

can apply it?—Society? Yes, to a certain extent. Opinion forms around us, according as we act well or ill, an atmosphere of honor or shame which we must seriously take into account. Besides, this purely moral sanction, society disposes of material sanctions, formidable punishments, or coveted rewards. But how often opinion and society are mistaken in their decrees! How many elements of appreciation they lack! How many secret actions escape their judgment! Will man punish or reward himself for his good and bad actions? Yes, again, in part. When we have done well, when we have come victors out of a violent moral struggle, when we have had the fortitude and manliness to sacrifice our passions to duty, our conscience gives us inward felicitations, the sweetness of which surpasses all applause and reward; we feel ourselves better, worthier, most estimable, greater, in a word, more men. If, on the contrary, we have done evil, our conscience protests, and stands up against us, as an avenging witness, to upbraid us with our sin.

Nevertheless, this testimony of conscience will prove insufficient. There are culprits whose conscience is so clouded, stunted, deadened, annihilated, that they feel not the weight of remorse after the most revolting crimes. As for those felicitations which follow a good action, they are experienced, especially after gaining a harder victory which required particular generosity. In the faithful accomplishment of our daily duties, we find peace of soul, and this reward is highly valuable and desirable, but does it effectively correspond to that constant effort, or rather that heroism, which sometimes is required for the continual application to the humble and monotonous labor of each day? Know you not, also, that if there are men always self-satisfied, be their merits ever so diminutive, there are others, on the contrary, whose conscience becomes more exacting in proportion as they rise in perfection?

There must, then, be a judge who penetrates the interior of souls, and scrutinises our thoughts, who discerns the motive of our actions, and knows all their moral value, who weighs impartially our part of responsibility in our determinations. This judge can be God alone. He alone can apply the sanction in accordance with the rules of infallible justice. He usually abstains from interference, because He respects our freedom and does not, as a rule, disturb the order of His laws. He reserves Himself for the hour of judgment, when He will render to every one according to his works.

We often hear in our day severe criticism on this hope of a final sanction, and our adversaries fling at us the reproach that our morality is an interested morality, since its incentive is the fear of punishment and the hope of reward. 'It is far more perfect,' they say, 'to work solely for duty's sake, because it is duty, without the attraction of reward either present or future.'

Nothing is easier than the answer to this objection. Presented cleverly, it produces a certain baneful impression, because some people do not see its refutation. First of all, we remark that we do not work principally in view of a reward, but rather in view of God our last end. Very different is the virtue of hope from the virtue of charity or love. We are aware that love, according to the words of Christ, is the perfection of the law; hence, when we work, or suffer, or act, our first view is not to avoid hell or win heaven, but to please God and show Him our love. This St. Augustine expressed when he exclaimed: 'I love Thee, my God, I feel, I am sure I do. My fears are not interested; quench hell-fire; I fear it only because I love Thee. Destroy paradise: my joy, my hope, my bliss consists only in loving Thee.'

Nevertheless, while in our soul and our life we give the first place to love, we by no means repudiate hope, because it is a supernatural virtue; nay, more, because it is a natural virtue and a most human one; our nature as well as our justice claims a reward for good, and a punishment for evil. We cannot abstract from that sentiment which clings to our inmost being and is a part of our very selves.

Thus those who carp at our invincible hope in the rewards of a life to come, and parade their so-called disinterested morality, are more consistent men in practice than in theory; for they are the last to neglect, they are keenly alive to the advantages accruing to them from the discharge of their duty. In that they deserve our imitation, without our abating one jot of our higher reward. Nor need we notice their inept and unfair attack. We have an ideal immeasurably above theirs; and we are thankful to the Church for daily reminding us of it, when we say: 'I believe in Jesus Christ. . . . Who will come to judge the living and the dead.'

(To be concluded next week.)

THE PRIESTS AND PEOPLE OF IRELAND

SLANDERERS SCORED

The Very Rev. Dean Regnault delivered a lecture on the above subject to a very large audience on Monday evening, August 13 (writes a Waimate correspondent). The Dean said he felt diffident about speaking to them on Irish affairs; but pamphlets had lately been circulated, repeating all the old and oft-refuted calumnies against the Irish people. These were the work of a briefless Dublin barrister, who, failing to make a living at his profession, and having lost his faith, had taken to the less difficult, but more profitable business of slandering his fellow-countrymen. The accusations may be reduced to the following: Irish Catholics are ignorant because they are priest-ridden and belong to a Church which has never prospered except by keeping its people in ignorance and intellectual stagnation; Irish Catholics are poor because they are priest-ridden and have no liberty of conscience, they spend their means in erecting churches; they are devoid of energy and without thrift and industry; Irish Catholics are superstitious, because they are priest-ridden and belong to a Church that is one vast network of superstition. Thus, for the ignorance, poverty and superstition, for the decay, degeneracy, and ruin that everywhere prevail, the priest is set forth as the universal cause. The Dean denied that the Irish were more ignorant than their neighbors and that, in spite of the Penal Laws, which proscribed learning and the Irish language in order to Protestantise and denationalise the Gael. He gave an historical sketch of Ireland, showing how in the early ages Ireland had been the university of Europe, and had sent missionaries to all parts, thereby earning the titles of 'Lamp of the West' and 'The Island of Saints and Scholars.' The Penal Laws shut out Catholics from every office, civil or military; debarred them from having any say in the elections or government of their country, and forbade education. There was a price on the head of the Catholic schoolmaster. 'Yet at the risk of his life—a penalty too often paid—the priest set up hedge-schools, which, despite the awful risks, were eagerly attended, so innate is the love of learning in the Irish character. From these hedge-schools came some of the brightest ornaments of Irish history, and the proudest place of honor in the records of that distressful country belongs to these hedge-schools. Yet the priests are accused of keeping the people in ignorance.' The establishment of the National Schools, with the object of 'weaning the children from the superstitions of Popery,' was then mentioned, and the struggle of the clergy to grapple with this new danger; how they succeeded and turned these schools into a blessing for Irish youth. Sir John Gorst spoke thus at a meeting of the Education section of the British Association: 'Teachers should be recruited from Ireland, the genius of the Irish people was one that lent itself to the teaching profession.' That does not look like ignorance—unless it proves the ignorance of the slanderers of the Irish race. The lecturer then went on to show what the religious Orders had done and were still doing in education; how they had built and equipped schools which more than hold their own. Speaking of the Catholic intermediate colleges, he showed how they more than hold their own with the State endowed non-Catholic colleges, and their victories were increasing year by year. Even non-Catholics—amongst them Dr. Archdall, Protestant Bishop of Killaloe, and Dr. Bunbury, Protestant Bishop of Limerick—have openly admitted the superiority of the Catholic intermediate education.

In University Education

The Catholic colleges had to enter the lists in their poverty against the well-endowed non-Catholic colleges, yet from 1894 to 1903 inclusively, the Catholic colleges obtained 371 first-class distinctions, Queen's College, Belfast, 242, Queen's College, Galway, 86, and Queen's College, Cork, 20. Of the studentships (£300) the Catholic colleges in the same period won 14—the three Queen's Colleges just 13. The Junior Fellowship in mental and moral science went to the Dublin Diocesan Seminary. One student of the Catholic University of Medicine competed for the studentship in pathology and won it from the Queen's Colleges. The same success has been achieved during the last three consecutive years. Once more, on which side is ignorance? Is it fair, is it honest on the part of the enemies of Irish Catholics, first to rob them of education, and then to revile them and accuse their Church of nursing them in obscurantism? We may say, with proof in hand, that in proportion to population, no country in the world has dur-

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