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REV. LEO C. MOONEY, Managing Editor; REV. JOHN E. MASSETH, Editor; THOMAS H. COONIN, News Editor

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I generally speak for the CATHOLIC COURIER, the sheet which represents the voice of the people, and I fervently hope that it may carry into every home in the diocese the salutary influence of the Catholic Press.

Editorials

NO SUBSTITUTES

In the course of his New Year's Message, His Eminence Cardinal O'Connell of Boston said:

"Philanthropy is no substitute for equal justice nor does it assuage resentment that moulders in the hearts of the aggrieved."

When the suppressed combustion reaches the flaming point, revolutionaries take charge and dictators arise."

Cardinal O'Connell could have gone further and declared that neither is charity a substitute for justice.

Abbe Leon Garriguet, in his "The Gospel and Our Social Problems," refers to a criticism of the Gospel frequently made:

"We often hear the Gospel criticized for not saying enough about justice, and for not exhibiting individual rights with due prominence. The idea most lacking in Christianity," writes Bougie, "is that of right, with all the latest combatsiveness it implies."

It is idle to suppose that for this idea we may substitute the outpourings of charity. A hundred bushels of charity do not make a grain of the sense of justice."

"Of course justice and charity are perfectly distinct," continues the Abbe, "and both are great virtues. One certainly ought never to be sacrificed to the other; and as a consequence, before taking up charity, it is incumbent upon us first to discharge our obligations of justice. Moreover, it will scarcely be called in question that, in point of fact, there are Christians who talk too much about charity, and too little about justice, justice apparently not being in such good favor with them. But we cannot admit that the Gospel is to be held responsible for the so-called Christians who may have partially lost sight of the notion of justice."

In QUADRAGESIMO ANNO, Pius XI emphasized the need of justice. Speaking of conditions induced by "dire poverty," Pius said:

"This state of things was quite satisfactory to the wealthy, who looked upon it as the consequence of inevitable and natural economic laws, and who, therefore, were content to abandon to charity alone the task of relieving the unfortunate, as though it were the task of charity to make amends for the open violation of justice, a violation not merely tolerated, but sanctioned at times by legislators."

You have observed in this statement of the Pontiff referred to those who regard poverty "as the consequence of inevitable and natural economic laws."

On the other hand, there are those, as Pius notes in his Encyclical, who cannot bring themselves to believe "that so radical and unjust a distinction in the distribution of temporal goods was quite in harmony with the design of an all-wise Creator."

One of the strangest things we have ever come across is the attempt to find justification for poverty in the life and sayings of Jesus Christ. Of this distortion Abbe-Garriguet says:

"Our Lord was born poor; He lived as a poor man among the poor; He manifested towards them a special love, showered on them marks of respect and consideration, and claimed them blessed, and seems to have chosen the best place in His heart for them. Some have argued that, in His eyes, poverty is a thing to be desired, an advanced condition, an essential element in the Christian society, and an indispensable condition of salvation. But it cannot be asserted with any show of truth that the Gospel regards pauperism as something necessarily inevitable, of which one must take advantage, and which it would be childish to try to avoid."

"The poor you will see." Was He in these words, as the poverty natural and unchangeable, as poverty thought and said as a result of reason?

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worry. I won't be with you long. After that you will have many opportunities to minister to the poor. You will always find them around."

Some have stretched this little colloquy of Our Lord with His disciples into an address to the ages.

Taking up Christ's meaning here, Abbe Garriguet says:

"It is in this last sentence, so simple, so clear and so natural, whose meaning has been strangely distorted. Some have found in it a commendation of poverty, and a setting up of wisdom by divine authority as a sort of institution. Starting from this common ground, one party has accused Christianity of lacking the social sense while the other has put itself at ease with regard to the obligations of charity. Their view is this: As there must always be poor people, it is idle to take any extraordinary pains to rescue one's fellow-men from their unfortunate state of destitution; for poverty is part of the plan of Providence."

"Such an interpretation of our Lord's words is not only wholly erroneous, but it stands in complete opposition to His mentality and teaching, and is scarcely intelligible except on the hypothesis of carelessness, ignorance or want of candor. A rapid glance at the context suffices to demonstrate that this cannot be the meaning. An interpretation like this is wholly foreign to the obvious sense of the text."

You will recall that Our Lord on the Mount did not bless the poor generally, but the poor in spirit. A man may be rich and yet be poor in spirit. On the other hand, a man may be poor and yet be avaricious, greedy of gain.

Detachment, then, is the thing, for detachment, not poverty, is a virtue.

JOHN E. MASSETH

REUNION

The annual reunion for the Roman Catholic Church, made by the American Committee of the Church Unity O'Connell Council, an Episcopalian group, took place in the city of Rochester, N.Y., on December 26, 1935.

It was foreseen, of course, that the church that "Protestantism is bankrupt, ethically, culturally, morally and religiously," that "it is disintegrating rapidly," would be strongly challenged.

What does all challenge is the statement, "The front of the anti-Christian attack falls on Rome." This is clear to anyone who is conversant with world affairs. And how can the reason be gained—"for the enemy knows well where the centre of Christianity really lies."

Herein, says AMERICA of January 1, is found "the fifth mark of the true Church."

Some of those taking exception to the statements of the Unity O'Connell Council, strengthen rather than weaken its charges.

"Protestantism is more than a protest; it stands for positive principles, freedom in religion and freedom of interpretation," says Reverend Dr. Charles E. Tuke of the Philadelphia Episcopalian Diocese.

This is old stuff. Yet it still is to be applied to the unthinking. Freedom is always a word of magic. But the extent to which Dr. Tuke and his confreres have carried freedom into religion is what has accounted for the "bankruptcy," the "disintegration" of Protestantism.

In his own day, Martin Luther saw the drift to disintegration. The logical results of "freedom in religion, freedom of interpretation," were even then showing themselves. In 1525 Luther said:

"There are as many sects and beliefs as there are heads. This fellow will have nothing to do with Baptism; another denies the Sacrament; a third believes that there is another world between this and the Last Day. Some teach that Christ is not God; some say this, some that. There is no rustic so rude but that, if he dreams or fancies anything, it must be the whisper of the Holy Ghost, and he himself a prophet."

Freedom? Yes, as promised by Jesus Christ—"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John VIII, 32). Free from what? From such doubts and divisions in regard to fundamental truths of Christianity as Protestantism most unhappily has begotten.

Always the struggles of those seeking the light should be met with our sympathy, and especially our prayers. Special incentive and opportunity for such prayers will be given us during the Church Unity O'Connell, January 18-25.

One of the difficulties confronting High Church Episcopalians as they consider becoming Catholics has been met by the convert, Father Selden Delany, recently deceased. In his book, "Why Rome?"

"I hear many of my friends saying: 'How can you deny the spiritual experiences of all these years?—Have you never received Christ at the altars of the Church? Have you never had your sins forgiven, or converted forgiveness to others in the sacrament of penance? Has your whole ministry been without spiritual fruit?' In answer I would say that I believe all my spiritual experiences have been real, and that the work for souls that God has performed through my ministry has been real."

In proof, Father Delany quoted from "Constantinople, Constantinople and Rome," a book by Father Woodcock, S. J.

"They need not deny a single one of these experiences. . . . Catholic theology and devotion recognize that what is called a 'spiritual communion,' without the Real-Presence of Christ under the sacramental species, may be the means of receiving, on occasions, greater graces than are received when Christ is bodily present at a sacramental communion. . . . and men who believe sincerely in the priesthood of the English Church ministers, may receive an outpouring of grace in their ministrations which to them is subjectively indistinguishable from strictly sacramental graces."

J. E. M.

Current Comment

RELIGIOUS LIFE

DEIUS DEI BETS CASE I LEON STAR OF BETHLEHEM

A reply by Dr. W. D. MacMillan of the University of Chicago to a reporter that astronomy agrees with the Star of Bethlehem never existed.

The Ottawa Journal, recalling the famous case of the Star of Bethlehem, the New York Star to the title girl, who died of the virus of a "cold" virus.

"Not believe in the Star of Bethlehem? You might as well not believe in Santa Claus. There are convictions for which we do not need the authority of science and mathematics. Our most profound beliefs are placed upon the solid operations of scepticism and doubt."

"Not believe in the Star? Shall we take the word of a hard realist who can't big enough to go beyond the facts into the realm of the imagination?"

Use of St. Matthew and the Wise Men versus the University of Chicago. It is a case of the things men and women for major centers have believed to be true that by virtue of this implicit faith have become a part of the very lives that are immutably more important in their effect on human lives than the hard facts and the most irrefutable of logic.

Seen by Wise Men

Of course there was a Star of Bethlehem. Perhaps the Chicago professor couldn't have seen it with the naked eye, but it was there on the night of the Nativity. It may have no place in the charted records of celestial bodies—it may not accord with the theories of science. But the Wise Men saw it. And millions of believers know it was there; in their minds have seen it hovering over the holy manger, awaiting the infant Jesus, a lovely and touching symbol of a beautiful story on which rest their hope and confidence.

Bethlehem's Star is woven into one religious tradition, and it will not lightly surrender to the use of an astronomer's telescope. In his materialistic way to try to follow science there was to such thing. We know better of course there was a Star over Bethlehem.

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STRANGE BUT TRUE

Catholic Facts But Little Known

By M. J. MURRAY

Advertisement for 'AD 1936' featuring a portrait of Bishop Otto Raible and text about the 'YEAR OF OUR LORD' and 'The Chasuble worn by the priest at Mass'.

THE LIBRARY SIGN POST

Advertisement for 'THE CATHOLIC EVIDENCE LIBRARY' recommending books by Pius XI, St. Augustine, and others.

What Catholic Editors Say

Article discussing the role of Catholic editors and the impact of the English film censor on Catholic publications.

Diocesan Recordings

Diocesan Recordings section containing various news items, announcements, and reports from the Diocese of Rochester.