of misery, crime and poverty is allowed to spread and flourish?—New York Tribune.

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MUNKACSY'S "ECCE HOMO."

The Cause of the Great Painter's Insanity.

Mihail Munkacsy painted into the bold outlines, the colossal figures and the superb coloring of his famed "Ecce Homo" his own madness and death. "Ecce Homo" was the dying burst of the genius, the "finis" written after his earthly career. He will never paint again, for shortly after the completion of this work he was adjudged hopelessly insane, and though since then rumors have now and then been circulated of his returning use of reason, the latest reports affirm that his insanity is incurable. It was unnecessary to await the coming formality of death, for already in the genius, the rare mind that was Munkacsy, dead. The great frame of the Hungarian artist is wasted, the leonine head bent, the deep-set eyes that were wont to glow with the passion of his painting are dim. When Mihail Munkacsy scrawled his name at the lower hand corner of his great painting, he wrote the epitaph of his reason. At that instant his wizard hand forever lost its cunning. His "Ecce Homo" was his suicide. Eight months of almost unmitigated lethargy, when sleep was taken between the hours of 1 and 4 o'clock in the morning, if at all; when food was passed in at the studio door by a servant who was not permitted to enter; when no one was allowed to pass the threshold of the studio except god-natured and insistent Mme. Munkacsy, and when the master took no exercise except the labor of the steady wielding of his brush! Even to the Hungarian giant painter there was a "thus far." The results of this unparalleled application were "Ecce Homo" and madness. Munkacsy left his mansion, No. 52 Rue Villiers, Paris, but once during the eight months in which he was painting "Ecce Homo." That was when he strolled about the streets in search of a model for the Christ. The gaunt man with the cavernous eyes singled out a man with delicate features a spiritual expression and a curling beard. He grasped his arm so tightly that he left his great finger marks upon the slighter man's arm for many a day. "Be my Christ," begged the Hungarian. "The one I have imagined is finished, but he does not suit. Come, I pray you." The big, seedy individual with the glowing eyes frightened the smaller man. He walked to the mansion on the Rue Villiers with the wild stranger, but he was careful to keep well out of reach. It needed the magic name of Munkacsy on the door plate to reassure him. With the stranger as model the master painted day after day, but still the Christ did not please him. "I like better the one I imagined. Go!" he said, angrily, blotting out the work of a week with a furious stroke, and the francs carried away a pocket full of francs and the conviction that he had been locked in the studio with a lunatic. Steadily Munkacsy painted his "Ecce Homo." Hunger he knew not in those eight months. He drove away the servants who came to announce that meals were ready, and only allowed a tray of food to be passed into the room upon the indignant demand of madame, his wife. Often sleep did not visit him for seventy-two hours, and when weariness compelled him to drop his brush, he lay in a tense, half-conscious state, his face thin and white as that of a corpse. The artist's dream of the Christ's sadly serene face began to take form in that rich, half-barbaric studio on the Rue Villiers. The figure grew into the quiet dignity of the proportions which the artist had planned. He placed the mimic crown of thorns upon his head and the derisive reed-scepter in his hand. While painting the Christ the artist's face had taken on something of the loftiness of deity, said loving, garrulous Mme. Munkacsy. "There was the peak that passed understanding in the studio. I loved to stand in there as I did to slip into a convent for the benedictine service, although he never allowed me to speak," she said, "but oh! how changed when he was painting the cold face and non-committal attitude of Pilate. He froze me then, but he was a fury when he painted the Jews. I would not go to the studio after that. The master is always in the mood of the figure he paints." A victim of his ceaseless energy, Munkacsy was as well the victim of his powerful imagination. The fury of an intense dramatic instinct wrought upon him as an overmastering stimulant and goaded him to a state close to madness. He was one with the taunting Pharisees and the cruel Roman soldiery, as he painted those latter figures. Their hatred for the calm, divine Figure on the portico was his as his quick, angry strokes followed each other.

And every day, had there been any one there to see, he would have noted that the master grew more gaunt, his eyes more like flames bursting from caverns, his face whiter, his movements more nervous and uncertain. At last it was fulfilled. The colossal Christ looked sadly down upon the rabble from the portico of the Roman building, Pontius Pilate, cold, impassive, stood at the right, a Roman soldier the grim figure at his left. Below the Jews strove with the soldiers to get a closer view and a better chance to mock the pretender. The figures on his divan. But wait! He had forgotten something. He staggered as he walked back to the painting and seized a brush. His strength hardly

THE KINDLY WORD.

True Mission Always at Hand For the Generous-Hearted.

We have all read the poem "Save not your flowers for my dead, cold face, give them to me now while I live," we have all been touched by the truth and pathos of the lines, have felt a quick remorse, perhaps, as memory called up how often we have withheld the need of prayer. But in a moment the flash of memory has vanished, our thoughts are turned anew to our own selfish considerations, and we accept with stolid mien the approach of another to whom a little word of praise would mean so much. Why, then, do we withhold it? We ask ourselves seriously the question we must enter into our souls to find the answer. This life is a life of effort. Every day and every hour has its conflict which leaves its mark on some human soul; every hour tells over again the same tale of misery it has been telling since the Angel stood with the flaming sword at the Garden of Eden. Every day, every moment, some soul needs assistance, some human creature is falling on a toilsome path for want of a bit of earthly sunshine; some lonely fellow creature is ready to sink by the way side for want of a hand stretched out in kindly assistance. How many sink into the mire of despondency, never to rise again, for the very lack of just a kindly spoken word. He alone knows who watches and comes when others fall. It is so little to give—so easy to give—and yet may mean so much. We talk about woman's mission—her work—her plans in the world—while around her on all sides is a fertile field for her tactful facilities, a mission for the amelioration of human woe, than which there can be no higher one. The beauty of the mission is that every day may see some progress in the work, every hour, perhaps. Dispel your kindly looks and encouraging words as you go about your daily avocations—don't always wait for the stated opportunity, which never seems to come. Let us be kind, gentle and generous in our dealings and meetings with our fellow creatures brightening all we can the paths of others, and by the reflection of our good deeds, making "light in dark places" for ourselves, in the satisfaction which the memory of a kindly act brings.

ON DUTY.

On a trolley car, the other day, a loafer insulted the conductor. The latter's face flushed and his right hand clenched unconsciously. But he controlled himself, made no reply, and went back in silence to the platform. A gentleman who witnessed the insult, said to the conductor: "I admire you for not noticing him." The man replied, "I certainly would have struck him if I had not been on duty." On duty? Are we not all on duty, we Catholics, who are surrounded by sixty millions of non-Catholics, watching us persecuting us, quick to compare our lives with the teachings of our religion? If we give way to anger, if we fall to keep the precepts of the Church, if we give bad example, by drunkenness, or immorality, or dishonesty, or untruthfulness, are they not scandalized? Is not their conver-

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"Friend, how earnest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?" (Matt. 22, 12.) Who is the unfortunate guest found at the banquet without the wedding-garment? It is, as you are aware, the sinner who by grievous sin has lost the robe of sanctifying grace with which our Heavenly Father clothed his soul in the sacrament of baptism. If he die in this state he departs from this life in enmity with God, and goes to him, for then also the Eternal Judge will say: "Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" Alas, what will the sinner say in justification? In the knowledge of his guilt, he must remain silent, for every word of excuse would be but a lie. Why did he live in enmity with God? Why, walk the wide road to perdition? Why, ungratefully refuse the hand of forgiveness which even on his death-bed was held out to him? Terribly, but justly, the sentence of the infinitely equitable Judge will overcome him, when he hears the dread words: "Depart from Me, you cursed, depart into the eternal fire of hell, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh fearful lot, to dwell in the eternal flames, to burn in the unextinguishable fire! Who can understand the effects of this fire! Who can describe the tortures of the flames! It is painful, indeed, to suffer from material fire! Who would for gold, hold his hands in the fire? And, yet, this fire has been created by God for man's benefit. How excruciatingly painful then must not be the fire kindled by the wrath of God, for the sole purpose of punishing His enemies! What is our material fire in comparison with the torments of hell where "their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished." (Isaiah 66, 24.) In these torments the damned must dwell forever. "Depart from Me, you cursed into everlasting fire." (Matt. 25, 41) says our Lord, "and these (the wicked) shall go into everlasting punishment." (Matt. 24, 46.) St. John the Baptist, speaking of the Messiah says that He "will gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff—that is the wicked—He will burn with an unquenchable fire" (Luke 3, 17). St. John in the Apocalypse speaking of the damned says: "He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of His wrath and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone. . . and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up forever and ever, neither have they rest day or night." (Apoc. 14, 10) There, the damned will be tortured by the devils with all imaginable pain as long as God shall live, that is, forever. (N. J. year, no sigh, no sorrow ascending from that abyss to the throne of Divine Mercy, even the drop of water from the tip of the finger which for a second might cool the tongue will be denied." (Luke 16, 24.)

This impudent sinner, in the abode with which your Saviour, your Eternal Judge, threatens you in the gospel if you continue the life you now lead. Should you not fear and tremble? Have you the temerity to advance one step on the road to eternal destruction? What, O sinner, preserves you from hell to which you are long on account of your wickedness? Is it not alone the frail thread of life which the Almighty holds in His hands and which He can, by death, sever at any moment hour? Alas! no assurance of another hour, aware that if of this you you would appear before God, deprived as you are of sanctifying grace, you would be cast into the eternal flames of hell.

O sinner, have compassion upon your own immortal soul. Save the soul as long as salvation is possible. Humbly return to your compassionate Saviour. Do you not hear how lovingly He calls you in the gospel? Do you not see how compassionately He offers you the wedding-garment of grace in the sacrament of penance? Why do you reject it, why not accept it? Rise you up, mind to Heaven, hold the banquet, yours is vacated. Shall it ever remain thus? Oh, hesitate no longer; hasten to cleanse yourself at the feet of your Divine Saviour. He will embrace you lovingly and imprint on your brow the kiss of peace and forgiveness. The angels will exult when your Saviour introduces you saying: "Rejoice, dear angels, for this soul which was lost, has been found; this soul which I have so long sought, is again Mine. My dear brethren, let the word of God be spoken not to the sinner alone, let us open our ears to it and accord to the admission of St. Paul, we must out our salvation in fear and trembling. For "Man knoweth not his day, nor his hour," whether he will be worthy of love or hatred." (Eccle 11, 1.) The greatest saints have tremored at the thought of hell—should we be so careless and indifferent—reassure such confident security—we, who are no saints, but miserable sinners? hold, in the dark recesses of a corner you see St. Jerome lying on ground, covered with blood, striking his breast with a stone—does he act thus? Trembling answers: From the fear of hell, I have secured myself, and I have my body on account of my sins. There, in the depth of the forest, see St. Bernard in tears scourging his body. Why? "I fear," he says, "the eternal flames of hell, and I punish myself now, that hereafter I may not be punished by God."

Once, when St. Chrysostom