

Current Topics

A Letter and a Reply

The *Catholic Herald of India* has had submitted to it a letter received by a parish priest, who asks for a suggestion as to how he ought to reply to it:

"Rev. Father, I have explained to you in what dire straits I am, and I cannot understand how you refused to give me the Rs. 100 I needed so urgently. If you still persist in your refusal, I am sorry to inform you that I shall have to join the Anglican Church and go where I may have a better chance of finding greater charity,

Yours, etc., N."

Following is the reply suggested by the *Herald*:

"Dear Sir,—Go.

Yours sincerely, B."

Our contemporary goes on to say that people who stay in the Catholic Church only in the hope of extracting a few rupees from her cannot be worse off anywhere else. Let them go. They are no loss.

Chesterton on "St. Joan"

It has been asserted that Mr. G. B. Shaw has tried to suggest in his play that St. Joan was a kind of primitive Protestant. Says Mr. Chesterton, commenting on this:—"Now considering what a number of Protestant prophets and prophetesses have rioted over the world since the Reformation—thousands in England and tens of thousands in America—it seems very strange that if one wanted a Protestant heroine, one cannot find her except among Catholic saints." Last week the cables conveyed the announcement of an Anglican bishop that the Anglican Church did not canonise saints, but just made them. The foregoing suggests that the easiest way in which Protestant denominations can make them is to claim them after the Catholic Church has canonised them. If they do that they will be able to rest secure in the knowledge that the saints they have are real saints.

A Healthy Sign

According to a contributor to a Dublin exchange there is a religious revival affecting powerfully the life and thought of Italy today, influencing every rank and walk and condition of life, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, on a scale so vast as to have no equal in past history. "As I see this extraordinary movement in full operation," says the writer, "it recalls the remark made more than once to me in the hard days of the war, as we sat in our dug-outs in the old front line: 'Only a great revival of religion can save Europe. I am no religious man, but I am quite sure of this.' Will Fascism and religion hand in hand spread out of Italy and regenerate Europe? Stranger things than this have happened in the past, and may happen again. Those who, like myself, have known Italy for twenty years or more, and possess a really intimate knowledge of the country and the people, can only describe the change as the most amazing phenomenon of our time. Socialism, Communism, and Freemasonry, not to mention

Jewry, formerly dominated the country, the educated classes were largely unbelievers, and any public manifestation of religion was practically out of the question. Now all is changed, and amidst scenes of great enthusiasm, the Sacred Host is borne through the streets of cities that were formerly hotbeds of red revolution; there is no shred of human respect, for men who have never darkened church doors since childhood fall on their knees as the Host is borne by, imploring forgiveness and calling on the bystanders to pray for them. One of the outstanding facts of this extraordinary revival is its entirely spontaneous character. There is no great dominating personality, no great preacher like Savonarola to focus the movement. Yet scenes are enacted up and down the country that recall vividly the days of the great Florentine; immoral books and novels are brought forth and burned in the public streets, blasphemy and swearing are being rigidly put down, and there is no question as to the marvellous moral change being wrought in the character of the people."

Street Theology

It is customary for the fles of the Catholic Church to speak of Spain and Italy as Catholic countries steeped in ignorance and superstition because they are Catholic. They tell us that it is only by keeping the people ignorant that the Church can exist. To clinch their argument they point to England, America, and several other countries (excluding Germany, of course), which they term Protestant countries, to show that the high standard of intelligence and education among Protestant peoples is the great bulwark against "Roman idolatry." Miss M. Ward, in referring to the work of the Catholic Evidence Guild, which consists mainly of street-corner preaching by lay Catholics in the big cities of England, cites some startling examples of Protestant knowledge regarding the Catholic Church. Here are a few of the gems that fell from the lips of enlightened Protestant hecklers:—

"My good sir, it's no earthly use you trying to convince us you don't pay to get your sins forgiven—I've seen it in your own prayer-book—it says you've got to make an *act of contribution* when you go to confession!"

"I take confession to mean, sir, that you tell your sins to the priest, and the priest tells 'em to the bishop, and the bishop tells 'em to the archbishop, and the archbishop tells 'em to the Pope, and the Pope tells 'em face to face with the Almighty. Am I right?"

A man had been giving a vivid description of the tortures inflicted upon nuns in convents—"but the very worst one of all is a thing they call *Extreme Unction*; and this is so terrible [he wound up with gusto] that the nun practically always dies after it!"

"Purgatory? Purgatory? That there teaching was invented by the Vestal Virgins of ancient Greece!"

"Look here, Mr. Speaker, can you tell me what the Catholics did to the Protestants in the catacombs of Rome?"

A speaker had been dealing excellently for twenty minutes with Papal Infallibility, taking questions and constantly driving home what Infallibility was *not*. Finally he asked: "Any more questions?" An old woman at the foot of the platform, who had been listening attentively to the whole lecture, raised her voice: "You may talk, young man, and you may talk till you are black in the face, but never will you convince me that your Pope is God!"

Human Evolution and the Church

We hope many of our readers are familiar with a series of American press publications which deal with the burning religious, social, and ethical problems of the day. They are reasonable in price, averaging 10 cents for each brochure; and they are worth ten times the money. Among the most recent we must notice a pamphlet entitled *Human Evolution and Science*, by Francis Lebluff, S.J. Having discussed the learnings of the problem from all sides, and examined the arguments adduced by evolutionists, the author gives us a masterly exposition of the Catholic view in the last few pages. Considering the importance and actuality of the subject, we are justified in presenting our readers with a summary of his conclusions here.

1. It is often asserted that the Catholic Church has no definite attitude on evolution. As the statement stands it is not true. The Church has a very definite attitude where there is question of the evolution of man—that is, the whole man, a rational creature composed of body and soul. No Catholic can hold the evolution of man in this sense, because the soul comes into existence fresh from the hand of God Himself.

2. The question is then narrowed down to evolution of the human body. Has the Church any attitude on this point? Certainly it has. The Bible tells us that the human race has one origin, that it descended from Adam and Eve. Hence no Catholic is permitted to hold the tribal evolution of man from non-man ancestors. On the descent from common parents is based a great body of dogmatic teaching, viz., the supernatural elevation of the whole human race, the fall, original sin, and redemption by Christ. The Council of Trent says—

"Can. 1. If anyone does not admit that the first man, Adam, when he has transgressed the command of God in Paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice in which he had been created . . . let him be anathema.

"Can. 2. If anyone asserts that the transgression of Adam harmed him only and not his offspring and that the sanctity and justice he lost, he lost for himself only and not for us . . . let him be anathema."

In these Canons is contained the teaching that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman and that from them we have all descended.

3. Does the Church admit that Adam's body may have originally been the body of an animal or a sub-man with a non-spiritual soul? Does the Church admit that God took this non-man body, removed therefrom its non-spiritual soul, thus forming man, "composed of body and soul?" Again, the answer is, the Church does not. The Church's atti-

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