

# CATHOLICS AND THE BIBLE.

"We have read so much and heard so much about the Catholic Church being antagonistic to the Bible, of Catholics ignoring the Scriptures, that we feel inclined to avoid the subject as one of these questions of controversy which is constantly kept in 'vicious circle' by the advocates of private judgment. It seems to us that the Rev. James Conway, S.J., in his article entitled, 'The Pope and the Scriptures,' which appeared in the 'American Catholic Quarterly,' for April, 1894, and Prof. Heuser, editor of the 'American Ecclesiastical Review,' exhausted the subject and placed it beyond the pale of all practical dispute. We are perfectly aware that, with a certain class of non-Catholic writers and readers, it is of no use whatsoever adducing proof to the contrary of their fixed belief in all the nonsense that has been, from time to time, launched against Catholicity on this score. The now famous Briggs controversy has awakened afresh an interest in the matter of the attitude of the Catholic Church in regard to these scriptural struggles; and we are pleased to find that Rev. Father Conway has supplemented his already published contributions by a most powerful and lucid letter to the New York Sun. While we could not attempt to reproduce the three columns of closely printed matter, in which the eminent Jesuit exposes the Roman Catholic doctrine, sets forth the Church's teachings concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, and explains the attitude of Leo XIII. in regard to the so-called 'Higher Criticism' of the hour, still we cannot afford to allow that letter to pass without furnishing our readers with some of its leading paragraphs.

In regard to the Briggs controversy, Father Conway says: "If I were asked to state the attitude of Catholics in the Briggs controversy, I would be tempted to say that it is one of comparative indifference. Catholics, as a body, are profoundly indifferent as to the amount of heterodoxy, liberalism, heresy, or open unbelief professed by any individual in particular, outside the pale of the Church. They seek little whether the work of destructive criticism is done by Dr. Briggs, or Dr. Kuenen, or Robert Ingersoll. They are little concerned whether Dr. Briggs ministers in the Presbyterian or in the Episcopalian Church, nor do they see any reason why he should not find wide enough berth in the bosom of the latter establishment, as he will certainly find there most congenial companions, though some may think it their duty to refuse him the kiss of peace for a time. As the Briggs controversy, however, has awakened new interest in Scriptural questions, and the representatives of most religious denominations have ventilated their views on the Scriptures and the 'higher criticism,' it may prove of some interest briefly to define the position of Catholics in regard to the Bible."

While the foregoing general statement may be applied to all the million and one disputes that divide up the countless sects of Protestantism, still the really important point for consideration is the actual attitude of the Church towards the Bible. It is thus very concisely and clearly set forth:

"The attitude of Catholics toward the Holy Scriptures is that of Leo XIII., as set forth in his recent encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, and unanimously accepted by the entire Catholic Church. Of course, there may be isolated expressions to the contrary, purporting to come from Catholics, propounded in some non-Catholic organs, such as the *Contemporary Review* or the *New York Independent*, but these are not the sentiments of the Catholic Church. The Church has always regarded the Scriptures as an inheritance, left to her guardianship by her Divine founder. The study of the Holy Scriptures was cultivated by the Church from the beginning. It was the theme of the preaching and of the writings of the holy Fathers. It was continued through the middle ages, and received a new impulse by the invention of the printing press, through which, in a short time, an incredible number of editions of the Latin Vulgate and translations in the vernaculars were issued. It was perfected by the revision and authentic editions of the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint by Sixtus V. and Clement VIII. New light was thrown on the Scriptures by the monumental polyglot editions of Antwerp and Paris, and by the more recent works of Catholic commentators, who, following the footsteps of the fathers, wrote profound and copious expositions of every book of the sacred text, and met the theories of the rationalists, as they came up with arguments taken from their own favorite sciences

of criticism and philology. The authenticity, integrity and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures have been defined and defended by various of her councils."

We will give now as briefly as possible, and divested of all authorities adduced, the real doctrine of the Church concerning the Scriptures; as it is set forth by the learned author under consideration. He says: "The doctrine of the Church, in regard to the sacred books may be thus briefly summarized. (1) The Scriptures have been at all times looked upon as sacred and divine. It is a patent, historic fact that the Jews possessed a certain definite collection of books, which were regarded as sacred oracles of Divine truth."

"The same belief in the sacredness of the Scriptures we find also in the teaching of the Apostles. We need only refer to St. Peter's first address on the day of Pentecost, or to St. Stephen before the Jewish council, to convince ourselves of this fact."

"But the teaching of the Church goes still further. The Scriptures not only contain a divine revelation, but what is more, they are inspired. Other documents, such as professions of faith, contain a divine revelation, yet no one asserts that such documents are inspired. What, then, do we understand by the inspiration of Holy Scripture? When we say that a document is inspired we mean that God is its primary author, while the human writer is only its secondary author. The Vatican Council puts this idea of inspiration in the clearest terms when it says:—

"These books the Church regards as sacred and canonical, not because they were composed by mere human industry and subsequently approved by its authority, nor because they contain a revelation without error; but being written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God as their author, and as such have been intrusted to the Church."

"From this it is evident that God must exercise a certain supernatural influence upon the intellect and will of the writer, that the latter may conceive the document as intended by God, and be determined or determined himself to its proper execution. God must also extend to him, while writing, the necessary assistance that he may not err in the execution of the divine purpose. This supernatural influence is the primary and efficient cause of the document as such. This influence need not in any way interfere with the freedom of the inspired writer. The secondary or human author may or may not be conscious of the supernatural action of God. All that is needed is that God so act on the mind and will of the writer that he himself must be regarded as the efficient and efficacious cause of the document in question. No verbal dictation on the part of God is required. Such is the opinion of orthodox theologians of the present day in regard to inspiration, and it seems to be the only view that can be reconciled with certain portions of the Scriptures in which the inspired writers appear to assume the entire responsibility of literary authorship."

So far we have the authenticity, the divine revelation, and the inspiration of the Scriptures most emphatically taught by the Catholic Church—a teaching which outstrips all the denominations of Protestantism united. But our non-Catholic critics, while unwillingly admitting the existence of such a doctrine in the Catholic Church, strive to show that it is more or less a dead letter as far as practical Christianity is concerned, because they claim, that Catholics are not at liberty to read or interpret the Bible as they wish. This is the most severe point of their contention, and yet it is a baseless one. The truth is, that, with the exception of a few passages of the Scriptures, upon which the infallible Church has pronounced, the Catholic has the widest latitude in the interpretation of Holy Writ—and he enjoys the individual freedom combined with the inexpressible advantage of having a sure and supreme authority to which he may have recourse in cases of doubt, or bewilderment. Let Father Conway explain this in his own lucid words:—

"A few words on the universal canon of interpretation of the Scriptures. On this point the Council of Trent issued the following decree:—

"For the restraint of audacious minds, the sacred council decrees that no one, relying on his own prudence in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the upbuilding of Christian doctrine, distorting the Scriptures to his own opinions, dare interpret the same scriptures contrary to the meaning that our Holy Mother the Church held, and holds, whose province it is to judge the true meaning

# MISS ROSE MARTIN.

She Tells Other Girls How They Can Be Healthy, and How a Fair Complexion Can Be Secured—An Interesting Account of Her Experience.

Men say that women are vain. Who can blame them? Men are vain, too. Everybody wants to be good-looking. Handsome features are due to good health. A strong, vigorous girl or woman must necessarily be free of female troubles. Diseases of girls and women rob them of their beauty. A pallid, nervous, pale, weak, thin girl or woman cannot be attractive. She cannot expect to have admirers. Men admire womanly women. They are attracted by fair complexions and graceful figures. A wise man selects a healthy woman as his bride. He knows there will be no happiness for either himself or his wife if the latter be weighed down with leucorrhœa, falling of the womb, nervousness, headache, backache and irregularities. He knows the children of such a union are apt to inherit the disposition and weaknesses of the mother.

Miss Rose Martin, 880 Glass street, Suncook, N. H., writes: "I can't tell you in words how thankful I am to Dr. Coderre's Red Pills for Pale and Weak Women. You don't know how healthy they have made me. Before I took them I was a great sufferer from female weakness. I had leucorrhœa, headache, backache and bearing-down pains. My complexion was bad, and it made me down-hearted to see other girls with pink cheeks and clear skin. Dr. Coderre's Red Pills, however, have cured all my female troubles, and today my complexion is as fair as any girl's. I wish every girl and woman would take



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and interpretation of the Scriptures; or also contrary to the unanimous consent of the fathers."

"The general rule to be followed in the interpretation of the Scriptures is therefore, the authority of the Church and the unanimous consent of the fathers. If, then, the meaning of a text is defined by the Church, as in the case of words, 'This is My Body.' 'This is My Blood,' the interpreter must defend that meaning. But if the meaning of the text is not defined, he must not give any exposition which would conflict with any point of the Church's teaching, and the same rule holds in regard to the unanimous teaching of the fathers in matters of faith and morals."

"The reader who has no knowledge of our Catholic commentators may be inclined to think that the Catholic Scripture student, who has his way thus marked out for him, has comparatively easy work—that nothing is left to private judgment. This, however, is a great mistake, which may be corrected by a mere glance at the works of any of our great commentators, ancient or modern. Here we find the greatest freedom of treatment. The number of texts whose meaning is determined by the teaching of the Church or the fathers is exceedingly small. If there is a definition of the Church or a consensus of the fathers on a certain text, it is the duty of the Catholic commentator to establish that meaning. If not, he is free to follow his own opinion, provided it be in concert with the Catholic teaching. The Catholic commentator must bring to bear on his subject all that ancient and modern science, history, philology, etc., can offer for his aid."

As to the question of 'Higher Criticism,' which is incidentally touched upon in the foregoing letter, we will not now occupy space with its consideration—moreover, it has been selected as a matter for editorial comment in these columns, and the present writer need not dwell upon it at all. The conclusions of a practical kind, to be drawn from the foregoing extracts are two-fold:—

Firstly, the Catholic Church teaches the whole Bible, and holds it to be the inspired work of God; secondly, with the exception of a small number of texts, which constitute the basis of fundamental dogmas of the Church, and upon which she has pronounced the Catholic has full and unbridled liberty in the interpretation of the Scriptures—provided his interpretation does not conflict with any of the teachings of Christ.

## STRANGLING IN A SWING.

Oscar Friske, 13 years old, son of Emil Friske, piano maker, was strangled to death in a swing last week, at the family home, 615 East Ninth street, New York. The swing was suspended from the porch in the rear yard. The porch is only five feet above the ground and the swing was a loop of three-eighth-inch clothes line which extended to within three feet of the ground. The boy had been playing in the swing for half an hour when Mrs. Theresa Gasser one of the occupants of the apartment house, heard a gurgling noise under the porch and discovered the boy sitting in the swing with his head entangled in the rope forming one side of the

swing loop. She cried for help and the boy's father cut the ropes. When the boy fell to the ground he was alive, but unconscious. He had struck his neck between parted strands of the rope. Before the Bellevue Hospital ambulance got to the house the boy died.

## NOTES OF INTEREST FROM THE CANADIAN PATENT OFFICE.

The work of the Canadian Patent office has been considerably delayed owing to recent changes in the corps of examiners.

Examiner Bailey has been granted six months leave of absence owing to impaired eyesight, and Examiner Farmer has resigned.

Messrs. Campbell, McGill, Richard and Thompson, have been appointed examiners to take the places of the absentees, and they may be relied upon to bring the work up to date, as they become more and more familiar with their duties.

Few people have any conception of the responsibilities of an examiner of the Patent office; their duties necessitating not only an education of a superior order, but an intimate knowledge of the vast field of modern invention, which can only be acquired by actual experience and hard work.

The following is a list of patents recently granted to clients of Messrs. Marion & Marion, solicitors of patents and experts, New York Life Building, Montreal.

63,080—Julius Otto Zwarg, Freiberg, Germany, microphones.

63,096—John D. Olin, Montreal, P. Q., artificial fuel.

63,097—Joseph Arthur Vaillancourt, Jr., Montreal, P. Q., butter presses.

63,106—Paul R. Trethewey, Muskoka Falls, Ont., boat propelling mechanism.

63,110—Delphis Desorrey, St. Malo d'Auckland, P. Q., boats.

63,144—Elias Jones, Winnipeg, Man., straw stacker.

63,140—Joseph A. Plante, Quebec, P. Q., acetylene gas generating apparatus.

63,139—Odilon Archambault, St. Hyacinthe, P. Q., acetylene gas generators.

63,138—Louis M. Destroismaisons, Ste. Anne de la Poutiere, P. Q., acetylene gas generator.

63,135—John Robert Stroud, Milford Bay, Ont., wrenches.

Why is it that nearly all aged persons are thin?

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## DON PEROSI'S CRITICS.

The musical critics of England and America have been somewhat severe on the young Italian priest—Don Perosi—whose oratorios have created such a great sensation in Italy. Italian composers are expected to perform miracles, and it is difficult to satisfy any audience—outside of Italy—unless the composition borders on the marvellous. Were an English, a Scotchman, an Irishman, or an American to have produced the "Transfiguration," or the "Raising of Lazarus," or the "Resurrection of Christ," he would at once be proclaimed the greatest composer of the age, a miracle of musical genius, one of the wonders of the world. But these oratorios happen to come from a young Italian Roman Catholic priest. The fact of being an Italian would suffice to create a demand for something superhuman in the art of music at his hands; but his being a Catholic priest renders it almost impossible that he should satisfy certain critics. The *Catholic Times*, referring to him says:—

"He has already helped forward the movement for the reform of Church music in Italy. He is still a very young man. With hard work and confidence in himself he will realize the highest expectations formed of him."

The old story of Prometheus is a parable. Prometheus was on terms of intimacy with the gods. From them he stole fire, and gave it to men. For this sin he was bound to the rocks of Mount Caucasus, and vultures were set upon him. They only ate his liver. This grew again as fast as it was pecked away. Are his sufferings to be imagined?

Take a modern interpretation of the parable. There is no cooking without fire. In cooking and eating the mischief lies. The stomach is overtasked, the bowels become clogged, they cannot dispose of the food that is given them. The impurities back up on the liver. Then come the vultures—the torments of a diseased liver. Dr. Pierre's Golden Medical Discovery is more than equal to the vultures of dyspepsia and its kindred diseases. There is no more need of suffering from dyspepsia than there is of hanging one's self. Sold by all medicine dealers the world over.

Sheep Killed by Lightning. A few days ago, during a severe thunderstorm near Bernardsville, N. J., fifty sheep belonging to John Peterson were instantly killed by an electric bolt. The sheep were huddled beneath a huge oak tree. A bolt of lightning struck the top branches of the tree and passing downward into the ground instantly killed the sheep. The big tree was completely split in two, while the branches and leaves were burned and charred. Each of the sheep had a black mark on its side where the lightning had passed through its body.

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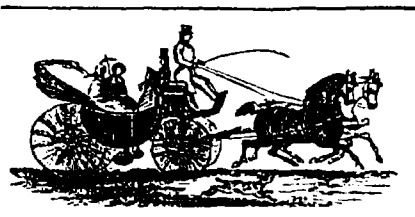
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NOTICE is hereby given that Albertine Brabant, wife of Edward Kiernan, of the City of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, will apply to the Parliament of Canada, at the next session thereof, for a Bill of Divorce, from her husband, Edward Kiernan, of the said City of Montreal, on the ground of cruelty, adultery, and desertion.  
Dated at the City of Montreal, Province of Quebec, this ninth day of March, 1899.  
WM. E. MOUNT,  
Solicitor for Applicant.

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