

recall the fate of souls in their last agony and in prayerful accents exclaim, "Heart of Jesus, once in agony, have pity on the dying!"

Statisticians give us, at least approximately, the figures of the daily harvest reaped by death. They estimate that, out of the fifteen hundred to seventeen hundred millions of people who are on this globe twirling through space, at least one hundred thousand die every twenty-four hours; that is, three millions a month, thirty-six millions a year. These figures are enormous, but because they are mere figures they do not strike our imagination as they should. Let us give them a more practical shape. Supposing that to-morrow, one day after we have read these lines, a city with a population of a hundred thousand disappeared suddenly beneath the ocean; a tidal wave, for instance, has come and swept this army of men and women from among the living. The catastrophe would daunt the rest of the world; God-fearing populations would fill their churches in prayerful sympathy; the souvenir of the cataclysm would form a lamentable page in the history of the race. And yet this is just what is happening every twenty-four hours. Recall the impression made on the world when the Titanic perished eighteen months ago; people were thrilled with horror at the sudden blotting out of the fifteen hundred lives. And yet every twenty minutes, and every day in the year, death is hurling fifteen hundred souls into the presence of their Eternal Judge.

Why are we callous at these dreadful tragedies which succeed each other so monotonously? Because they are being enacted so quietly around us that they do not excite human emotions. War fills us with dismay because the horrors of slaughter and suffering are bunched together, as it were, and presented to us that we can take in the awful sight at a glance. But the work of death is less spectacular; the tireless reaper has the whole world for a meadow, and the blades of grass falling here and there, though they number every day a hundred thousand, make no perceptible change in the aspect of the entire crop. The work of the sickle is relentless, but it is a silent work; the living blades fall, die and are soon forgotten; other blades take their places, and the world moves on as if nothing were happening. The disappearance of a hundred thousand souls every day from this earth makes little difference on a population of hundreds of millions who are awaiting, all unconscious, for their turn to disappear. We are not eye witnesses of the great tragedy, and we pass heedlessly on, failing to learn the lesson it teaches or to penetrate the full meaning of the daily toll paid to death.

And yet we are heedless, not because we are heedless, but because we do not feel for the sorrows of others; we are heedless because we do not reflect. When our own loved ones die our grief bursts forth and our tears fall copiously. If we are Catholics, not merely does the memory of the cherished ones stay with us, but the problem of their eternal welfare is uppermost in our minds; we think of them often, we pray for them and have Masses said for them; the assurance that they had reached the realm of bliss would be for us a supreme consolation. But when those die who are strangers to us, our hearts respond to no deeper emotion than that of sympathy, even though we know well that sympathy, no matter how intense it may be, or how welcome it may be in this vale of tears, is of little avail after death. Sympathy alone will not free a soul from the bondage of sin either here or hereafter. Why not, then, widen our outlook and open our hearts? Why not offer something more useful to souls than sympathy? Why not think prayerfully of those, even strangers, who are on the verge of the grave? We are all children of the same God; we have all been redeemed by His precious Blood; we are all destined to live together in glory. Our faith ought at least to teach us that our compassion for souls about to die, our interest in their eternal welfare, should not be less intense because they are not of our own flesh and blood or because they are dying unknown to us thousands of miles away.

Look at the matter from another point of view. Examine the world's daily death-roll and see who die and what they are who die. Taking the population of the globe, as it is at the present time, and the factors composing it, the hundred thousand daily deaths would probably include, in round numbers, sixteen thousand Catholics, six thousand Protestants, eight thousand Musselmans, Jews, Pagans, etc. Leaving the destiny of souls belonging to those various denominations to the mercy of God who will deal with them according to their lights, and eliminating all baptized children who die before the age of reason, for their eternal happiness is assured, let us ask ourselves, as a general rule how do a large majority of adult Catholics die? For the sake of an answer let us group thousands of Catholic deathbeds together and then go from one to the other and watch the occupants in their dying moments. Try to enter into their hearts and analyse their sentiments in those last hours. What little value earthly cares, anxieties, ambitions, projects, desires, have now for them! What sermons they could preach on the nothingness of life! In a few moments they shall have passed through the portals of eternity, when the balance sheet of their lives shall be struck

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off and placed before the infallible eye of God. How precious to them would a prayer be in those solemn moments! How earnestly they would ask us to think of them before they go to meet God! And yet absence of personal intercourse during life has practically made them strangers to us, strangers to whom we owe nothing, not even a prayer! True they are strangers to us as children of men, but surely not strangers as children of the Father Who is in heaven.

The nearness of death has made the saints tremble. St. Charles Borromeo tells us that he did not fear the final summons "because of the evil he had done but because of the good he had left undone." How few Borromeos there are among the thousands of Catholics who shall die to-day, and how many there are, alas, who have much to atone for, and who unconscious of their state, blindly pursue even to the edge of the grave this world's fleeting fancies. Before midnight they shall be in eternity, and still they cannot bring themselves to believe that the end is so near; the very novelty of their situation is an obstacle to salutary thoughts. To be lying on one's death bed is a new experience for most people. It is the first time perhaps they have undergone it, as it shall be the last.

Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant is knocking his dire summons at my door. The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt. Has never, never come to me before.

The danger point is reached; the priest is at the bedside; it is only a question of hours, perhaps of minutes, and still only too often what do we find? Not the soul calm and prepared to make the long voyage, but one terrified at the prospect of approaching dissolution with mental vision obscured, disheartened possibly by temptations of all sorts. Is a soul in this condition fit to make adequate preparation for death? We hardly think so; and any spiritual help that shall be given it will be charity under a most gracious form, a charity that a soul is not likely to forget when it has reached heaven.

A vast field is open to us in praying for the dying. While it is undoubtedly true that the efficacy of our prayers for the living may be hindered by a will obstinate in evil, it is equally true that obstinacy is rare at the moment of death; and while we may not hope to save the hundred thousand who die each day, still our prayers offered in union with the prayers of millions of others throughout the world, will obtain marvellous results. To speak only of Catholics, the greater number of the dying who neglect their souls in life are more the victims of apathy than of impiety. They are the victims of human respect or of ignorance rather than of ill-will or hatred of God and of His Church. With them the heart needs strengthening more than the head, and there is every reason to hope that even the most wayward among them, when on the threshold of eternity, will recall the impressions of their childhood, or the lessons and examples that have not been completely effaced from their memory. When dying Catholics feel that the things of time are leaving their grasp, the things of eternity assume a new importance. This alone is a great grace, which when watered with our prayers, will help them to turn completely to God. Praying for the dying of each day is an apostolate in which all may join. No one may claim exemption from this duty on the plea of inability. The short invocation, "Heart of Jesus, once in agony, pity the dying!" our rosary, our sufferings and good works of each day offered up for them, are all means that we have at our disposal. Let us ask God and His Sacred Heart to be merciful to all those who are about to meet Him soon, and to grant them the happiness of seeing Him face to face for eternity. E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

IN AN AUSTRIAN CITY In an ancient Austrian city there is a wonderful bridge, on the parapets of which stand twelve statues of Christ. He is represented as Prophet, Priest, King, Physician, Pilot, Shepherd, Sower, Carpenter and so on. In the early morning, just after dawn, the country people coming into town with fruit, pray with bowed heads before the statue of the Sower or Shepherd Christ.

A little later artisans and mechanics, on their way to workshop or factory, stand before the Carpenter

Christ. Then come sailors and boatmen, who kneel at the feet of the Pilot Christ. And when the sun has driven away the damp mists of the dawn and the city is bathed in the glow of the strength giving sun, the aged and the infirm and the halt and the blind come with tottering steps out of their homes to stand and pray in the shadow of the Great Physician—New World.

LIBERALISM IN RELIGION

Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion, as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy. Devotion is not necessarily founded on faith. Men may go to Protestant churches and to Catholic, may get good from both and belong to neither. They may fraternize together in spiritual thoughts and feelings, without having any views at all of doctrine in common, or seeing the need of them. Since, then, religion is so personal a peculiarity and so private a possession, we must of necessity ignore it in the intercourse of man with man. If a man puts on a new religion every morning, what is that to you? It is as impertinent to think about a man's religion as about his sources of income or his management of his family. Religion is in no sense the bond of society.

There is much in the Liberalistic theory which is good and true; for example not to say more, the precepts of justice, truthfulness, sobriety, self-command, benevolence, which, as I have already noted, are among its avowed principles, and the natural laws of society. It is not till we find that this array of principles is intended to supersede, to block out religion, that we pronounce it to be evil. There never was a device of the enemy so cleverly framed and with such promise of success.—Cardinal Newman.

A WONDROUS CHURCH

No man can regard lightly any words of the late Prime Minister of England, William Ewart Gladstone, and we can never forget his tribute to Catholicism:

"She has marched for fifteen hundred years at the head of civilization and she has borne the burden of the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Her greatness, glory, grandeur and majesty have been, most, though not absolutely, all that in these respects the world has to boast of. Her children are more numerous than all the members of the sects combined; she is every day enlarging the boundaries of her vast empire. Her altars are raised in every clime, and her missionaries are to be found wherever there are men to be taught the evangel of immortality and there are souls to be saved. And this wondrous Church, which is as old as Christianity and as universal as mankind, is to-day after its twenty centuries of age, as fresh and as vigorous and as fruitful as on the day when the pentecost fires were showered upon the earth. Surely such an institution, challenged the attention and demands and deserves the most serious examination of those outside of its pale."—The Missionary.

OUT OF EVIL COMETH GOOD

The war has already brought back the thought of "higher things" to many minds and hearts in France, it has been said that "no one will ever know the number of souls who have returned to God since the declaration of war." The situation appears to be a literal verification of the phrase out of evil cometh good. With reference to the fact, Mgr. Baudrillard declares that "no doubt the fear, the just fear of death has tended to this but still more effectual has been the need felt of having recourse to the Great Father upon Whom depends the fate of each one and the fate of the country. From the first day of mobilization our churches were filled, our confessionals besieged, the Communion rails crowded with the faithful. In many cases husbands and wives preparing for confessions together. Priests have heard con-

We can scarcely blame busy editors on this side of the Atlantic for being "taken in" by the fake stories of Rome correspondents. But when these stories have been proved to be false, the agency that supplies them should be called to account. As long as the editors pay for the news service without protest, permit their readers to be deceived by invented correspondents in Paris or Milan the evil will continue. The editors have it in their power to put an end to this condition if they only chose to do so. But we fear that few of them care. The only thing for us to do is to refuse to be deceived by "faked" reports. If the editors want their papers to gain a reputation for unreliability that is their concern.—True Voice.

"DO UNTO OTHERS"

We are at a loss to understand the attitude of many of our Protestant contemporaries toward the Catholic Church. Its bishops, priests and people. They seem to be animated with hatred instead of Christian charity; with prejudiced intolerance in place of reasonable conciliation. They will relish any libel against Catholicism, however extravagant it may be, and deliberately give it all the publicity at their command. They keep open house and welcome for the slander-mongering ex-priests, in spite of the fact that these men are devoid of every principle of truth, honor, decency and morality.

We would like to see our separated brethren, in all sincerity and in all charity, if they really believe that they are giving Catholics a square deal, when they give credence, without the slightest investigation, to books, papers and men that vilify the old Mother Church and her devoted children? Are they satisfied in their hearts that they are doing unto us as they would have us do unto them?

Can they name even one Catholic paper, which makes it a practice to circulate lies about any Protestant church or its adherents? Can they mention any Protestant minister, who has been received into our fold, that was every encouraged or allowed to give the denomination, from which he came? On the contrary, is it not a fact that every sectarian clergyman, who has been converted to the Catholic faith, has exhibited only the most fraternal charity towards his former co-religionists? Who ever heard of an ex-minister being booked, like a theatrical star, for a circuit of the country in a campaign of calumny against the bishops, the pastors, the asylums or the deaconesses of any Protestant denomination?

Is there no food for thought in these considerations, dear Protestant brethren? Have you been exactly fair to us? Or do you regard Catholics as outside the jurisdiction of the Golden Rule? We believe that a meditation upon the parable of the Good Samaritan or a prayerful reading of the two commandments, on which "dependeth the whole law and the prophets," would serve to mitigate, if not to eradicate, all anti-Catholic animosity arising, we believe, from want of thought rather than from want of heart.—Catholic Telegraph.

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essions in the military wagons, in the streets, and in the barrack yard. A regiment from Normandy stopped for some hours in a town of Seine-et-Oise; the greater number of the officers and many of the soldiers entered the church and received Holy Communion.—Church Progress.

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