

Lenten Pastorals.

PASTORAL OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO.

From the Lenten Pastoral issued by Archbishop Walsh of Toronto, we make the following extracts:

And in this connection let us exhort you, dearly beloved brethren, to practice the virtue of temperance, and to avoid and to detest the sin of drunkenness, which is opposed to it. This fearful sin of drunkenness spreads its ravages all around, and like a deadly plague brings sorrow, desolation and death into numberless families. It brings a curse upon all who are guilty of it; it maculates and defaces the image of God stamped upon our souls, it dethrones reason and reduces man to the level of the brute creation; it darkens the intellect, weakens the will, blunts the conscience, and smoothes the way to an impenitent death. It squanders the savings of years of toil; it plunges multitudes in misery and want and sorrow; it wastes the energies of the mind and the body; shatters the constitution, drags its victims' bodies into a premature and dishonoured grave, and casts their souls into the everlasting flames of hell.

O, dearly beloved brethren, let us conjure you to shun this gigantic evil which deluges the world with a tide of miseries, which is so offensive to God, and so destructive of our happiness both here and hereafter.

Let us again most earnestly request both priests and people to do all in their power to promote the cause of Catholic education, to render the Catholic schools as efficient as possible, and to see that, besides a sound secular education, religious instruction be regularly and efficiently imparted therein. An awful responsibility rests on the souls of both pastor and people in this matter. If any of the little ones of Christ should be lost to God and the Church by the criminal neglect and indolence of those who have charge of them, the blood of these lost children will be required at their hands by the Supreme Judge. The law establishing the Separate School system is indeed most defective, yet if our people be unanimous and generous in support of Catholic schools, as we know they are and will continue to be, it can be made the source of untold blessings to the children of this diocese. And here let us remind the Trustees of the Catholic Schools, that they should never employ a teacher without the express approval of the Pastor, as he is the legitimate guardian of the schools in their moral and religious aspects.

Our clergy should also encourage their people to take well-conducted Catholic newspapers. As it is, numbers of families take cheap weekly newspapers, which, whilst they do not contain a single friendly word towards the Catholic Church, are stuffed with gushing accounts of "tea-meetings," "socials," "Bible meetings," *et hoc genus omne*. By the perusal of such papers some lose the very language of Catholicism, and adopt that of the conventicle. Thus you will hear some people say that they are going to "prayers" or to "meeting," when they mean that they are going to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It is easy to see what injury all this is calculated to inflict, for inaccuracy of language in such matters logically begets a confusion and inaccuracy of ideas, and destroys the correct notions which should be entertained of Catholic doctrines. Our people, we repeat, should take good Catholic newspapers which will bring them into more direct relationship with the Catholic world, which will tell them what their brethren in this and other lands are doing for the triumph of truth and the promotion of Catholic interests, and will thus make them take a lively interest in the work and labours and trials of the world-wide Church of which they are members, and which, in fine, will take them as it were out of their isolation and solitude in the remote townships and back-woods of the country, and make them partake of the great current of Catholic life. The Catholic press has a great and glorious mission to fulfil in this country and it should be encouraged and fostered by all who have the sacred interests of the Church at heart."

PASTORAL OF ARCHBISHOP O'BRIEN OF HALIFAX.

The following passages are from the Lenten Pastoral of the Archbishop of Halifax:

These primary truths of our Holy Religion to-day, more than ever, need to be clearly set forth for the world. Owing to our mode of life, and our many comforts and conveniences, a great shrinking from physical pain has been developed. Supernatural charity may not abound; but a readiness to alleviate pain, and to relieve distress is very general; and no one delights in inflicting bodily torment on his neighbour.

The advance of material science, the many discomforts it has removed, and the sensitiveness to pain thus developed, have produced various effects.

The unthinking, and the class of idle pleasure-seekers have, unconsciously, perhaps, come to the conclusion that the road to heaven has also been made easy and pleasant. If they can now glide swiftly in a sleeping car over tracts of country through which their fathers slowly lumbered along in jolting wagons, why should they not have an easier road to heaven than that of duty, self-restraint, and irksome obedience to God's law? In their selfish effeminacy they delude themselves with the idea that nothing disagreeable should be required of them by their Creator. They forget that they are running in the race, and that those who strive for even a corruptible crown restrain their passions. They forget, in a word, they are here on trial, and live as if life held no duties, and exacted no sacrifices.

Others again, recognizing that life is a time of probation, but not grasping the grand truths of our Holy Church, seek to establish a future place, or time, of trial for those to whom, as they assert, a sufficient opportunity had not been afforded during life. This is called "Progressive Orthodoxy," and is not to be confounded with the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.

Yet others there are, and for them as for the class just mentioned, we have sincere sympathy in their efforts to free themselves from the fatalistic chains of Calvinism, who are endeavouring to eliminate the harsh errors from their "Confession of Faith." Whilst we sympathize with them in their struggles for the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, let us pray they may understand that a Confession of Faith which needs revision cannot be God's message to our race, otherwise revision would be rank impiety and treason to the Almighty. It can only then be a device of man, and as such can be no guide on the road to heaven. To us who enjoy the light of divine Faith, whose creed develops, indeed, on the same lines, and in the same nature, even as a human body waxes stronger and more symmetrical, but which can never be revised or changed, being God's own word, it seems strange that earnest men cannot recognise this, to us, so apparent a conclusion.

It is because men do not know the truths of our religion that they are restless in mind, "tossed about by every wind of doctrine," sceptical, or downright unbelievers. So many generous souls and highly cultured intellects, have known from childhood no higher form of worship than the cold formalities and judaical observances of Calvinism and its kindred sects, and no more noble presentation of dogmatic truth than the dreary fatalism of their creeds, that it is only natural their hearts should be dissatisfied and their intelligence filled with unrest. It is only natural, too, that hearing the inconsistencies and sensationalism of so-called teachers of religion, they should gradually lose all respect for a revelation that was presented to them in such a contradictory guise. Their intelligence enables them to see the fallacy of such teaching, and knowing nothing of Catholic truth they would easily enough conclude that God had not spoken,—perhaps even there was no God to speak.

It behooves us then to endeavour to lead men to the truth by word and example. The never-changing creed of the Catholic Church, understood by the light of Faith, consoles the heart, satisfies the intellect, vindicates God's mercy whilst upholding His justice, and fills the soul with peace and hope. It proclaims man a free and responsible agent, created by God for everlasting happiness if he use aright the graces received.