

A NOTABLE EVENT.

Celebration in Honor of the Right Rev. Mgr. Preston.

Born a Protestant, for Three Years He Served as a Minister to That Faith, When He Became Convinced of His Error and Entered the True Church.

The celebration at St. Ann's church, New York city on the 17th inst., in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of Mgr. Preston's ordination to the priesthood, was an event of unusual importance in the ecclesiastical world when it is remembered that the learned man is one of many who were born and reared under teaching directly opposed to Catholicity, and who, seeing the error of his way, sought admission to the true church.

In a magazine article detailing his religious experience, Mgr. Preston, after relating that he was born in Hartford, Conn., on July 23, 1824, of a pious family, which had inherited all the prejudices of Protestants, and even of Puritans, against the Catholic Church, refers to his father as being an Episcopalian merely because he liked the fine English of the Prayer Book and not because he thought the Episcopalian Church was better than any other. He seems to have attached no importance to the sacraments; indeed, he denied baptismal regeneration. Belief in Christ as the Saviour he apparently thought to be the only necessary condition of salvation. One would almost think that belief in the Trinity was the only distinct Christian tenet taught to the future Catholic priest. If there were another, it was that the Roman Catholic Church was scarcely Christian, and that it was corrupt in doctrine and practice.

Mgr. Preston began early to think for himself. The inquiring mind which was to weigh in the balance one after another, the peculiar tenets of Protestantism and find them all wanting, was at work at an age when most people accept what is told them from the pulpit without dreaming of doubt.

Continuing in his autobiographical article Mgr. Preston says: "As time went on and the days of childhood passed, I began to inquire into the systems of Christian faith which I saw around me. I never denied the omnipotence of God, nor asked for the intrinsic proof of revelation or the reasonableness of verities proposed. If God really taught any truth it was the denial of Him to deny the truth he revealed. But I also saw that the extrinsic proofs of a revelation were offered to the reason, and that we, as intelligent agents, must examine them, and thus be sure that God was speaking to man. The question then came up in force: Had God really revealed the truths which I had so long received? Where was my authority? The religious body of which I was a member said to me that I must find the truth of God in the Holy Scriptures. Those Scriptures were held up to me as the inspired Word of God. I was not disposed to contradict this assertion, yet, when I began to reason upon this welcome proposition I was beset with difficulties. First, I saw in the Scriptures some truths which I believed, and some which I did not believe. Those which I did not believe were more plainly expressed than those which I did believe. For example, I saw in the Scriptures the clear declaration of the real presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. I had not received this, and if I were to continue in my previous state of belief I should be forced to explain away the plainest assertions in the whole Bible. Nothing could be clearer than the words of Jesus Christ: 'Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you.' 'This is my body; this is my blood.' Surely the God-Man knew enough of language not to use such expressions if He did not mean them. And I knew enough of the use of words to know that they could not be tortured into the signification of simple real union with Christ by faith. No man would have used such language unless he found that the risen Lord bestows the power to remit sin, and had seen any trace of this system of Christianity in the Scriptures likewise. Christ had founded the Church and had commanded that it should be kept together in unity. But if there was a schism which was not the work of man, how could it be connected with the Church, receiving the power to remit sin, and being compelled to do so? How could it be that I should know of God's forgiveness of sin, and yet be stumbling? He was, in fact, that, as the witnesses for some external

infallible testimony to their truth. At this stage of the process of evolution which his faith was undergoing he saw that a Church must be either divine or human, and he was thus necessarily forced to the conviction that, as to use his own words, "one God could not well employ different Churches, especially when they contradicted each other," either there was one divine Church or that there was none. He was unable to accept the second alternative, so the problem he had to solve was which of the religious organizations calling themselves churches was the true church. His Trinitarianism gave him his answer. Believing with his whole heart that Jesus Christ was God as well as man, that His coming to earth was one of the best-established facts in the history of the race; that the proofs of His divinity were found in His miracles; he concluded that Christianity was inseparable from its Author. In the language of his article: "It was a fact that Christ had founded a Church with which He had promised to be to the end of time. The Scriptures told me that He had founded it on Peter. I saw this Church on the page of his history as clearly as I saw the sun at noon-day. Peter and his successors were its head, and I saw grouped around the Roman Pontiff a living and widely spread priesthood, claiming the authority of Christ in the teachings of truth. If I accepted this Church, I possessed at once all that my reason claimed. I could readily exercise faith and receive truth upon the Word of God alone. I asked myself if this was really the end of my struggles and prayers. Had I found at last the goal of my hopes? With such a belief I could explain history. For centuries the Catholic Church under Peter had been the only representative of Christianity. I could not have any sympathy with the early heretics, who denied articles of a creed which I accepted as the Christian faith, and who soon fell into disintegration; whatever they were they could not have been the Christian Church, to my mind, unless I was ready to deny the divine authority of any church and go back to my first danger of skepticism." When I came to period of the Protestant Reformation, whence sprung all the denominations with which I was personally acquainted, I was still compelled to admit that such bodies, founded by man and widely differing from each other, were not the representative of the one Christianity. Thus I had approached the door of the Catholic Church, to which my reason and my conscientious convictions led me. Why did I not enter in at once and find the peace which I have since enjoyed? Let me tell the story as plainly as I can. I was very young. Many whom I revered pointed in another direction. They could not change my conviction. If I gained a step one day, I did not waver and lose my ground on the next day. But they had the power to make me wait and watch at the door when the goal of my hope was in sight. They bade me beware of the impetuosity of youth, and charged me to weigh well the arguments of those who had studied long the points of controversy. I can here recount only the theories which then seemed to me to have weight. To have told me at this stage of my religious experience that there was really no Church of Christ upon earth, would not have influenced me. This denial of Christianity in its concrete form would have been to me equivalent to an infidelity for which I had no temptations. Extreme Protestantism, which leaves every man to make his own creed, I could not accept. But they said to me, first, that the Catholic Church had lost the primitive faith, and had become corrupt to such a degree that she could not be the divine organ of truth; and, secondly, that the true Church was to be found in the reformed branches, which, though cut off from visible communion with the parent trunk, have still kept the essential faith. Moreover, the Church to which you belong is one of those branches. It is not like other Protestant bodies. It has the apostolic orders and is a true portion of the Church which Jesus Christ founded. In it you have the primitive faith and all the guidance you need. If there are errors in it abide manfully and do your part to purify and strengthen your spiritual mother. These arguments reduce themselves to two, the actual apostasy from faith of the Roman Catholic Church and the branch theory of Christianity. I may say that I examined these arguments well. I remained in the Protestant Episcopal Church. I passed through the course of its principal seminary. I entered its ministry, and for three years waited in patience and prayer. I read many Catholic books, but I read many more Protestant works. I tried to open my intellect and heart to God's light; but, much as I wished to do so, I never entered a Catholic Church, nor sought the counsel of a Catholic priest, until the happy day when, upon my knees, I begged admission to what I knew to be the one fold of Christ. All human influences around

me would have kept me where were all my worldly ties, but I felt that the voice of my conscience was more to me than any earthly attraction. If there was one Church founded by my Lord, I must seek and find it."

John Boyle O'Reilly's Tombstone.

Nature has provided for John Boyle O'Reilly a tomb worthy of the man. On the highest point of Holyhood Cemetery, Brookline, Mass., there crops out a ledge of rock whose base is in the foundation walls of the earth. Countless eons ago the great glacial plane passed over this ledge, cutting its iron face and leaving a polished surface which the rains and frosts of thousands of years have hardly dimmed. Grinding its way slowly over the reef the mighty glacier left its indelible imprint behind, and left also an equally enduring memento of its passage—a giant boulder of conglomerate rock, fifteen feet high, and, roughly speaking, about twelve feet square—seventy-five tons of weather-stained, time-defying, eternal rock. It stands on the crest of the picturesque height, a landmark conspicuous above all else in the neighborhood, solitary, massive and majestic.

It is the tombstone of John Boyle O'Reilly. No mark, save a single tablet on its face, will be allowed to mar the severe simplicity of the noble monolith, which is nature's fitting memorial to God's nobleman. Mankind will honor him by a suitable work of man in the city of his adoption, but this monument will stand for all time, imperishable as the fame of the man who sleeps beside it.

She will Love Him.

No woman can love a man better for being renowned or prominent. Though he be the first among men, she will be prouder, not fonder; as is often the case, she will not even be proud. But give her love, appreciation, kindness, and there is no sacrifice she will not make for his content and comfort. The man who loves well is her hero and king—no less a hero to her though he is not to any other, no less a king though his only kingdom is her heart and home. In nine cases out of ten it is a man's own fault if he is unhappy with his wife. It is a very exceptional woman who will not be all she can to an attentive husband, and a very exceptional one who will not be disagreeable if she finds herself willfully neglected.

HIS LOVE FOR IRELAND.

John Boyle O'Reilly's Letter to Rev. Father Anderson.

When Rev. Father Anderson left America some time ago he received the following letter from John Boyle O'Reilly:

"DEAR FATHER ANDERSON—God speed you on your home voyage. I am glad to have met you, and I hope to meet you again. I may never go to Drogheda, but I send my love to the very fields and trees along the Boyne from Drogheda to Slane. Sometime, for my sake, go out to Douth, alone, and go up on the moat, and look across the Boyne over to Rossnaree to the Hill of Tara; and turn your eyes all round from Tara to New Grange and Knowth and Slane, and Mellfont and Oldbridge, and you will see there the pictures that I carry forever in my brain and heart—vivid as the last day I looked on them. If you go into the old graveyard at Douth, you will find my initial cut on a stone on the walls of the old church. Let me draw you a diagram (Here followed a diagram of church with place marked). This is from the side of nearest the Boyne. I remember cutting 'J. B. O'R.' on a stone with nail, thirty years ago. I should like to be buried just under that spot; and, please God, perhaps I may be. God bless you, good bye. Fidelity to the old cause has its price; but it has its rewards, too—the love and trust of Irishmen everywhere. You have learned this, and you have it. I will send you photographs of all my girls when you get home. Always tell me what you want done in America and it shall be done if it be in my power."

St. Cecilia.

St. Cecilia was a Roman lady of good family, and, having been educated as a Christian, was desirous of devoting herself to heaven by a life of celibacy. Compelled, however, by her parents to marry a young nobleman named Valerian, she succeeded in converting her husband and his brother to Christianity and afterward shared with them the honors of martyrdom. St. Cecilia was martyred in the year 230 of the Christian era. Accounts differ as to the death which she suffered, but she is supposed to have been beheaded.

As You Would Wish to Die.

Live as you would wish to die, because as you die, so you will be to all eternity. Precisely that character which you have woven for yourself through life, by the voluntary acts of free will, be it for good or for evil, that will be your eternal state before God. As the tree falls, so shall it be. Make one mistake, and that mistake is made forever.—Cardinal Manning.

A UNIQUE OCCASION.

Cardinal Manning's Reply to the Congratulations of the Hebrews.

At the time of Cardinal Manning's Jubilee an address of congratulation was presented to him by the Jews of England. In reply to their congratulations he said:

"Until I received an official announcement that you had prepared to greet me on this twenty-fifth year of my work in London I had no thought of receiving such an act of kindness at your hands. But I have in these many years had constant evidence of your good will. You may be sure, therefore, that your presence here to-day, and the only too favorable words of your address, are most grateful to me. Let me ask you to accept my most heartfelt thanks. For nearly forty years London has been my home, and in that time all forms of suffering and poverty, as well as of vice, have come before me. I can, therefore, bear witness to the charity and generosity of my Jewish fellow-countrymen. I have found them forward in all good works. In the care of your children, of your sick, and of your poor you give us a noble example of generosity and efficiency. You are inflexible, as we are also, in maintaining that education is essentially a religious work—Your schools, as ours, are firmly and fearlessly religious. I have been witness of your care of the sick in the festivals of the Metropolitan Free Hospital. Of the watchful care of your poor I have had full evidence, when, driven over by tyranny in Russia, they came over in multitudes to our shores; and I was a witness of your wise and efficient administration. I should not be true to my own faith if I did not venerate yours. There are, I believe, only three indestructible elements in the history of man; the people and faith of Israel; the Catholic Church, sprung from it, and the world, which has persecuted both. Sometimes, indeed, we have wronged one another; for all are not Christians who are called Christian, and all are not of Israel who are called Israelites. Many deeds, dark and terrible, have, no doubt, been done of which Israel as a people are guiltless; as, also, in many misdeeds, the Catholic Church is without a stain. Happily, in the British Empire, where by equal laws and brotherly charity all just and honorable careers of life are open, our Jewish fellow-countrymen are loyal, peaceful and generous in the service of the Commonwealth. They share our strength and they add to it. Unhappily, not so in other lands. But both the cause and the remedy are in the hands of those who complain and declaim against you. Men become what their rulers make them. Penal codes make loyal men disloyal; and social vexations generate animosities which crush the weak and sting men to madness. The greater the power the greater should be the humanity and the tolerance of those whom ages have brought low. But a day of restitution is at hand. I will now ask you to accept my heartfelt thanks for your generous words and acts to-day; and I will ask you further to make my thanks known to those whom you represent in the United Kingdom. May all grace and blessing be upon you and upon your homes."

A Curious Object.

A curious natural object is now to be seen in the Catholic cemetery grounds at Mobile. In the upper part of the graveyard, within the walls of the lot of the Callaghan family, there is a fair sized fir tree, which tree, like other trees, twice a year puts forth its new branches. A new spray has just appeared at the apex of the pyramid formed by the tree's dense foliage, and strangely enough the spray has the shape of an anchor, with a stock forming a cross. This perfect representation of an anchor and cross, with a ball on the end of the shank, just as appears in a real anchor, attracts the attention of all who visit the cemetery.

The Shadow of Sin.

Every substance in the world has its shadow; you cannot separate the shadow from the substance. Where the substance moves the shadow follows. So every sin has its pain; it matters not whether we think of it or no, whether we believe in it or no.—Cardinal Manning.

Devotion to the Saints.

A sign of mental obedience is devotion to the Saints. They are our examples. Their counsels, their sayings, their instincts, are our guide and admonition. St. Philip bids us read authors who have St. before their name.—Cardinal Manning.

Confession of Saints.

Many of the Saints, as St. Charles, confessed every day. We wonder what they could find to accuse themselves of. It was because they were Saints that they saw so much where we see so little.—Cardinal Manning.

There are 6,884 French Catholic communicants in Woonsocket, R. I.

TAKEN FROM THE GERMAN.



THIS BOY HAVING HEARD SO MUCH OF THE SUPERIOR QUALITIES OF WHALEN'S SHIELD CHEWING OVER ALL OTHER BRANDS, CAN NO LONGER RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO ROB ONE OF OUR GERMAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS OF HIS CHEWING TOBACCO.



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