

# Northwest Review

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY.  
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
AUTHORITY  
AT WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

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Office: 214 McDermot Ave., Winnipeg, Man.



SATURDAY, MAR. 19, 1904.

## Calendar for Next Week.

### MARCH.

- 20—Passion Sunday.
- 21—Monday—St. Benedict, Founder of the Monks of the West.
- 22—Tuesday—Feast of the Most Precious Blood (transferred from last Friday).
- 23—Wednesday—St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop, Doctor, (transferred from the 18th inst.)
- 24—Thursday—Ferial Office.
- 25—Friday—The Annunciation of Our Lady or Lady-Day.
- 26—Saturday—The Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin (transferred from yesterday).

## CATHOLICISM AND PROTESTANTISM COMPARED.

On Thursday evening of last week Prof. W. F. Osborne, of Wesley College, delivered a lecture in the basement of St. Andrew's Church on "Romanism vs. Protestantism." To judge from the newspaper reports this was no fanatical attack on Catholicism. The Telegram called it a "friendly comparison" and emphasised its kindly references to the Church, as may be seen from the following passage of that report.

The speaker paid a tribute to the great services that Catholicism had rendered to the world, from a historical standpoint. Its organization is unrivalled and its persistence throughout the middle ages and into modern times necessarily led us to infer that something more than human wisdom was at work. The speaker paid a glowing tribute to the Roman Catholic missionaries, especially to the Jesuit missionaries amongst the Northwest Indians.

This is the sort of thing we should expect from Mr. Osborne. Being a cultured layman, and therefore a sort of free lance, he can say things that a Methodist minister would not have the courage to say. Besides, Mr. Osborne is a distinguished professor of English and French Literature, he has made a name for himself as a brilliant writer and a painstaking student of nationalities that profess and practice the Catholic religion. Hence it is that, according to the Telegram report, he could, survey "the resources of Catholicism showing how little the average Protestant realized the supremacy of Catholicism. In this connection the speaker referred to Quebec as the most eminently Catholic country in the world. Continuing, he said that in any survey of the resources of Catholicism, the ritualistic movement in the English Church must be included inasmuch as it was really the work of Romanism."

But what we did not expect to find in a lecture by so well informed and broad-minded a man was this sort of thing which the Free Press reporter credits him with.

Dealing with missionary work Professor Osborne said the reason why pagans were more easily converted to Roman Catholicism was on account of the ease with which they could pass from the form of worshipping idols to the system of worship in vogue in that church. While paying a tribute to that faith he said many good

systems had provided bad men and he considered that Roman Catholicism was responsible for the illiteracy of many of its people.

We shall first take him to task on the missionary work among the heathen. His remarks, as reported, imply that the transition from heathen to Catholic worship is easier because Catholic tenets resemble pagan beliefs more than Protestant tenets do. He surely cannot mean that the mere presence of a sacrifice and an altar constitutes a resemblance; else the Jewish people, the people of God, might have been likened to the Gentiles, whose exact antipodes they were known to be. Evidently Professor Osborne must allude to religious beliefs and practices. Now as to beliefs, the Protestant missionary can scarcely insist upon any generally recognized Protestant tenet except the unity of God, the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the sacramental system, and almost every other Christian tenet being denied by some Protestant sect. On the contrary the Catholic missionary must and does, insist on the whole body of Catholic doctrines. As to practices, the difficulty of accepting the Catholic religion is still greater. While many Protestant missionaries tolerate polygamy and a host of heathen vices, the Catholic missionary enjoins obligatory attendance at Sunday Mass, teaches the absolute impossibility of divorce, the inevitable duties of maternity for married women, the necessity of restoring ill-gotten gains, and he teaches by precept and example the observance of fast and abstinence days, a still stricter fast before Holy Communion, and sacramental confession. An assertion of conversion from the lips, outward, an altogether subjective and intangible assurance of salvation, and the heathen is welcomed by the Protestant missionary as a brand plucked out of the fire.

No, Mr. Osborne, the real reason why the Catholic missionary converts thousands of pagans where the Protestant missionary easily counts his very doubtful converts on his fingers, is that the former is generally an apostolic man, whereas the latter generally goes into the missionary business as a pleasing, easy and profitable pastime. Mr. Angus Hamilton, a Protestant, in a book which he has recently published about the missions of the East, draws a striking contrast between the mode of life of the Catholic priests and that of the American Protestant Missionaries. He says that the priests live in absolute poverty not only in Korea, but throughout the East, and rather court martyrdom, while the life of the American Protestant missionary he describes as follows:

"The American Protestant missionary is a curious creature. He represents a union of devices which have made him a factor of commercial importance. . . . He has a salary which frequently exceeds £200 (\$1,000) a year, and this is invariably pleasantly supplemented by additional allowances. Houses and servants are provided free. . . . There is provision for the education of the children, and an annual capitation grant for each child. . . . They have large families who live in comparative idleness and luxury. . . . They own the most commodious and attractive houses, . . . and appear to extract . . . the maximum of profit for the minimum of labor."

Mr. Osborne's jaunty charge that "Roman Catholicism was responsible for the illiteracy of many of its people" is directly met by the recently published educational statistics of the Dominion, in which it appears that there is more illiteracy in Ontario, the standard-bearer of Protestantism, than in Quebec, which Mr. Osborne calls "the most eminently Catholic country in the world."

Where there happens to be a certain amount of illiteracy in Catholic countries, this is not honestly chargeable to the Church, which has always fostered primary and higher education and which was the first to establish public schools for the poor. The illiteracy, when it is to be found, is due to the wretched governments, which too often counteract, in Catholic countries, the beneficent influence of the Church. Moreover, an illiterate

Catholic, provided he be properly instructed in his religion, has generally far more intelligence and far higher and broader ideas than the average half-educated and wholly bigoted Protestant public school product. And yet Mr. Osborne has the hardihood to assert that Protestantism stands for intelligence of the masses.

Mr. Osborne is, furthermore, reported by the Telegram to have said "that Protestantism makes an intellectual appeal, while Catholicism made a sensuous one." How does this square with the fact, of which Mr. Osborne must be aware, that the most intellectual Protestants frequently become Catholics, while the most sensuous Catholics often become Protestants?

We pass rapidly over his claptrap about "ritualistic forms of religion being dramatic and worldly." Of course they are dramatic in the best sense of that word, in the sense that true ritualism helps to make religion real and dramatic as was the life of Christ; but they are not worldly except to the worldly-minded.

Perhaps the most astonishing assertion for a well read man to make is Mr. Osborne's antithesis about Protestantism being democratic and Catholicism aristocratic. Why, it is a reproach often cast up to us by worldly and unevangelical Protestants that Catholicism is the religion of the poor. Can anything be more democratic than the perfect equality of king and peasant in the confessional and at the communion table? Could anyone be more democratic than the present Pope? No, the Church is neither aristocratic nor democratic, she is all things to all men.

After such lamentable exhibitions of common ignorance, we are not surprised at Mr. Osborne sharing the common Protestant error that Protestantism made most of the individual while Catholicism tended to sacrifice the individual to the system. True, Mr. Osborne has himself borne witness, in a series of articles in the Boston Transcript on French Canadians, to the individual charm of convent trained girls and to the virtues which their individual training developed in them; but, having no experience of the confessional, that mainspring of the Catholic system, he may be excused for being ignorant of the strong individuality developed by that most personal of spiritual exercises. From earliest boyhood and girlhood the Catholic is taught to examine his or her conscience alone before God. So absolutely incomparable to any other is this individual discipline that they who are accustomed to it stand agast at the manifest absence of self-knowledge unconsciously betrayed by those who never examine their consciences and never confess their sins in detail. What the old Greek philosopher laid down as the best maxim for individual development, "know thyself," the Church, under the guidance of Christ, has reduced to practice. Far from sacrificing the individual to the system, she makes the individual conscience the court of last appeal, so much so, indeed that what would outwardly by others be deemed a mortal sin, is no sin at all if the doer thereof, being innocently mistaken, thought it right.

To sum up—Mr. Osborne has some graceful concessions as be seems an educated professor of literature; but he has indulged too freely in the great Protestant game of bluff, which consists in echoing popular but untenable shibboleths to tickle the ears of the groundlings.

A dumb waiter can't talk, but neither, for that matter, can a speaking tube.

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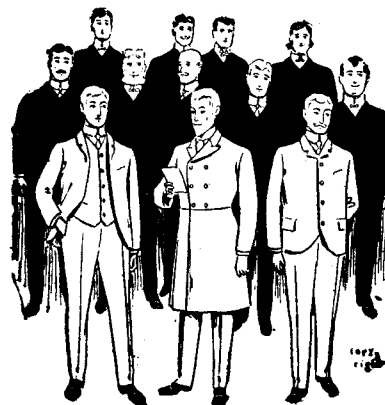
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Catechism in the Church, 3 p.m.  
N.B.—Sermon in French on 1st Sunday in the month, 9 a.m. Meeting of the children of Mary 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.

WEEK DAYS—Masses at 7 and 7.30 a.m.  
On first Friday in the month, Mass at 8 a.m. Benediction at 7.30 p.m.

N.B.—Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 3 to 10 p.m., and every day in the morning before Mass.

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The Northwest Review is the official organ for Manitoba and the Northwest, of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association.

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