

BOGUS PIETY

The Bishop of St. Gall Censures—
Certain Unhealthy Extravagances

The following robust instruction by Bishop Egger has, says the "Examiner," Bombay, been freely translated from the German for the benefit of those who still retain a lingering affection for endless chain prayers and sacred extracts:

We live in an age in which not enough can be done for the promotion of faith and piety, and therefore it is all the more to be regretted that the need should arise for censuring certain unhealthy extravagances in this matter. It is here my intention to mention two such extravagances, because my own experience, as well as the weighty opinion of many, both inside and outside this diocese, makes it desirable and necessary that they should be discussed.

The Object of Prayer

We must, above all remember the words of Our Lord: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice." The primary object of prayer must be the promotion of the glory of God, of the kingdom of God, of the salvation of souls. Asking for temporal benefits is not excluded but Christ has put the petition for our daily bread only in the fourth place. Besides this our prayer for temporal things must always be to ask for such favors only on the supposition that they are in no way contrary to the holy will of God, but rather conducive to God's honor and our salvation.

Now it is a weakness of human nature to care more for earthly comforts than for higher things. If therefore, in certain leaflets, pamphlets, etc., the asking for temporal favors is unduly put in the foreground; if some temporal difficulty is made to take precedence of spiritual aims, sometimes even of highest interests of the kingdom of God, this can scarcely serve to enlighten our conscience with regard to the proper aims of prayer, but will tend rather to obscure them.

Invocation and Intercession of the Saints

As friends of God and our friends, the saints are our intercessors with God, and it lies in God's hands to determine when and where and how He will especially manifest the effects of their intercession. But we must always keep in mind that no saint can by himself answer our prayers; that he can only implore God to hear us; that the greatest as well as the smallest favors of Grace come from God alone, and, finally that the intercession of the saints derives its efficacy not from the saints themselves, but from their union with Christ and His infinite merits. Whatever expressions may be used while addressing a saint, they must in their meaning always be equivalent to the words: Pray for us! As a rule this truth is commonly recognized by the faithful, but it can be obscured and spoiled by certain false descriptions of the nature of intercession. If these descriptions are couched in language which, although capable of a sound interpretation, might be equally applied to a Greek demigod, the religious mind of simple Christians is thereby so obscured that they think more of the saint—who can only intercede—than of God, Who is the giver of all good things. A model showing how we should act in this regard is the new Papal encyclical letter about the Blessed Virgin Mary in which devotion to the Blessed Virgin is duly emphasized, but nowhere without indicating its proper relation to Christ. With good reason it is to be feared that writers who do not earnestly try to aim at correctness will gradually exercise a noxious influence on the religious views of uneducated readers.

Granting of Petitions

The life of the just is an intercourse of love between heaven and earth, wherein petition, mercy and thanksgiving continually follow each other. For every benefit bestowed from above the Christian should give his thanks to God, and should be filled with new confidence. But as it is impossible to calculate what each dewdrop or each ray of the sun has contributed to the growth of the crops, so it is very seldom possible to state that a certain heavenly favor is the fruit of one particular prayer.

The individual Christian may, without harm, privately hold his own views on the matter, but such favors ought not to be published except so far as they are conducive to edification. This will be the case only if it can be convincingly demonstrated to the public as a supernatural effect. So long as



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authentic witnesses are wanting, so long as it may be suspected that the reports have originated from credulous, eccentric and visionary persons, the majority of the public will not take them seriously nowadays. And if even the most ordinary occurrences of daily life are exhibited in a foolish manner and brought into the highest and holiest relations on insufficient evidence, then it is no longer a matter of edification, but of scandal.

Various reports from far and near make it clear to me that just those Catholics who stand most in need of edification are liable to be scandalized and repelled by such publications. In these matters we ought also to have regard for non-Catholics and unbelievers, whose views are so entirely different from ours that they fail to appreciate even the most correct religious principles of Catholic belief. It may happen that sober and solid devotion, joined with the fear of God, will make some good impression on them, but imaginative, pious extravagances are only apt to confirm them in their antipathy against Catholicism. They attribute such follies to the Church itself, and thereby confirm themselves in the belief that behind such silly stuff the truth cannot be found.

St. Paul in some places admonishes the faithful to conduct themselves prudently towards those that are outside Col. iv. 5). If his instruction is to have its proper value among us, many things regarding the points in question will stand in need of amendment. Bishop Henle, of Passau, carries this point still further. In a public letter he remarks: "Anything from which it might be inferred that the Church in fostering religion, cares more for formalities than for the reality, ought to be eliminated and expunged. Especially that kind of so-called 'pious literature' which, under pretense of edification, mixes together truth and falsehood, history and legend, without discretion, ought once for all to disappear from the Catholic book market. Among such things are to be enumerated, according to the declaration of the Pope, all books and pamphlets which treat about things that are repugnant to every earnest and sincere Christian, such as childish stories of miracles, pretended appearances of ghosts, new revelations, visions, prophecies, etc.

Commercial Catholicism

Under this head are included sundry practices for the purpose of collecting money. In the "Catholic" of Mayence, February, 1904, p. 61, we read: "There should still be added a long chapter about unhealthy pious literature, the nuisance of prayer leaflets, prayer cures, the sale of pictures for building purposes, hawking domestic blessings on commissions, trading in articles of devotion to provide for ecclesiastical needs, abuse of Papal honors and distinctions, etc. For many years I have traced the secret tracks of sordid enterprise and noted down the tricks and devices of business agents in this matter.

Even serious material injury is done thereby to the people, large sums being obtained from them by knavish tricks; nor is the spiritual damage done thereby to be underrated. The severest measures ought to be taken against such practices, since the individual often cannot sufficiently guard himself against surprise." The author goes on to prove that such fraud is to a great extent practised by non-Catholic speculators. Against such swindlers we have no means of protecting ourselves except by avoiding them. But if we find abuses in Catholic circles we must try to suppress them.

To Stop A Crying Baby.

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THE ETERNAL MONEY QUESTION

The Pastor's Disagreeable Duty of Begging Funds to do the Congregation's work.

Catholic Union and Times

Pert young Catholics—and grouchy old ones, too—ofttimes affect to be caustic at the expense of their pastor's money-getting proclivities. The fact that churches have to be built, to say nothing of schools and houses for priests and teachers; that the church has to be maintained and priests and teachers fed and clothed—all this seems to make little or no impression on the dense skulls of the grumblers who give nothing, or about that themselves, and then try to quiet their consciences by railing at the priest because he is obliged to perform the never agreeable duty of asking his congregation for funds with which to defray the oppressive expense account which stares him in the face by day and disturbs his sleep at night. The carpers do not try to realize that the money the priest has to raise is not for himself; that it does not go into his own pocket or bank account; that more often than not he has to go deep into his own meagre funds to make good the delinquencies of his people. I have heard of more than one instance where a person in an excess of personal pride put his name down for a stained glass window, or a station, and then refused to keep the promise he made to God through his representative—and smugly sat Sunday after Sunday looking through a window which bore the inscription, "Donated by Mr. John Blank." Some of these days a priest who is braver than his fellows will tack on the inscription, "—and not paid for." and Mr. Blank will be less conspicuous. Such people eventually become the most pronounced fault-finders with every effort their pastor makes to raise funds for the church.

Soon after the first of the year the annual statement appears, and discloses the fact that the whole of the pastor's salary has been applied to the church's debt—this has happened many times right here in Buffalo. Then, again, a priest goes to his eternal reward and it is found that he died so poor that there isn't enough in his estate to bury him, and our wise—but

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close-fisted—friends grow merrily sarcastic with wonderment over "What became of his money?" An instance of where the priest's money goes came to light the other day in Brooklyn. Father Michael J. Moran, for thirty-five years pastor of the Church of the Nativity in that city, died suddenly about three weeks ago. During his busy years he built the parish church and two fine schools. In the long period named, Father Moran handled many hundreds of thousands of dollars, and no doubt he was often made the object of sharp shafts from partitionous members of his flock. Yet, when the good old priest passed away and it came time to look into his affairs, it was found that there wasn't a dollar with which to pay his funeral expenses, and a collection had to be taken up in the church for that purpose. In this instance the priest's income didn't go to the support of the church, but into the mouths and unto the backs of the poor. It is related of Father Moran that no one ever came to him for aid and left without getting it; and thus his confiding nature was many a time and oft imposed upon by those who were undeserving. But what matter? They claimed to be poor and in need, and that appeal never found a deaf ear in "Father Mike."

There are thousands of Father Morans in the priesthood, and always will be. Alas! there are, too, and always will be, thousands of stingy Catholics who will turn a deaf ear and a loud mouth to every appeal their pastor makes.

RAISE WHAT'S WANTED

Few really intelligent and progressive farmers are heard complaining. The wise man is he who keeps himself ever on the alert to produce that commodity for which there is a good, strong, quick market.

There are several ways in which the cash returns from the farm may be largely increased without the sacrifice of much time, money or work. For instance, the raising of poultry has come to be a great profit-making business on some farms.

Now, a few years ago this end of the farming business was scarcely worth bothering with. The farmer's wife set a few hens, raised a few chicks and sold a few eggs, but the whole thing didn't amount to much and never was counted on to help pay the interest or swell the bank account.

Now, however, conditions have changed. There is a strong, steady and ever increasing demand for chicks as broilers. City hotels, restaurants, clubs, cafes, dining cars and private kitchens are consuming more and more every day, to say nothing of the tons and tons required to fill the export demand. Dealers can never get enough to supply the wants of their customers, and thousands and thousands more could be sold at good prices if they were offered.

A few farmers have been wise enough to see what was going on and to prepare to profit by these conditions. Broilers are wanted and good cash prices are being paid for every chick large enough to be made ready for the table. Then why not produce them?

Several difficulties arise. Hens as hatchers are failures. They set when they take the notion and seldom when you want them to. They are careless mothers, almost always leading their chicks into danger and losing many. To make any progress or profit in the raising of chicks you must have a good Incubator and Brooder, and this initial expenditure may prevent those who are not prepared to instal such a machine.

With a good Incubator and Brooder any farmer's wife can raise chicks so as to make a handsome annual cash revenue. You should get one at once and go into the raising of chicks. All you need is a small yard, eggs and the machine.

By the way, there's a firm in Chatham, Ont., who are advertising an Incubator and Brooder and who offer to send it prepaid and wait for the money till after 1906 harvest. This offer is worth inquiring about. If you will write a post card with your name and address to The Manson Campbell Co., Dept. 1, Chatham, they will doubtless send full particulars of their offer.

Get into the poultry raising business as soon as you can if you want to make money—and keep looking out for other good things all the time.

"You must find that impediment in your speech rather inconvenient at times, Mr. Biggs."

"Oh, n-no; everybody has his peculiarity. Stammering is m-m-mine; what is yours?"

"Well, really, I am not aware that I have any."

"D-do you stir y-your tea with your right hand?"

"Why, yes, of course."

"Well, that is y-your p-peculiarity; most people u-use a t-teaspoon."