

## THE RELIGIOUS WORLD.

## THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN THE LIGHT OF THE PARABLES.

THOSE who have ceased to believe in Christianity bring two entirely opposite charges against it, says a recent writer. One is that it is too negative a creed, exalting forgiveness and non-resistance to the exclusion of justice and manliness. The other is that it is an "overstern rule of life, insisting on an ideal outside the reach of human nature, enforced by an inflexible system of theology, making an arbitrary division between good and bad, believer and doubter, condemning the one to torture and the other to bliss, or else the one to life and the other to death, according as the mind of the interpreter leans to severity or mercy." This writer (in London *Spectator*, October 19) believes both these charges to be false in so far as they are applied to the spirit of the Gospel. But he concedes that both "can be substantiated by liberal interpretation of isolated texts, interpretations founded upon 'the letter which killeth.'" To quote the language of his article further:

"Between our Lord's direct teaching and the teaching contained in some of His parables there is sometimes, it must be admitted, a superficial difference. The reason of this difference our Lord Himself alludes to when He says to His chosen disciples: 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to them it is not so. Therefore I speak to them in parables, for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed.' The God revealed to us in the Sermon on the Mount is a God of mercy. Men are to be merciful to each other, not primarily for their common good, but because God is merciful, and mercy is in accordance with the divine element in their own natures. 'Do good to them that hate you,' He teaches, 'that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' And again He reiterates: 'Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and ye shall be the sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and the evil.' But the ruler who seems to represent God in some of the parables could not be thus described. He is the incarnation of righteous retribution rather than the fount of mercy. The master who forgave his servant a debt, only to cancel his forgiveness and deliver him to the tormentors as soon as he perceived that he had refused to forgive his fellow servant, is terrible in his judgments 'to the unthankful and the evil.'"

The writer is reminded that this and other stories told in the parables in some way shadow forth the "kingdom of heaven." He asks if it is possible to reconcile such differing teachings, and answers his question as follows:

"We believe that it is, and this without recourse to the old expedient of limiting God's mercy to this world. Such an expedient is repellent to the reason and religious feeling of the present day, for it necessitates the hypothesis that the death of a man can change the eternal attributes of God. If He is the Father of Spirits here, He can not be a harsh judge or an indifferent Creator somewhere else. Does not the explanation of the apparent contradiction lie in our Lord's repeated assertion that He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance? If Christianity has nothing to say to those whose 'heart is waxed gross,' to those who see misery and suffering with complete indifference, to oppressors, and to such as wilfully sink the spiritual side of their nature, but that God 'is kind to the unthankful and the evil,' would it not justify those detractors who charge it with want of strength and manliness? 'No man cometh to the Father but by me,' said Christ, and we suppose Him to have meant: No man can realize the fatherhood of God who has not sought to approach Him through Christ's 'way,' which is the way of righteousness. But men who have never taken even the first step in what St. Luke calls 'that way' may be taught to their own great moral advantage to recognize a 'power outside themselves which makes for righteousness.' That such a power exists, and is irresistible and inexorable, most men dimly believe; but the morally shortsighted often can not trace its action, and say, like the careless servant who betrayed his trust, 'My lord delayeth his

coming.' It is to this power that Christ points through the similitude of a story, a story whose application is intended not for those already within the kingdom of heaven, which means those who endeavor to submit to the highest law they know, but for those without, in the highways and hedges, whom Christ would force to come in. That resistance to this great power for good is limitless in its evil consequence He suggests, and that it must inevitably lead either to the outer darkness of callous ignorance or to the burning remorse of an awakened conscience He declares. . . . But, it may be said, is there any real ground for so entirely metaphorical an interpretation of dogmas which for so long have been considered to be literally true? The difficulties in the way of a literal interpretation seem to us to be far greater. The kingdom of heaven can not necessarily refer to the state after death since our Lord Himself declares that 'the kingdom of heaven is within you.' Then it must be remembered that when, as not infrequently occurred, our Lord's hearers took His words literally, He explained them metaphorically. 'It is harder,' He said, 'for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God'; but when the disciples exclaimed aghast, 'Who then shall be saved?' He explained that 'with man it is impossible, with God all things are possible.'"

## IS "TEMPORAL POWER" AN ESSENTIAL DOGMA OF ROMAN CATHOLICISM?

A RECENT writer says that for Catholics the momentous question of the day, religious and quasi-political, is that of the Pope's temporal power. He finds that there are many Roman Catholics who profess lax views regarding it. In *The American Catholic Quarterly Review* (October) this writer, Rev. Charles Coupe, S.J., sets forth, as he understands them, the obligations of Roman Catholics in this regard, and the grounds of those obligations. He begins by making a statement as to what the Holy Father's temporal powers really are—their nature, their limits, and their "necessity." To quote from the article:

"The first proposition is this, that in no sense whatever has the Roman Pontiff direct temporal jurisdiction over the whole world. He has indeed jurisdiction, temporal but indirect, over all Christians scattered over the whole world; but nothing more. What, however, is meant by direct and indirect jurisdiction? The two terms play an important part in this discussion, and therefore call for clear definition. By *direct* temporal jurisdiction I mean that which is exercised primarily for the advancement of temporal interests; by *indirect*, that which is exercised for the furtherance primarily of spiritual and only secondarily of temporal interests. That the Pope has no spiritual or temporal, direct or indirect, jurisdiction over the whole world is obvious from the fact that Christ gave him none. Our Lord's command to 'go and teach all nations' gave only the right to preach and conferred no jurisdiction over all.

"The second proposition is this, that the Pope has no direct temporal authority even over the Christian world. Direct spiritual authority he has, conferred by the words, 'Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.' But neither Scripture nor apostolic tradition shows any trace of any such direct temporal jurisdiction. When to Peter and his successors Christ gave 'the keys of the kingdom of Heaven,' that gift carried with it direct spiritual, but not direct temporal, authority over Christendom. Were it otherwise, an infidel king, by conversion to Christianity, would forfeit his throne to the Pope—which is absurd. . . .

"The third proposition is this, that the Roman Pontiff has temporal power, supreme but indirect, not over the whole world, but over all Christendom. Not over the whole world; for the direct spiritual and the indirect temporal powers are coextensive, and as the former does not embrace the whole world, so neither does the latter. But over all Christendom; for as that is the extension of the spiritual power, so also must it be the extension of the temporal. For the indirect temporal is but an aspect of the spiritual power, and was given concomitantly with the spiritual.

"It is essential to notice that this indirect temporal power is temporal but in name and is spiritual in reality. It concerns the temporal aspect of spiritual things and the spiritual aspect of temporal things. . . .

"Our fourth proposition runs thus: that the Roman Pontiff is,

by divine right, exempt from and superior to all secular authority and civil jurisdiction of whatsoever kind or degree. This doctrine is an accepted conclusion of theology and is thus enunciated by Suarez: 'The Roman Pontiff is free and exempt from all secular judgment and jurisdiction, even of emperors and of kings. This doctrine is held by all Catholic doctors who declare this exemption to be a divine right.' . . . . .

"It is *de jure divino naturali* because, as Christ constituted Peter and the Roman Pontiffs the Supreme Head in spirituals, it follows logically that He must also have conferred on His vicar exemption from the secular jurisdiction of all and any of his spiritual subjects. A subject may not be the sovereign of his own sovereign Lord."

Having cleared his way by the statement of these propositions, this writer goes on to say:

"We may now more conveniently pass on to our main investigation into the nature of the Roman Pontiff's *de jure* civil sovereignty over Rome and the Roman states. Of what right is it, divine or only human?"

"I reply that over no territory whatsoever has the Pope by divine right, natural or positive, direct temporal sovereignty. Therefore, not over Rome."

"He has not a divine positive right, for no express command of God to that effect is found in either Scripture or apostolic tradition."

"He has not a divine natural (*i.e.*, non-positive, but implicit) right deducible by reason as a corollary of his spiritual dignity of Supreme Pontiff. . . . Since Christ, as Man, while He lived on earth, willed not Himself to possess temporal and territorial sovereignty over any particular province or city, so neither did He give any such sovereignty to St. Peter and his successors. . . . He had the power to do so, but that power He did not will to exercise. Hence not only He did not exercise territorial dominion, He did not even possess it. For temporal principedom is built on one or more of these four titles—inheritance, popular election, conquest, divine donation—and Christ had none of them."

The conclusion reached by Father Coupe, therefore, is that the temporal power of the Popes is *de jure humano* only. He regards this as a most important conclusion, and mentions a number of distinguished writers who have attempted to prove a divine right for the temporal power. He says: "They have striven to adduce Scriptural warrant to show that it is *de jure divino positivo*, and therefore (I presume) that the denial of it would be formally heretical." The writer, however, is very clear that this merely human right of the Popes to the temporal power is absolute. He assigns his grounds for the necessity of the Pope's civil sovereignty as follows:

"To secure freedom from secular dictation; to possess ability to carry on, without let or hindrance, the world-wide government of the church; to enjoy the possession of competent revenues for that purpose; to wield the power necessary to uphold the dignity and even the splendor of the Pope's unique position."

He goes on to ask what precise obligation rests upon Roman Catholics to accept this teaching?

"How far is a Catholic bound to recognize the necessity of the temporal sovereignty? Is that necessity a mere opinion? Is it a dogma of the faith? Or is it a doctrine intermediate between mere opinion and absolute dogma? In view of the loose views prevalent on this subject, this question calls for a clear reply."

"Would a denial of the necessity of the temporal power be heresy? For those writers who think the temporal power to be of positive divine right—'clearly, evidently, and unequivocally,' as Mr. Lindsay holds—and writ plain in Scripture, perhaps it would."

"Again, for those who hold it to be a natural divine right, the denial might be heretical."

"But, as I have said before, I doubt if there be reasonable grounds—I am sure there is no obligation—to hold either of these superlative opinions. No one is *bound* to believe that the temporal power is based on anything higher than human right, tho he must hold that a special Providence guided men to confer that right."

"This then is the practical question: What is the obligation to

submit, founded on the plain, repeated, and authoritative teaching of the papacy and the episcopacy?"

Father Coupe answers the question by saying:

"A practical test of the church's mind on this subject is supplied by the fact that when in 1877 Father Curci, S.J.,—one of the most distinguished men of his order—held and taught the non-necessity of the temporal power, he was called upon to recant, and, refusing, was expelled from the Society of Jesus, of which for forty years he had been so bright an ornament."

As to those professing Roman Catholics who assert that the extinction of the temporal power would be beneficial to the church, he says:

"Taking into account the papal and episcopal declarations, and at the same time the action of the Popes, and the sense of the church manifested in many ways for ages, I can not bring myself to believe that such a view falls short of *heresy*, at least of *constructive heresy*. I do not want to imply that it is contradictorily opposed to a dogmatic definition on the utility of the temporal power, but that it obviously charges the church with a very serious error, doctrinal and practical; for if that condemned view be right, the church is grievously and mischievously mistaken concerning her own condition, and has been so for ages. And such an imputation can not be cleared of heresy."

## THE OFFICE OF THE PREACHER.

IS it true that the chief source of religious inspiration nowadays comes from outside the pulpit, and that the clergy are no longer the chief instruments of spiritual revival? Something like this is asserted by Stanton Kirkham Davis in *The Arena* (November). He says: "Almost it would seem that all there is left for the parson to do is to bury us, for help us to *live* in virtue of his office he surely can not. As a man he may give us the example of an unselfish life, but as the exponent of a dead creed what can he offer us? No; the inspiration of the day comes not from the pulpit." Mr. Stanton considers that the themes discussed in evangelical pulpits are archaic and unworthy:

"We are weary of Christ crucified, weary of the gospel of Sin and the gospel of Death. Let us have the gospel of Life; let us have the *living* Christ—the virile, potent Truth—if so we are to continue the office. Unless the discourse be tuneful, rhythmic, vibratory, we will have none of it. Unless he can tell us better than we already know, it were folly for us to listen. Unless his experience is richer, his insight deeper, his vision clearer, his humanity broader, what can he possibly impart to us? But it is not for him to vibrate for us, but to set us vibrating—we are capable of it. That is the good he can do us, and the only good. . . . .

"It is for the preacher to proclaim truth on the authority of his own insight and experience. To repeat it on hearsay is nothing. They who groan can do as much. If listening to parrot utterances would dry our tears, men would long since have ceased to weep. Nay, he must not tell us of other men—he must bring us to ourselves, for therein is the resurrection. What can he say of any rebirth if he has not himself experienced it—if he is not re-born, renewed, reclothed with the Spirit? What can he say of Life if he has not come to the consciousness of Life eternal? What can he know of divinity until he has recognized within himself the divine? Nor can he speak of the Spirit until he has become engrossed in the love of spiritual things."

"Preeminently is it his office to offset the pernicious belief that inspiration has ceased to flow to the world—that the book of Truth is closed. And this he can do only by being himself the voice of truth. It is largely because he has become a mere echo that shallow men have concluded inspiration has ceased, and there is nothing left to do but repeat what has already been said. It rests with the preacher to disprove this by his inspired utterance—free and clear as in the morning of the world. He of all men should be the champion of inspiration, for in virtue of this only has the office any good reason for being, and without this he is but a reader. Let him show that Scripture is not all