

Sacred Heart Review. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCXXCV.

As I have said, the appearance of Janssen's work created a tremendous uproar in Germany. It went far to justify the plaintive exclamation of the old Lutheran divine: "Brethren, we do not know our Luther."

However, as it was plainly impossible in Germany, to suppress the work, and as the Government would not consent to send the author to prison, or to suffer his ears to be cut off, as was angrily suggested by some zealous brethren, admirers of Ulrich von Hutten who took this way of promoting pure doctrine, we have had to fall back on two weapons of defense, which I have already mentioned.

One is: Janssen garbles from Luther. The other is: He and his colleagues regard Protestantism with preternatural hate.

As to the first accusation, I am not prepared to refute it. I have no such knowledge of Luther's voluminous works as to be entitled to say that Janssen, in citing from him, nowhere breaks off before the full sense comes out. I think, however, that I am authorized, having read Janssen, in the German, once, from beginning to end, text, notes, and all, and having read over the vital parts of his work twice, besides comparing a good deal of the English translation, to say that he may be depended on, so far as he quotes, to quote exactly, verbatim et literatim, even to the very archaic forms of Luther's or Melancthon's or Bucer's words.

As to the charge of garbling, Nippold brings it, as was to be expected, with the intense resentment which the very mention of a Catholic almost always rouses in him, but he brings not one example. We may therefore easily dismiss him as presenting attorney, but with the query in our minds: "If Janssen is so given to garbling, why could not Professor Nippold afford us a single instance of it?" To be sure, he says confidentially to his hearers, as of a case made out: "We all know what a garbler the man is," but this trick of speech is too familiar to be very impressive. Nippold's work is condensed and found room for an example or two, even found room for leaving out our national church history. I would even, for so good an end, have allowed him to omit his commendations of my articles on Missions and Mohammedanism.

Nevertheless, I held in mind for the first, in reading Janssen, and making copious extracts against a man on the strength of passages from his works adduced by a pronounced antagonist. Yet as my health did not allow me to resort largely to Luther's first-hand works, and as I have nowhere seen Janssen accused of not quoting precisely so far as he goes, I have thought it right to use his extracts freely, but with three restrictions.

First, that I should not allege, as a fact of the German Reformation, including the next century, any statement which is at variance with those three great Protestant authorities, Ranke, Schiller, and Gardiner, having regard likewise to two subordinate but valuable writers, also strongly Protestant, Muller and Archbishop Trencz.

Secondly, that I should not use any brief extract made by Janssen from Luther unless it plainly speaks for itself, no matter what may precede or follow.

Thirdly, that I should note that ordinarily, the longer a citation is, the less capable it is of being garbled. Some of Janssen's most damning citations from Luther and Melancthon fill page after page, and bear witness in themselves to their completeness.

Janssen, I need not say, nowhere disputes that a large share of Luther's treatises are simply the non-controversial works of a Christian teacher writing for the edification of the plain Christian people. Even when some brief passage of this sort is a trifle controversial, it is only slightly so.

For instance, when, in the full tide of his warfare with the Papacy, in 1527, the very year of the sack of Rome, Luther pleads for the immaculate Conception of Mary, he plainly not aiming a blow at the Dominicans. His purpose is wholly practical, to promote devotion among the laity, and to increase their admiration of the redeeming goodness of God.

So also when, I judge even later, he declares that he has finished his work on the Canticles "through the intercession of the Blessed Mother of God he is not writing scholastically, but purely in the interests of practical piety. He is trying to restrain his followers from our Protestant inclination to imagine that we honor God more in proportion as we condemn and forget His most highly favored creatures. It may also possibly be that, having in mind the heavy German contempt for the female sex, which the large Celtic admixture in England has greatly mitigated, he wishes to remind his countrymen that it is a woman, not a man, whom "all generations shall call blessed."

At all events, he urges devotion to the Blessed Virgin in very much the style of an Alphonso Liguori afterwards. He reminds the people that the mediation of Mary is only a form of her Son's; that she is not the source but the channel of grace; that Christ is her Lord also, and through His foreseen merits, her Redeemer. "Mary," he exclaims, in substance, "does not wish you to fix on her as the end, but to look through her to her Son, as through Him to the Father."

Even that presumably much larger part of Luther's predominantly non-controversial works which is not of an accented Catholicism, is doubtless intended to promote faith, holiness and virtue. Whatever he may have done, he certainly did not set out to break up the foundations of Christian society. On the contrary, as the great Catholic

citine, Mohler, remarks, he set out with the sublime intention of bringing the Christian people to realize the filial freedom of the children of God, and unquestionably there was a large body of his disciples with whom this design was successful, and who resolutely shut their eyes to the antinomian looseness into which the coarse vehemence of his controversial temper finally plunged him. It is to be feared that there was an antinomian germ in his original theory of justification, but had he not broken with Rome this might always remained latent and unnoticed. Even as it is, many of his followers have always refused to acknowledge the poison core of the original Lutheranism. It is from this sounder element of the movement, we may presume, that the exquisite piety of so many Lutheran hymns has proceeded.

Of course then you can not find anything so bad said or done by Luther but that you could doubtless find much in his non-controversial works wholly at variance with it. However, what he teaches or says or does that is bad or false or vile is not purified by what he says that is good and true. Poison does not cease to be poison because you put it into excellent bread. Quarrel then as much as we may with Janssen's quotations from Luther, there is unhappily too much left that is ablutely crushing in its effect on his reputation.

I will employ a paper or two in retelling some of Luther's propositions, leaving it to any one who can make out how these can possibly be explained as being garbled.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK. Andover, Mass.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Third Sunday of Lent.

HONORARY CHURCH MEMBERS.

He who is not with me is against me. (Luke x. 23.)

Societies in our day, brethren, have become a great moral force, the very best means of promoting and spreading any great cause. Men recognize this fact, and so combine together, that by unity of purpose they may better advance the principles they desire to support. Many of these societies are made up of two distinct classes, the active members, who are the bone and sinew, the life of the institution, and the honorary members, who take no personal interest in the management or working of the society, but who, nevertheless, are good enough, or interested enough, to advance the cause they honor by the support of their name.

You and I, brethren, belong to a society, the Catholic church, which embraces the whole world. We have in view one great object—the salvation of souls, the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ among men. But this society of ours, a real, living, organic institution, differs from most others in this: that it does not need the support of honorary members; neither will it approve their existence in its bosom.

No, the church would have all her members living, active, earnest supporters of her principles, and from them all she requires a pledge that they will keep her laws, advance her ends, and fight her battles for the kingdom she was established to uphold. She will welcome no mere spectators to her ranks, and as for neutral ground, she recognizes none; for those who are not with her are against her.

And yet there are many who call themselves Christians, would be honorary members of the Catholic church, who do not even realize what the word Christian means; who seem to forget that to be a Christian imposes the obligation of being at war with all that is anti-Christian. An honorary membership for such Christians is very convenient; a membership that would allow them to be on good terms with Christ and satan. The fasting and praying, the vigils and good works, the real brunt of the battle they would leave to the active members, while they would look on with an encouraging smile of approval.

Ah! brethren, learn this lesson once for all and well: between Christ and the world there can be no compromise. He who is not with me is against me. There is no neutral ground, for the sacraments she offers you the source and support of your life? If so, you have reason to thank God.

Or are you standing afar off ready to give an approving nod when the world frowns? Are the laws of the church irksome to you and so avoided? If this be the case, you are nothing but dead limbs, and liable to be cut off without a moment's warning from the living body, for dead members are against, not with, the parent stem.

Would be honorary members of the Catholic church, beware of the error of trying to give one hand to God and the other to the devil; beware of the fallacy of thinking that because you are outwardly connected with the church you cannot be lost—that hell was never intended for Catholics; that, somehow or other, you will come out all right in the end. That is what Judas thought when with his sin-stained lips he kissed his Lord Whom he had so lately sold to the enemy.

Have you still the faith, then beware lest your want of charity may bring on a want of faith. Have you still a conscience, beware lest your frequent

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attempts to stifle it may extinguish it altogether. If there be a spark of it left I beg of you stir it up. Be in earnest, and at least let not this Lent pass without a good confession and Communion, the only condition on which you can become active members of God's holy church. Put your heart in the work and you will be happier for it here and certainly happier hereafter.

LENT, AND THE INSPECTION OF THE BRAKES.

We might readily find a definition of the purpose of the holy season of Lent now upon us more conformable to religious usage, but none, we believe, that will come home with greater force to the average man than that of the genial humorist, Mr. Dooley—himself a Catholic—"Lent is the time for seeing" that your brakes are all right."

The word brake, as most commonly used in present day language, is a mechanical device for arresting or retarding the motion of a vehicle or car by means of friction, and a continuous brake is a series of car-brakes so arranged that all can be controlled from one point on the train. We all know what happens if the brakes are not working properly, or if control of them is lost before some serious obstacle on the track, or a broken bridge or a washout, or a train that has no business in your way, but is nevertheless coming up against you at a speed of fifty miles an hour.

Yes, it is very necessary to have the brakes all right and perfectly under control. So only shall we avoid collisions and wrecks, and bring ourselves and all who have been entrusted to our care safe into the terminal for which every engine, little or great, is headed. The great business of the brakeman in the spiritual, as well as in the material sense, is to carry out his orders, keep clear head and alert vision, and see that his brakes are all right. In what state are his brakes who is a rebel against the rules of the road, or who has begun to take them lightly; whose head is muddled with drink, while his eyes are misted with passion?

What is there for him but imminent disaster and disgrace, and the final dread accounting at the Terminal? Lent is the time for the inspection of the brakes and for much self study on the part of the brakeman. Is he less cool headed, less clear eyed, less quick and dexterous of hand, more willing to take big risks than he was at the outset? Is his inspection of the brakes confined to the comparatively rare occasions of a mission?

Then, surely he has been neglecting his annual Lenten opportunities; the abstinence not only from flesh but from pleasures; the quiet hours of the special devotions of the season, can delude as they are to profitable retrospection; the week day Mass, if he can have it; and the special charities which his self-restraint should enable him to distribute more generously than at other times among the helpless and afflicted poor, and among those who are struggling under heavy material burdens to which their means are inadequate.

The grace of self-control—that mastery, spoken of by the Apostle, and promised only to him who retaineth himself—is the grace of a well kept Lent. Then the man—and equally the woman—self disciplined by penance, prayer, and almsdeeds, and strengthened by the sacraments, has the brakes in order and is able to apply them, to foresee the broken bridge, the engine run amok, and every danger and obstacle which can impede its progress over the long and winding road which we call Life, and to go safely through the fearsome tunnel of death, which is the only passage to the Light and Peace unending on the other side. —Boston Pilot.

Above things, all endeavor to place the sentiment of peace over all thy feelings; it will enable thee to do great things without any labor — nay, with great tranquillity and serenity.

Sweet is the spiritual fragrance of the flower of the Penitence. It is a mingling of obedience to the law — of joy in presenting such a Child to God's own equal, to God's Himself, and of sorrow for His foretold sufferings. —Father Ryan.

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ENVY.

AN EVIL AND A DEADLY THING, A DESTRUCTIVE PASSION. "Protem" in the Catholic Transcript.

Envy is the sadness which the miserable feel on beholding the good enjoyed by their fellows. It is the vice of little men, the terror and the nightmare of petty souls. It is the opposite of charity, the sworn enemy of merit.

The envious man cannot abide his neighbor's prosperity. He is deluded and fancies that the good of his friend is his own calamity. What falls to another's lot is bemoaned as something lost to himself. Though the world is large and abounding in opportunities, the envious man fixes his heart to the precise advantage which accrues to his neighbor. Envy is an evil and a deadly thing. It recognizes neither the claims of friendship nor the canons of the Most High. It is a destructive passion and ends in ruin for the envious.

Envy is frequently a guarantee of the merit and excellence of the person envied. It has about it an element of praise. It is only the inert, the sluggish and the notoriously bad that entirely escape the venom of the envious.

Envy is a treacherous thing. Do not trust it. Beware! It is steeped in cruelty. It revels in crime. It feeds upon the ruin of men and their reputation. It is insatiable. When it is suffered to run its course it means death, to all generous instincts—death to charity and peace of mind, and ultimately death to the soul, which it has withered and sapped of its higher life.

The man who is possessed by this dread monster is poor and blind and wretched indeed. He sees visions and dreams, dreadful dreams. Give him your pity, but without your counsel. Pardon his blindness, but beware of his spleen. His sight is sinister. He sees everything darkly and through a colored atmosphere. Your thoughtlessness is for him premeditated treachery. Your openness, consummate cunning. You are prejudged and condemned, and the sentence must be served out to the last letter.

In your philosophy do not proceed by rule when reckoning with the victim of envy. He is treacherous and you cannot count upon his morrow. His conscience is elastic, and you have no canons to fit his case. He is without judgment, and therefore, without law. If you are wise, you will set your vigilance against his unconscious malice. He is the victim of a blinding and devouring passion. Beware lest his darkness may cloud the meridian of your perfect day!

Meanwhile, if a blight has come over your soul, if envy gnaws at your own heart, probe it to the very centre and tear out the canker, root and branch. Do not suffer this green eyed monster to afflict the soul life which you have to spend in this world. The earth and the fullness thereof are not for the petty, the flint-souled and such as repine at their neighbor's good. These blessings come down from the Father of Lights. They are for the children of light, and they are plentiful enough. The bounty of heaven will not be exhausted by the success or glory of any man. There are good things enough in the world to satisfy every legitimate craving and every human heart. Why repine at the happiness of a brother sojourner in this land of shadow?

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