

# The Catholic Journal.

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## CHOIR SINGING.

Should a Catholic Sing in a Protestant Church Choir?

Total Indifference on the Part of Most Singers as to the Denomination of the Church from Which They Draw Their Salaries.

Church-choir singing has grown to almost a profession in the United States. The increase in wealth and cultivation in the American cities has been the cause of this. Perhaps also the decay of religious belief among Protestants has had something to do with it. In the olden days when the great body of Protestants believed in the Bible and read it devoutly, when they called their places of worship "meeting-houses," they all took part in the acts of praise to God according to the style of their respective sects, and they all sang, or tried to sing, to the Lord. But with the weakening of belief came a change. The old unction disappeared. The younger generation refused to take part, and kept mute when the words of the hymn had been given out, and they smiled in disdain at the squeaking or nasal tones of their elders who still attempted to maintain the tradition of congregational singing. The time at last came when all further efforts had to be abandoned and the singing was left to a few volunteer vocalists who gathered around the organ. Gradually this had to be given up as a failure and the congregations, now become rich and ambitious, surrendered the musical part of the services up to the control of committees, and these, being "business men," used to "business methods"—that is to say, men accustomed to put a money value on everything—very quickly adopted the plan of hiring the men and women who were to sing the praise of God.

Once professionalism was introduced into the church choirs, the particular religious belief of the singers or the organists became necessarily a secondary matter, or rather, for all practical purposes of the choir it ceased to be of any importance whatever. The main, the only question, now was, can he—or she—sing the service as it ought to be sung? As for the organist, he—or she—was so much a part of the key-board, pedals and pipes as not to be supposed to have any human thought apart from the mere music.

One curious effect, by the way, of this professionalism in the Protestant Church choirs has been the introduction into them of a good deal of what is called "Catholic music." For most of these singers have had good teachers, a large proportion of whom were either Catholics, or the pupils of other teachers who were Catholics, and thus the music of the Masses of Mozart, Haydn, Mercadante, and others, and of innumerable "Ave Marias" has been adapted with more or less fitness to the words of Protestant hymns and so has become the common property, as it were, of what our Protestant friends call "the churches." But the most important feature of this professionalism is the sort of indifference which the choir singers themselves manifest as to the denomination of the Church from which they draw their salary. The soprano who thrills a long-drawn "amen!" in a Baptist organ-loft this year will be singing a chant—pronounced chawnt—in a Low Church Episcopalian edifice next year. And the basso, the contralto, the tenor will be found to be equally versatile. As to the organist, the less said about him, the better.

The only trouble is when the professional choir singer is a Catholic. We do not propose to discuss the morality of the thing. As to that, doctors differ.

But there can be no question as to the absurdity of it, to call it by no worse name; absurdity for the Catholic to take part in a service in which he does not believe, absurdity for the Protestant to hire him to do so. And yet there seems to be no other logical issue for a system which makes the praise of God in song a matter to be regulated by salary in dollars and cents.

Fervor and Constancy in God's Service.

Does the fire of Divine love seem nearly extinguished in your heart? Rekindle it, then, at His altar. Has your prayer become barren and unsavory? Vary its form if you please; it is a manna for every palate, but return to it with a humbled spirit. Have the very mysteries of our Lord's passion lost their sweetness to your soul? Go back the oftener to His cross, and leave Him not till once more He hath blessed you. His adorable Sacrament begun in His blood, or are you cold when you receive it? Still more have recourse to it as a saving medicine, whose efficacy and Divine virtue are the better known the more they are tried. In fine, redouble your efforts in proportion as you apprehend your danger. Refrain yourselves from all things that indispose you for God, strengthen your watch while the enemy is only approaching; and using the things of this world as if you used them not. Allow no dangerous influence to divide your heart.—Cardinal Newman.

You must bow your head and bear yourself contrary to your habits or inclinations. Live humbly before God, amiably with your neighbor, and sweetly with yourself.

Love is an evergreen; in winter and summer alike it possesses the power of budding forth. Love is an everlasting flower; it cannot wither for it has within it the bloom of immortality.

## The Power of Poetry and Song.

The man who makes the people's songs is a true and popular preacher. Whatsoever, true or false, he sends forth, will not be carried home, as a sermon often is, merely in heads, to be forgotten before the week is out; it will ring in the ears, and cling round the imagination, and follow the pupil to the workshop, and the tavern, and the fireside—even to the deathbed, such power is the magic of rhyme. The emigrant, deep in Australian forests, may take down Chalmers' sermons on Sabbath evenings from the scanty shelf; but the songs of Burns have been haunting his lips, and cheering his heart, and moulding him, unconsciously to himself in clearing and in pasture, all the weary week.

## C. T. A. U.

The Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Wisconsin Societies.

The twenty-second annual convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union, of Wisconsin, will be held at Oshkosh, Wis., June 14 and 15.

More than one hundred delegates, representing about fifty societies, are expected to attend. Among the notables who have given assurance of their presence are Archbishop Ireland, Bishop Messmer of Green Bay, McGorick of Duluth, Cotter of Winona, Shanley of Jamestown, N. D., and Father Cleary of Minneapolis. Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Messmer will deliver addresses at the Grand Opera House on the evening of June 14.

## St. Peter Martyr.

In 1505 the glorious martyr Peter was born at Verona of heretical parents. He went to a Catholic school, and his Manichean uncle asked what he learned. "The Creed," answered Peter, "I believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth." No persuasion could shake his faith, and at fifteen he received the habit from St. Dominic himself at Bologna. After ordination, he preached to the heretics of Lombardy, and converted multitudes. St. Peter was constantly obliged to dispute with heretics, and although he was able to confound them, still the devil took occasion thence to tempt him once against faith. Instantly he had recourse to prayer before an image of Our Lady, and heard

## Silence is Golden.

Silence is golden sometimes. Especially is it golden when you are conscious of irritated nerves, and your temper is in the condition which invites the last feather and rejoices to be broken under its weight. The most amiably disposed people have their days of darkness; their moods when nothing looks bright; their seasons of lucid intensity, when they astonish their friends by their success in the art of being disagreeable. If you and I are sadly aware that we are not in an angelic temper, that we are fretted by petty things, and ready to quarrel with our nearest and dearest, in danger of saying sharp or bitter things prompted by to-day's misery, which to-morrow we shall repent of in

## THE LOURDES CURES.

NONCATHOLICS IMPRESSED BY A VISIT TO THE SHRINE.

A Great Mass of Crutches at the Grotto Bear Witness to Miraculous Healing. Ludicrous Attempts of Scientists to Account for the Wonders Performed.

Non-Catholic visitors to Lourdes are rarely not impressed by what they see there, and when they write about the grotto often show that faith exists in their hearts, although they may be ashamed to confess it. This is especially true of the English, who are naturally shy of all outward religious demonstration, even in their own communion.

Some one writing to the London Spectator describes a trip to Lourdes and a brief stay there, and while not directly exhibiting a belief in the influences that exist at the shrine or the cures there, yet betrays the deep impressions produced. The unwillingness to admit faith, however, is not unnatural, because there would be the charge at once from the scoffing and irreverent of weak-mindedness and superstition, and there is nothing an Englishman dreads more than ridicule.

This writer in The Spectator was much struck by the great mass of crutches, of all shapes and sizes, piled up there, and the bandages which literally cover the rock on each side of the entrance to the grotto, for the space of 14 or 15 feet on one side and 10 or 12 feet on the other, these dismal memorials having been left by persons miraculously cured. The writer says:

"All I can say is that I never was in a place where there was less concealment of any kind, and there was no attempt whatever to influence you in any way by priest or attendant. There were all the buildings and the grotto open, and you could examine them and their contents undisturbed for any time you choose to give to them and draw from your own examination whatever conclusions you pleased. So I, for one, can only repeat that I am heartily glad that I went and shall think better of my Roman Catholic brethren as the result of my visit for the rest of my life."

A physician, discussing the cures with this person, said, with the usual skepticism of doctors, that the cures of ulcers, etc., could be disputed, but they were not due to miraculous intervention, but simply to the action of mind upon matter. The sores were absorbed. "But," says the correspondent of The Spectator, "how could the absorption of diseased tissue drive a piece of cloth out of a soldier's leg or body? Such an explanation will not hold water."

No one questions or can question the cures, but the explanations are innumerable, all differing from one another, and each much harder to believe than the simple fact of a miracle. The scientific theories are, for the most part, ludicrously far-fetched. To an ordinary mind they are absolutely incredible. For instance, the hypnotic school of doctors declare that the diseased pilgrims "think away" their maladies. But why could not this principle of cure be applied anywhere as well as at Lourdes and without prayer or intercession? Force of thought sufficient to take almost lifelong lameness out of a leg ought to be able to accomplish other marvels.

But, as the Englishman in The Spectator says, these explanations will not hold water. It is much easier to accept the Catholic view at once of miraculous intervention. The grotto has an incontestible fascination for non-Catholics—even for persons of no faith. They go and examine, and seeing no machinery of deception or concealment come away thoughtful. They cannot get over facts before their senses.—Catholic Mirror.

## The Necessity of Baptism.

The Catholic church has always taught that the sacrament of baptism is necessary for salvation, and the practice of pious Christians from time immemorial has confirmed this teaching. Original sin is the heirloom of every child of Adam. Christ instituted this sacrament to wash the stain of this sin from the soul.

Parents should learn from this how necessary it is for them to see to the baptism of their children without delay. As soon after birth as the health of the child will reasonably permit, it should be taken to the parish church to be baptized. The consequences of a delay are sometimes so disastrous that any negligence in this matter cannot be tolerated. Bear in mind the many dangers to which a child is exposed at this tender and critical age. Sickness may carry it off with slight or no warning, and should it die without baptism it will never behold the face of God. Parents, how can you be so cruel as to endanger your child's salvation? If, through any negligence of your own, you allowed your child to die without baptism, you would never forgive yourselves, and in this you would be right, as it would be a great calamity. Too long a delay is, then, sinful. It is the teaching of many theologians that to postpone baptism beyond two weeks without a very serious reason is a mortal sin. Yet some parents do not scruple to wait weeks and even months before they see to this. They will bring forward all kinds of flimsy reasons to excuse themselves. Children are ordinarily baptized a day or two after birth.

It is estimated that there are 6,000 post-mistresses in this country.



THE WORLD'S FAIR COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, BERTHA HONORE PALMER, President of the Ladies Board of Managers.

## Persecution of the Clergy in Russia.

The persecution of the Catholic clergy in Russia still continues with increased ardor on the part of governors and their officials. The new governor of Wilna, Mr. Orgiesky, has inaugurated his appointment by sending off three priests into exile for from two to six years. No specific charge has been brought against them. A fourth has, it is reported, been confined in one of the convent prisons for inadvertently not standing up while his brother-priests were taking the oath to the emperor. It is the old story of the wolf and the lamb. Every pretext is seized that ingenuity can conceive to harass the Catholic priesthood. Governors refuse to appoint priests to vacant posts on the pretence they are not wanted, with the object in view of eventually closing the churches and dispersing the flock. On account of an unfortunate disorder in a Polish seminary caused by a student who is supposed to be out of his mind, the seminaries are threatened with civil inspectors. The Bishop in St. Petersburg is actually prohibited from visiting in his diocese, and thus incapacitated from using an important means of control and influence over his clergy. A formidable campaign is organized against the church, and carried out with an unrelenting animosity. It is said the convent prison of Aglons is full of banished priests. The persecuting officials may succeed for the moment, but sooner or later their disgraceful despotism, which should be execrated by every lover of freedom, will be baffled by the growing spirit of inquiry and the progress of western enlightenment.

Unless your hearts and souls are at peace with our Crucified Jesus, they cannot be sharers in His grace.

## On the subject of Total Abstinence.

The Arion orchestra will furnish the music for the occasion. The convention will open with a pontifical high Mass at St. Peter's Church at which Bishop Messmer will officiate.

After mass Rev. F. X. Steinbrecher, the president, will call the business session of the convention to order at Hibernian hall on Main street. Matters pertaining to the advancement of the temperance movement and particularly the work of the Catholic Union of Wisconsin will be discussed.

At 10 o'clock a. m., the second day of the convention, the delegates and local temperance societies, accompanied by the local companies of the Wisconsin National Guard and several bands of music will parade the principal streets for two hours.

## St. Philip Neri.

St. Philip Neri allured men to the service of God so dexterously and with such a holy winning art that those who saw it cried out astonished: "Father Philip draws souls as the magnet draws iron." He so accommodated himself to each, as, in the words of the apostle, to become "all things to all men." His love of them individually was so tender and so ardent, that even in extreme old age, he was anxious to suffer for their sins.—Newman.

He is the wisest and the happiest man who by constant attention of thought, discovers the greatest opportunities of doing good, and with ardent and animated resolution breaks through every opposition that he may improve such opportunities.

It is rare that Our Divine Saviour sends consolation to others than those who endure great afflictions with a good heart and who bear a heavy and irksome cross for love of Him.

a voice saying to him the words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel: "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith may not fail; and thou shalt confirm thy brethren in it." Once when exhorting a vast crowd under the burning sun, the heretics defied him to procure shade. He prayed, and a cloud overshadowed the audience. In spite of his sanctity, he was foully slandered and even punished for immorality. He submitted humbly, but complained in prayer to Jesus, crucified. The crucifix spoke, "And I, Peter what did I do?" Every day, as he elevated at Mass the Precious Blood, he prayed, "Grant Lord, that I may die for Thee, who for me didst die." His prayer was answered. The heretics, confounded by him, sought his life. Two of them attacked him as he was returning to Milan, and struck his head with an axe. St. Peter fell, commended himself to God, dipped his finger in his own blood, and wrote on the ground, "I believe in God, Creator of heaven and earth." They then stabbed him in the side, and he received his crown.

It is much better to do good with imperfect perfection than to omit it.

The mind can be so trained to this that at certain hours in the day it will turn to a particular line of duty, and at other hours to other and different labors. The very diversity is restful, when attended to in regular order. There are those who confuse and rush, and attempt to do several things at once, and accomplish little, while another will quietly proceed from one duty to another, and easily accomplish a vast amount of work. The difference is not in the capacity of the two, but in the regular methods of the one as compared with the irregular and confused habits of the other.

sackcloth and ashes, there is one safeguard within our easy reach. Feel as we may, we can repress speech. Our lips are our own. We may lock their gateway, if we choose, to whatever of our better selves. Nobody compels us to find fault audibly. Nobody urges us to scold or complain. If we avail ourselves of the escape-valve of hasty speech we shall certainly suffer pangs of regret by and by, besides inflicting present pain on children and servants, who cannot answer back when we chide; on brothers and husbands who are too patient or too proud to be resentful; or, perhaps, on some dear aged heart, which has had its full of sorrow, and does not need our adding a drop to the brimming cup.

## The Combat of Life and Its Goal.

We have dedicated ourselves from infancy to a noble combat; our names were entered as candidates for Heaven, in golden letters, upon God's own book, when we received the adoption of His children through baptism. Asked what we expected to obtain by the Faith we were about to profess, we replied, "Life everlasting." This was our goal; towards this we started clothed in a white robe, emblem not only of innocence, but of victory.

Nature is true and not a lie. No lie you can speak or act but it will come, after longer or shorter circulation, like a bill drawn on nature's reality and be presented there for payment with the answer, "No effects." Lies, and the burden of evil they bring, are passed on, shifted from back to back, and from rank to rank, and so land ultimately on the dumb, lowest rank, who, with spade and mattock, with sore heart and empty wallet, daily come in contact with reality and can pass the cheat no longer.—Carlyle.