
The Devil's Pamphlet Rack. II.

Comes in yesterday's mail a case under yesterday's Bulletin. A student, now at another university, whose only Catholic education consisted of a year and a half at Notre Dame, sends a clipping from a magazine proposing ten subtle doubts. Had this young man remained at Notre Dame for four years he would have had the answer to the doubts: they include some knowledge of the Scriptures and a good knowledge of Catholic philosophy. While the boy has a wonderful disposition and wants to learn the truth, he has been guilty of a grave mistake: he has purchased poison at the Devil's Pamphlet Rack, and he does not know the antidote. He is frank enough to come across with his difficulty; how many do not!

The Catholic Church knows her business. She has been in the business of saving men's souls for the past nineteen hundred years, and she has done a good job. When she condemns certain kinds of reading she does so because she knows after long and bitter experience that bad reading destroys faith. When she gives permission for condemned books to be read, she does it not that the individual may satisfy morbid curiosity, but that he may make serious studies that will protect less instructed Catholics from the poison of these books. The state exercises exactly the same protection for patriotism, and it places heavy penalties on the printing, sale and circulation of seditious or treasonable literature.

Archbishop Sheehan, in his Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine, makes an apt comparison. He says that no good mother will permit her son to read books that are written for the purpose of destroying her son's faith in his father and devotion to him. The Catholic Church is our good Mother; God is our Good Father. And when she declares that if you read certain vicious books against your Father she will no longer recognize you as her son, she uses the threat that any good spouse and mother would use to protect the tender relationship between father and son.

There is a former Notre Dame student, an undergraduate, who transferred from Notre Dame to Harvard, now on the staff of the American Mercury. He is no longer a Catholic, although he has not dropped the good Irish name he bore when he entered Notre Dame a few years ago. Tragedies of this sort are painful, discouraging. New-found wealth and the culture of a raw western state was what this boy brought to Notre Dame; here he found the mellow culture of the Catholic Church old-fashioned, and bizarre magazines became his diet. The silly, superficial sophistication of Conde Nast and H. L. Mencken appealed to his shallow mind, and he hit the sawdust trail with the propagandist of the Rotarians, the cynic who has destroyed more and built less than any of his dyspeptic contemporaries. This young man and his good Irish name are commended to your prayers: the young man, that he may yet come back to God; the name, that it may be no further disgraced.

If you have about your room any books, magazines, or pamphlets of the kind your mother should not approve, please destroy them before some person of taste sees them and forms a wrong impression of your mother. "Should" is used, and not "would," because a few years ago a student stated when this argument was put up to him that his mother would not know what it was all about. He was told, of course, that he should at least, as an intelligent son, protect his mother's reputation and not let the world know that she knew not the difference between right and wrong in religion and morals.

The Year of Thanksgiving.

This year we have dedicated to thanksgiving; tomorrow the nation dedicates to this intention. The Holy Eucharist is the proper Christian form of thanksgiving to God for His benefits; in it the Son of God thanks the Heavenly Father in our name for the all blessings, known and unknown, conferred upon us by God. Be at less tomorrow.