

# THE GREAT CHURCH.

A PROFFESSED ATHEIST'S VIEW OF CATHOLICISM AND THE WORK IT HAS DONE—WHAT IT IS DOING NOW AROUND THE GLOBE.

In the current number of Reed's Iconomy, James Armstrong, the notorious free-thinker or atheist—as he persists in calling himself, has a striking article on the Catholic church and its influence on civilization. Armstrong is not only a scholar, he has been a traveler in many lands, and is able to speak from observation. For this reason his paper will be read with interest by our readers.

Speaking of the beginning of Christianity, he says:

"During the first three centuries of its career, the Christian religion was the cultus of a despised and plebeian horde. It was opposed to every idea of pagan culture and ethics. In every way it was contrary to the genius of Roman civilization. The doctrine of the equality of man was a strange and pernicious doctrine to the proud and idle patrician. He was taught and believed that only the optimate had a soul. The millions were cattle to be enslaved and slaughtered as his profit or pleasure directed.

"Christianity found the world composed of slaves and tyrants. The civilizations of ancient times were aristocracies based on slavery. They were essentially heartless and cruel. The orgastull of Dionysius and the struggle of Spartacus are typical of the times. There were, indeed, enlightenment and culture, art and science, and in some instances, the degree of cultivation that they attained has not been excelled by two and twenty centuries of subsequent progress. But they were the enjoyment and heritage of only the few. The sole business of the aristocracy was to conquer and rule. Cities aspired and achieved a world supremacy, and the kings of tributary peoples were chained to chariots in triumphal marches and their subjects devoted to slavery.

"The mission of Christianity was to humanize the tyrant and liberate the serf. It came to widen the sphere of civilization and bring its blessings to the homes of the humbled men. Its earliest votaries were zealous and devout. They strengthened and glorified a faith with their blood that was eagerly sued. They were given to the sword and flames by thousands. They clung to the ideal, they worshipped with unwavering courage. They defied alike the state and gods of Rome. At the end of a little more than three centuries of struggle, their creed was made the religion of the Roman government. It suffered considerably on the ideal side from the contact of its new and powerful associates, but in the end it was destined to become one of the greatest of the benefactors of men.

"The Catholic church has been the greatest civilizing power the world ever saw. It became the most perfect of human organizations. Among her pontiffs were some of the very greatest of men. Their learning and genius, directing a vast and ever enlarging priesthood, were to eliminate the worst and preserve the best of the civilizations that had gone before. They were to weld the barbarian hordes that were to sweep the old landmarks away into a homogeneous and orderly whole. They were to make possible the rise and development of Modern Europe, and afterwards America, not only by the preservation of all that was the greatest in the past but by the moulding of myriad and antagonistic elements into a uniform and plastic mass, which in its turn was to give rise to social forces that are carrying and shall continue to carry the greatest of all civilizations to the remotest ends of the earth.

"Thus I accord to the Catholic church the highest credit. As a human institution, working inevitably for the welfare of the human race, it has accomplished more than all the other great religions of the earth combined. Buddhism has done nothing for China and India that is at all comparable to what Catholicism has done for Europe and America. Mohammedanism has been almost as barren of real progress as the sands of the desert in which its founder proclaimed it.

"My admiration of the Catholic church, however, begins and ends with it as a purely human organization. Beyond all doubt it has been and is one of the most powerful factors of civilization. If there are popes whose rapacity and tyranny offend one, let him turn to the unflinching charities and constant sacrifices of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. If he is repelled by the austerity of the Jesuits, he should find enough to make him renew a declining faith in the world in the Sisters of Charity. If he wants an example of heroic sacrifice, then look to the life of Father Damien. No one need listen to the acrimonious debates of the Schoolmen as long as he has Roger Bacon and Thomas A Kempis. He does not have to believe in the Real Presence in order to appreciate the benevolence of a priesthood whom neither disease nor calamity can terrify or subdue.

"There are ministering angels for those who are stretched on beds of pain, a magic touch and a word of cheer for the life that is slowly ebbing away. Above and beyond the fitful and cruel gleam of the battle the sob of the dying, the solemn surge of the pine as it floats above the dead the human spirit of the church is there to serve and to save with a grandeur that awes the most grateful hearer to reverent silence and gratitude.

"Materialism holds out no hope for humanity. Of the Catholic religion, do not accept a single dogma. Beyond the night of death I see no star to guide and save. I am not a Catholic simply because it is absolutely impossible for the religious ideas to accommodate itself to my mind. But appreciate the good which that religion is doing and has done in the world. There is nothing in materialism for the millions who suffer. It is starless and dawnless. The massive ceremonial of the Catholic church uplifts an exalted mind that is prepared to receive it. In all literature, what is there more beautiful than the hymn beginning—*De Profundis*—Out of the

depths, O Lord, I have cried unto Thee? How weirdly sweet is the far-coasting chime of the Angelus as the simple soul, votary bows to murmur a prayer to her whom he regards as the mother of the tender and loving Christ! I speak of a religion which is sincere, that which no greater blessing was ever given to the children of men. How well for the happiness of mankind if it could check and roll back the tidal wave of atheism that threatens to engulf the world in theathomless seas of utter despair.

"Atheism is a boat that sets out without pilot to voyage through seas of storm. Why, then, should not the clergy, whether Catholic or not, that is really sincere, that is working for the weal of the world and the contentment of mankind as well as it may, why, then, is it not worthy, not only of respect, but of positive encouragement? It happens that the Catholic clergy has given the most striking evidence of its sincerity. It happens that the Catholic church has more persistently fostered what it conceives to be the principle of true religion than any of the sects that wandered from the fold. Because I am not Catholic and will never be, may I not still encourage in every way the continued exercise of the beneficence of such virtues as shone pre-eminently in the life of Father Damien. For they, indeed, are the sheet-anchor of civilization, the keystone of the arch upon the removal of which the whole fabric would fall."

### An Exquisite Chalice.

Sunday June 3 at Holy Angels' church, Buffalo, there was used for the first time a chalice which is perhaps the most exquisitely wrought and expensive piece of the kind in the country. Nearly two years ago Father Quinn, then rector of Holy Angels, suggested the plan for this rare receptacle. The parishioners were not slow in accepting what their pastor intimated, and at once he began to receive costly, rare and beautiful jewels as well as a goodly quantity of gold coin, gifts from his people to be used in making the chalice. When all had been given the entire assortment was sent to a well-known New York goldsmith.

Following is a list of the gifts: Diamonds (18 solitaire), 83; emeralds, 13; sapphires, 4; rubies, 48; pearls, 145; amethysts, 48; garnets, 178; opals, 19; turquoise, 123; topaz, 9; cameos, 27; other varieties, 93; gold chains, 65; gold locket, 27; gold bracelets, 82; gold earrings, pairs, 108; gold crosses, 31; gold medals, 17; gold watches, 8; gold pins, 126; gold pens, 3; gold pencils, 2; gold studs, 33; gold sleeve buttons, 56; gold thumbies, 5; gold rings (208 wedding rings) 398; gold ornaments, 500; gold coin, \$139. The maker of the chalice was of the opinion that to use all the articles in one piece would make it cumbersome. Hence, it was decided to divide the gifts and while all the jewels are attractively arranged in the large chalice there is also a smaller one of burnished gold, and other articles used in the mass.

### The Disabled Sister of Mercy.

When twilight, as a curtain gray, drops on a garish world, And, like a weary bird, the day its busy wing hath furled;

In a dim corner of her cell, she loves to kneel apart, And go in spirit through the land, compassionate of heart,

To view upon their squalid beds the lonely sick and poor, Who languish in their wretchedness without a hope of cure;

To visit in their dreary cells the prisoners forlorn, (Alas! for some of them 'twere well they never had been born!)

And, as she kneels beside each bed, Love's viewless almoner, Or sits in fancy by the side of each lone prisoner.

She worships in each suffering one with all his ills or aches, Him who was stricken for our sins and wounded for our sakes.

From out each captive's mournful face she sees the features shine Of Him who for love became a Prisoner Divine!

What wonder, then, that, softly, in the pauses of her prayer, It should be given her to hear a tender Voice declare;

"Since in thy days of youth and strength thou didst these deeds sublime Unto the least of these poor wrecks of sorrow or of crime;

"Thy Spouse and Saviour, Christ the Lord, shall call thee by thy name, And in His day, before the whole assembled world proclaim:

"Oh, come, My Father's blessed one to me, Sick was I, and a Prisoner, and thou hast Heaven's eternity—"

—Eleanor C. Donnelly.

### All-Saints.

One feast, of holy days the crest, I, though no churchman, love to keep.

All-Saints,—the unknown good that rest In God's still memory folded deep; The bravely dumb that did their deed And scorned to blot it with a name Men of the plain heroic breed,

That loved Heaven's silence more than fame.

Such lived not in the past alone, but tread to-day the unheeding street.

And stairs to Sin and Famineknown Sing with the welcome of their feet; The den they enter grows a shrine, The grimy sash an oriel burns, Their cup of water warms like wine, Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brow to me appears An Aureole traced in tenderest light The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears

In dying eyes, by them made bright Of souls that shivered on the edge Of that chill ford repassed no more And in their mercy felt the pledge And sweetness of the farther shore

—James Russell Lowell.

### Ex-President Cleveland Honored by Augustians.

For the first time in the United States the honorary degree of doctor of juris-prudence was conferred Tuesday at the Augustinian College of St. Thomas of Villanova, Penna. The recipient was ex-President Grover Cleveland. The ceremony of conferring the degree was a part of the commencement of the college.

The Austrian ambassador, Ladislaus Hengelmüller, Baron Van Hengervara, received the honorary degree of doctor of philosophy. Other honorary degrees conferred were:

Doctor of philosophy, the Rev. William J. Hill, LL. D., rector of St. Pauls church, Brooklyn, and Judge Morgan J. O'Brien, of New York.

Doctor of laws, Ex-Judge Joseph F. Day of New York, Judge F. T. Fitzgerald, New York.

Archbishop Ryan, of Philadelphia, presided. Previous to conferring the diplomas Mr. Cleveland spoke in part as follows:

"The republic of education is based upon identical aims, equal rights in its opportunity and impartiality in the distribution of its rewards and honors.

"This, it seems to me, is impressively illustrated when the severely Catholic college of St. Thomas of Villanova bestowed its highest honorary degree upon one connected with the management and holding an honorary degree in the severely Protestant Princeton university.

"It will be a sad day for our nation, when the forces of education, and the teachers of moral living shall cease to strive in unity to leaven the entire mass of citizenship, or when their influence in that direction shall be divided and circumscribed by religious and sectarian differences."

### Bellamy Storer's Gift.

Hon. Bellamy Storer, United States Minister to Spain, who has been staying at Colorado Springs, made a gift of \$2,000 to the Glockner Sanitarium at that place to be added to the fund for the erection of an annex. The sanitarium is in charge of the Sisters of Charity.

### Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Every Catholic knows that the gift of the Holy Ghost are wisdom, understanding, council, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord, but not every Catholic knows the meaning of those seven gifts.

Wisdom enlightens us to perceive the ways of God, and to comprehend so far as finite minds can, His designs in His works.

Understanding makes sufficiently clear to us the perfections of God, the mysteries of faith, the senses of the scriptures and the truths of religion.

Counsel gives us light to grow in grace and virtue to discover the snares of the devil, to perceive the occasions of sin, to solve doubts and to banish scruples, to remove anxiety in spiritual concerns and undue solicitude in worldly affairs, to guide us in the choice of a vocation, and to show us care.

Knowledge makes us appreciate rightly the things of God; gives us a correct estimate of grace and virtue; exposes the vanity of wealth, beauty, fame and power; points out the supreme worth of salvation and makes us eager for the sanctity and treasures in heaven.

Piety shows us God in the light of a Father and calls upon us to look at joys or sorrows, success or failure, health or sickness, as sent to us by Him for our good; and it stimulates us to love our neighbor for His sake.

The fear of the Lord gives a dread of offending God. It stirs us to work out our salvation in trembling, lest at the judgment we be found worthy of perdition; it stimulates us to hate sin for the reason that it arouses the wrath of God against us; and it inspires constancy in the practice of virtue.

These are the gifts that are granted in Confirmation and that are renewed by the Holy Spirit in those who desire them, who pray for them, and on whom He chooses to bestow them in abundance.

### Should Know These Things.

Parents, do you know where your boys spend Sunday? Do you know where your girl spends the evening?

Those questions strike the root of much sin and suffering. The parents who can answer them in the affirmative, are seldom worried by the misconduct of an unruly son, or disgraced by a wayward daughter. It is not their sons who are found on Sunday in bar rooms and worse places, indulging in swearing, vulgarity and drunken orgies, and in a short time become confirmed loafers, drunkards and criminals; it is not their daughters who meet at night on the streets in questionable company, flirting with corner loafers, or going to masquerades and other resorts of vice—trading the path that leads to the disgrace of themselves and family. No; parents who know or care where their sons spend Sunday, and their daughters spend their evenings rarely have to answer for such conduct on the part of their children. It is those parents who do not know, and apparently do not care where their sons and daughters go, who will have to answer for this terrible responsibility. And yet many, too many, of those parents are

### Small Capital for Big Trust.

It ever occur to them that they by their neglect, are accountable for the souls of their children? That when they appear before the final judgment of God they will have to answer for the sins of their children, due to their neglect, as well as those of their own commission? It would seem not, and may God have mercy on them, for they will certainly be held to such an account. Neglect on the part of parents is the source of most of the sin and immorality of the present time. It may be traced the reckless indifference, immoral and criminal conduct, and eventual disgrace and damnation of our youth. Readers, if you are a parent have you ever thought of this? Do you know where your boys spend Sunday, and your daughters spend their evenings?—Catholic Advocate.

# Happy Moments.

Two-Step.

T. O. Carr.

