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just now. A hopeful sign, if co-operation be not used as a blind to hide the confessed hopelessness of unity. Federation was in the air after the great Conference of 1907, and is still in evidence. That, too, as well as co-operation, is a sign of hope, but only as a short path to *unity*, not as a swerving path away from it. We doubt the efficacy and practical working of either without previous and definite unity in verity; and the question obtrudes itself authoritatively with which I began, Do we remember clearly in our manipulation of co-operation and federation that what our Lord prayed for and enjoins and waits for is unity? Is it too late to hope that the English Church, steadfast and faithful to her Creeds and doctrine and Sacraments, and to the Faith, in all the fulness of that great Word, may even yet unite the forces of the missions in China in their plans for advance and forward movements to win the land and every land for the Lord of all?



Some Impressions of Irish Romanism.

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IN the course of a ministerial life which, though short in years, has been chiefly spent in the training of candidates for the ministry, it has fallen to my lot to devote a good deal of time to the study of that summary of Anglican theology, the Thirty-Nine Articles. The Articles, as all well-instructed Church-people know, take up a mean position between the extremes of Romanism on one side and certain aspects of Protestantism on the other. But the Articles were composed and revised at various dates between 1553 and 1571, and were based in part on still earlier sources such as the Confession of Augsburg in 1530 and the Confession of Würtemberg in 1552. Therefore the Romanism to which they are opposed is the Romanism of a bygone age. It is the system of doctrine and practice

advocated by the medieval "School authors," and more especially by the Council of Trent, for that Council was sitting at intervals between December, 1545, and November, 1563, and it has been shown by the late Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury in the case of Article Twenty-two, and by Mr. W. P. Upton in other details, that the bodies of formula-constructors on opposite sides of the Channel were watching each other and taking the opportunity of successive editions or sessions to make indirect replies to each other's statements. Romanism has altered for better or worse since then. It may be the boast of Papal theologians that their doctrine remains uncontaminated; that it is, in fact, the true deposit of the faith handed on by St. Peter to his successors; but there is more truth in Newman's theory of development, especially if we yield to the facts and say development by accretion from without rather than evolution from within. But it is not merely that the Romanism of the Council of Trent is in some matters out of date; it is scholastic, it is carefully phrased and guarded in statement, as befitted the utterance of a Council summoned to attempt to propitiate the rising Protestant movement by some measures of reform; therefore it does not really reflect the popular religion, it is not a true index to the beliefs of that vast body of "Catholics" who then as (now) are ignorant of Latin and incapable of fine distinctions.

It was therefore particularly interesting to me to be able to go over to Ireland during the Easter vacation this spring and study the popular Romanism of to-day. England is not a good place to study it, for in this country Protestantism, with its open Bible, is the dominant form of Christianity, and Romanism, chameleon-like, takes much of its colour from its context. In Ireland things are different. Outside Ulster, and perhaps Dublin, the Roman type of Christianity is not merely dominant, it is almost exclusive of any other. In the towns of the South and West Protestants are in a hopeless minority; in the country districts you may travel for miles without meeting one at all. Romanism, therefore, is better able to appear

in its true colours, and it is, perhaps, not too far from the truth to say that it is seen better in Ireland to-day than in any other place, for the Irish peasant is naturally religious, and he has not been demoralized by close contact with paganism as in South America, or by rationalism as in European countries.

One word of personal explanation may be admissible at this point. It is hard to think of Ireland at this moment without thinking of a current political controversy, and in the background of this particular controversy lies the question of religion. Not much has been said about it in parliamentary speeches; perhaps it is well that silence should have been preserved. But it is impossible not to remember a sentence which Mr. Harold Begbie quotes from a Roman Catholic Bishop in his book on the "Lady Next Door," and which he reiterated quite recently in the columns of the *Times*: "Have I made you feel, have I convinced you, that the Irish question is a spiritual question, a religious question? Our movement in its soul is that, nothing but that." The truth of the remark becomes apparent very quickly to a traveller in Ireland, and what one thinks of Irish Romanism must have its bearing upon one's views of the Irish question as a whole. But the present writer would desire to say that his visit to Ireland was undertaken for a reason entirely unconnected with the turmoil of politics, and that this account of his impressions is being written in complete forgetfulness of its existence.

Perhaps the most obvious thing about modern Romanism is its comfortable assurance of its own correctness and the folly—nay, the fatality—of any other belief. Here, again, one sees the difference between the statements of the Papal documents and the teaching propounded for popular acceptance. The Pope may issue a decree asserting his own infallibility, but it is tempered in its application by so many conditions as to the delivery of the decree that nobody can be sure that an infallible decree has ever been issued from 1870 until the present day. But the Pope's ministers do not trouble themselves about conditions. They are quite sure, for example, that nobody can be

saved outside the Roman Church. We in England remember some remarks on this subject by Cardinals Newman and Manning. Manning gave his imprimatur to the statement, "It is impossible to be saved in the so-called Anglican Church," and Newman once said to some members of the Church of England: "A bad Catholic may have a hope in his death to which the most virtuous of Protestants, nay, my dear brethren, the most correct and thoughtful among yourselves, however able or learned or sagacious, if you have lived not by faith but by private judgment, are necessarily strangers." This doctrine is being vigorously taught in Ireland. Here is a passage from the Maynooth Catechism: "Q. What do you mean by the true Church? A. The true Church is the Congregation of all the faithful . . . under one *visible* head on earth. Q. Are all obliged to be of the true Church? A. All are obliged to belong to the true Church, and no one can be saved out of it." The priests believe this (or perhaps one ought to say that the priests either believe it or pretend to believe it), and so it is passed on to the people. In the light of this it is easy to understand why the priests raise such tremendous opposition when any member of their flock shows signs of interest in Protestantism, and why there are so many indisputable cases of bitter persecution of perverts. When I was in Limerick I visited Dr. Long's Medical Mission and met a woman who had confessed to her priest that she had been to the dispensary. She was told that to visit the dispensary was a grievous sin, from which an ordinary priest could not absolve her; absolution could only be obtained from the administrator of the cathedral. Many pages might be filled with stories of persecution of perverts, but this article is not the place for them. The curious may find a selection of them in "Intolerance in Ireland," by an Irishman. The stories there recorded sound incredible, but they are strictly true. What it is desired here to emphasize is that persecution, past and present, is a direct consequence of Roman claims to exclusive rights in the blessings of salvation.

An infallible Church dispenses with the necessity of any

reference for proof of its statements to the Bible, and hence the Bible is a neglected book in Ireland. Part of the organization attached to many churches is the Confraternity for men and the Sodality for women. At one church the Confraternity numbered seven thousand, and a workman gave it as his opinion that not twenty out of the seven thousand possessed a Bible. In view of other evidence it is highly probable that his figure twenty could be considerably reduced. Inquiry by others has proved that in many provincial towns it is practically impossible to purchase a Bible, because there is no demand for it. I went into a good many Roman churches, and always studied the literature on the rack by the door, but in only one church was any portion of the Bible to be found—an annotated copy of St. Luke's Gospel. Nor is the Bible merely ignored: in some cases it is even treated with contempt. A colporteur was selling portions of the Bible in Limerick, when a woman shouted at him that the book came from the Devil. He appealed to the Roman parish priest, who happened to pass by at the moment, and asked him whether it was true that the Bible came from the Devil. The priest would not say no, and could not say yes, and therefore found it best to return no answer.

We may now proceed to illustrate the character of the teaching given by the Church and its effects on common life. The teaching given can be readily gathered from the penny manuals of all sorts which are on sale at the church doors. It is a duty as well as a pleasure to emphasize at the outset what no responsible Anglican has ever denied, that Romanism, though perverted Christianity, is Christianity still; and that here and there in its documents one comes across really beautiful things. Here is a passage from a booklet purchased in the pro-cathedral at Dublin, a penny copy of St. Alphonsus de Liguori's "Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary," a passage which any Protestant might glory in having written:

"Come then, O Lord! come and take possession of my heart; close its doors for ever, that henceforth no creature may

enter there to divide the love which is due to Thee, and which it is my ardent desire to bestow all on Thee. Do Thou alone, my dear Redeemer, rule me ; do Thou alone possess my whole being, and if ever I do not obey Thee perfectly, chastise me with rigour that henceforth I may be more watchful to please Thee as Thou willest. Grant that I may no longer seek for any other pleasure than that of giving Thee pleasure."

That is a beautiful passage expressive of the highest Christian ideal. Would that our Roman brethren and we could live up to it! It has been said that every error lives by the truth that it contains, and one feels at once that here is a pure gem of Christian truth which has given survival value to the system in which it is found. The gem is so splendid that one is the more sad at the poorness of its setting. I will not stay to express surprise that the Alphonsus who wrote that passage could also write in his so-called "Moral Theology" on themes so far removed from what is of good taste—to put the matter extremely mildly—that his language is utterly untranslatable. I desire to call attention to some errors which are found in his little book to which I have referred.

There is error about the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is limited to a presence in the consecrated Host. The author quotes an illustration which is pathetic. He says of St. John Francis Regis that when he desired to spend a night in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and found the church door closed against him, he used to remain on his knees "outside the door, exposed to the rain and cold, that at least at a distance he might pay his homage to his comforter concealed under the sacramental veils." The saint's devotion and watching unto prayer are matter for thankfulness and emulation, and if Irish Romanists would copy him in these things they would profit greatly. Unfortunately, many of them lack his spiritual discernment, as well as his earnestness, but they hold his belief in the bodily presence of Christ in the consecrated Host, and therefore it is that so many of them wander into the churches in an incessant stream and tell their beads in the Sacred Presence.

Some of them are, of course, mere formalists; others are reverent and as devotional as they know how to be; but all are misguided, and all are missing the precious privileges of fellowship with God in spirit without restriction of time and place which were made known to us by the Apostles and preached again by Luther.

Again, there is error about the mediation of Christ. St. Alphonsus writes: "Let us go with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid." St. Antoninus says that Mary is this throne from which God dispenses all grace: O most amiable Queen! since thou hast so great a desire to help sinners, behold a great sinner who has recourse to thee: help me much and help me without delay! Sole refuge of sinners, have mercy on me." There are many similar passages in the book, but the position of Mary in the Church of Rome is so well known that no more quotation is needed to illustrate it. An incident may, however, be recorded. A mission worker was talking to a Romanist of the peasant class about Jesus Christ as the sufficient Saviour, and the reply in substance was: "You are always bringing Jesus out before us. Now the priests don't do this in our church: they keep Jesus barred up in the cage." The reply was a puzzle to the worker for some time, but at length he discovered what was meant. In the church in question, in a dark corner where no casual visitor would notice it, is a recess in the wall in which, behind iron bars, is a statue of the Saviour. When the worker showed me the statue, I was able fully to appreciate his story.

Another thing that struck me about popular Romanism was that it is largely a religion of fear—fear of God and fear of the priest. There can be no doubt that large numbers of the poorer people still live in absolute terror of the priest, although perhaps less so than they used to do. There is a common belief that a blow from a priest's hand results in paralysis. An example of this was provided for me by a woman in Connaught; yet the same woman professed herself quite prepared to tackle any layman who dared to touch her, and her appearance did not in the

least invite one to doubt her statement. Of course, such a belief is confined to the uneducated classes, and cannot be called particularly dangerous to religion. But it is dangerous to religion when people of all classes are trained to fear God. I do not mean a loving fear of Him as our Almighty and Holy Father. That needs inculcating. I mean an abject fear of Him as an angry tyrant. I bought two books in Dublin (I believe that they are officially withdrawn from circulation), one meant for adults and called "Hell Opened to Christians," and the other, meant for children, called "The Sight of Hell." They are by different authors, and have been widely circulated. They can only be described as exceedingly bad prose parodies of Dante's "Inferno," and to circulate such literature among children is cruel. Yet this kind of stuff is preached regularly every Lent, and is responsible for the annual revival of popular interest in religion which is manifest at that season. It may be allowable to illustrate the point further by a quotation from an article by Mr. P. D. Kenny, an Irish Roman Catholic layman, in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for September, 1909. "My earliest impressions concerning God were of an eternal stoker in a mighty rage ready to roast me; and of the priest as God's only master, with his eternal hose-pipe to keep down the flames, all for a trifle in silver at Christmas and Easter, which, in the circumstances, seemed to me the one sane field for investment."

But what to a Romanist is the real way of salvation? I have been illustrating my points mainly from the poorer classes. I can illustrate this by alluding to a conversation I had with a man who had been partly trained for the priesthood. So far as I could discover, the way to be saved was to attend Mass, and keep the more obvious moral rules. It was impossible to distinguish in principle between his version of the matter and that refinement of Rabbinic Judaism which St. Paul wrote Romans and Galatians to overthrow.

One word must be said in conclusion of the civil and moral effects of Romanism, and in saying it I purposely refrain from comparing statistically Dublin and Belfast. I spent a sad morning in the slums of Dublin. They are insanitary, unfit for

human habitation, and would be condemned by any enlightened corporation. Their inhabitants, partly through their misfortune and partly through their fault, are sunk in the lowest depths of sin and degradation. What is being done for them? Mr. Harold Begbie declares that all virtue "would be destroyed but for the constant vigilance of a ruling priesthood." No doubt some priests penetrate to the slums and try to improve them. There are well-deserved statues in Dublin and Cork to Father Matthew, an apostle of temperance reform, and there are those who still walk in his footsteps. But one swallow does not make a summer, and doubts may be expressed about the ruling priesthood's "constant vigilance." If the workers of the Society for Irish Church Missions were consulted, they would say that the vigilance only became obvious when Protestants attempted to do the work which Romanists neglected, and that in this case the vigilance took very unpleasant forms. The Jesuit author of a little tract on what is called "Soupersism" refers to a "wonderful list of organizations for the relief of distress in and around the capital," and significantly adds that the "submerged tenth on which the Soupers prey are seemingly out of reach of all these activities."

What of the "Ne Temere" decree? Its provisions need not be repeated here, nor the notorious McCann case that arose out of it. It must suffice to say that the only satisfactory way to avoid it is to impress upon people the evil of mixed marriages. They are very common in Ireland. They are really encouraged by Rome for proselytizing purposes; and while they exist there will always be trouble.

Much prayer has been offered in England lately for a right solution of Ireland's political troubles. I should like to plead that prayer should also be offered that our Roman brethren there may be delivered from the darkness of medieval superstition, and brought to the full knowledge of their glorious liberty as children of God in Jesus Christ. A reformation in their Christianity will, in the writer's belief, be a great step towards solving their political problems.