

# THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

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VOL. XXI.

JULY, 1917.

No. 3.

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## WHY DO CATHOLICS ACCEPT THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

During the last two weeks of the Sunday campaign in Boston a small tract, or pamphlet, was distributed by mail, apparently by courtesy of the "Massachusetts State Council, K. of C.," since it was published by them, as stated on the title page. The tract is entitled "The Divinity of Christ," with the further information: "One of a Series of Lectures on the Fundamentals of Faith, Delivered in the Brooklyn Academy of Music before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, by Rev. Walter Drum, S. J., Professor of Scripture, Woodstock Collegè. Imprimi Potest: A. J. Maas, S. J., Praep. Prov." On the second page we read: "Nihil Obstat: Patrick J. Waters, Ph. D., Censor Librorum." Below this: "Imprimatur: William, Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston. November 2, 1916." The tract is officially censored and sanctioned, as you see. From a footnote on page three we gather that this lecture was delivered in December, 1915.

Naturally, the tract was read from cover to cover to ascertain if perchance there might be something new under the Jesuit luminary. But herein we were disappointed, which was to be expected. It is the same sleight-of-hand performance that these Jesuits, those brilliant logicians, have always practised to the confusion of their audiences. On receipt of the tract one was led to speculate, too, why these courteous Knights of Columbus distributed this tract at this particular time. Perhaps it was "Billy" Sunday's fervent and enthusi-

## ERASMUS THE SATIRIST AND MORALIST.

Few things are so wholesome to all men, and specially to maturing and maturer men in the clerical office, as the study of history, its sources, documents, and deeper coherence. The instinctive hero-worship of youth and its intrinsic immaturity are well expressed in a sentence of Macrobius: "Then, when we admired, but could not judge as yet." In this year of 1917 we think much of 1517, its mighty struggles bound up with the recovery of Christian freedom and Christian truth. It is not easy for a young theologian who is rapidly losing his slender classical equipment to realize that there was a time in Europe when there was fairly no other culture than classical culture and the leaders of minds and tastes, the establishers of ideals and universally accepted canons of refinement and achievements were men who wrote Latin with idiomatic brilliancy, and abandoned scholasticism for a somewhat vague body of "Humanities." The leader of all this movement, a movement begun by Petrarch, was Erasmus of Rotterdam. At a future time I shall present some extracts from his correspondence. If he had lived in the time of Antonius, he might have done the work of Lucian, with which universal satirist he had much affinity. I am not going here to depict—it has been done a hundred times—how Erasmus as critic and satirist seemed to go into the direction of Reformation, and how he halted, and, halting, reestablished himself (in the crisis) a Romanist. It may be well here to recall his patrons, whose pensions the famous scholar, author, and oracle of his time accepted: they were all adherents of the older order. Some of them were: the bishop of Cambrai, Lord Mountjoy, Thomas More, Colet, Archbishop Wareham, Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII, the Marquise de Vere, Archduke Philip of Austria, John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, James IV of Scotland, Leo X (to whom he dedicated his New Testament!), the Bishop of Basle and some of its foremost citizens, Charles V and his brother Ferdinand, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, and

many others. His writings were all in Latin, and they were read in Madrid and Warsaw no less than in Rome, Florence, Venice, Louvain, Paris, London, Oxford, Heidelberg, Ingolstadt, Erfurt, Wittenberg, or Copenhagen. The most powerful and the most gifted men of his generation were his correspondents, and he was indeed the oracle of Europe.

Since that time all the greater commonwealths have developed a national literature of their own, and when we return to Erasmus, we feel profoundly that such a life and such ideals have become simply impossible. I have seen at Basle the splendid portrait of Erasmus by Holbein. There is a countenance in which keen analytical power predominates. In this little paper I would present, partly as documents of the history of that time, specimens of his writings in which the satirist and moralist stands revealed. The artificiality of the classical allusions is too much for us, who groan under the micrology of ever-narrowing "research." But, inasmuch as my readers must be made to feel, in a concrete way, the dominant taste of that time, I begin my paper with some allusions culled from the greatest of his satires, *viz.*, the "Encomium Moriae," or Praise of Folly: Nectar, Nepenthe, the cave of Trophonius, the Favonius-wind, Midas, Pan, Hercules, Solon, Busiris, Phalaris, Thales, Mystae, Chaos, Orcus, Tapetos, Plutus, Hesiod, Homer, Pallas, the Plutus of Aristophanes, the floating isle of Delos, gardens of Adonis, with many a phrase, term, or sentence in Greek directly, the Stoics, the Square of Pythagoras, Sophocles, the Islands of the Blessed, a line from Apuleius, an allusion to Plautus, Nestor, Achilles, a phrase from Homer, Medea, Venus, Circe, Aurora, and Tithonus, an ephebus (of Athens), Sappho, a name of one who is a butt of Aristophanes' satire, Endymion, Momus, Priapus, Silenus, Polyphemus, the Atellanæ plays, Plato, the Seven Wise Men, etc., etc. All this from a few pages. We would not endure this "Humanism" any more. Excuse me. But let us see. Few of Erasmus's readers could promptly see every point, nor just how or why the allusion was apposite or per-

minent; and still they looked up to him as a wonderful man. At bottom all this culture was artificial and the intellectual satisfaction therein revealed we may call naive. It is all like a meadow studded with—artificial flowers.

But in order to follow Erasmus at all, we must tolerate or ignore this classical investiture. I will now go forward to present some versions from his famous satire of his own times, choosing, as material of the history of the Church, and as presenting some perspective of the causes underlying the Reformation, certain portions of his famous diatribe, "The Praise of Folly":—

"But that class of men certainly belongs wholly to our own substance who rejoice in miracles and stupendous lies, either in listening to them or telling them, nor do they ever get their fill of such stories, when certain wonderful things are told, about ghosts, specters, spooks, the abode of the dead, and innumerable marvels of that kind. The further away these things are from the truth, the more largely are they believed, and with a more delightful sensation do they thrill the ears. And these indeed are not only wonderfully effective to beguile the time, but they are profitable also, especially to priests and preachers. Close to these again are those who have acquired a foolish, but pleasing conviction that, if they look on a certain wooden or painted giant Christophorus, they will not die on that day, or that he who greets a sculptured St. Barbara with a certain prescribed form of words will return unscathed from battle, or who calls on St. Erasmus on certain days, with certain candles and certain little prayers, will become rich in a short time. As for St. George, they have made of him a veritable Hercules or Hippolytus. His horse, adorned with trappings and medals in the most scrupulous fashion, they all but worship. . . . To swear by his brazen helmet is considered a downright royal achievement. What shall I say of those who flatter themselves with imaginary pardons for their crimes, and measure the spaces of purgatory as with clocks, centuries, years, months, days, hours, measuring

them out as though by a mathematical table, without any mistake? Or about those, who, relying on certain magic marks and prayers, which some pious impostor, either for fun or for gain, has devised, promise everything to themselves, wealth, honors, pleasures, a full belly, perfect health, long life, a green old age, finally a seat close to Christ in heaven, with whom, however, they do not want to have anything to do, unless very late, that is, when the pleasures of this life have deserted them, which they had been gripping, as it were, with their teeth; *then* those pleasures of the blessed in heaven should follow closely. Here, for instance, some merchant, soldier, or judge, casting away some single paltry coin out of so much loot, thinks the entire pool of his life is cleansed, so many false oaths, so many debaucheries, so many feuds, so much drunkenness, so many assassinations, so many swindling transactions, so many breaches of trust, so many acts of treason he thinks are canceled as by contract, and so canceled that he may now return, afresh, to a new cycle of crimes. . . . What now? Does it not amount pretty nearly to the same thing when particular regions claim their own particular saint, when they allot particular spheres to a particular saint, . . . that this one aids them in toothache, that one attends mothers in childbirth, another restores something stolen, this one is merciful in shipwreck, that one watches the flock? And so about the rest; for it would take too long to run through the entire list. There are those [saints] who, individually, are powerful in more than one sphere, especially the Virgin Mary, whom the average person credits with almost more than the Son. . . .

“Come, among so many consecrated gifts with which you behold all the walls of certain churches and the very ceiling to be filled, have you ever seen one person who escaped from folly? . . . One swam to land unharmed; another was pierced in battle and survived; another escaped from a battle (while the others were fighting), not less luckily than bravely; another, raised to the gallows, through the favor of some saint or other friendly to thieves, fell down, so that he continued to relieve

some men who were richer than they ought to be; another broke jail and escaped; another recovered from fever when the physician had lost his temper; another drank poison, his bowels were loosened, and it healed him instead of killing him, and this put out his wife, who had no reward for her pains; another had a runaway and brought the horses safely home. . . .

“So greatly is all the life of all Christians teeming with such hallucinations: the which the priests themselves not unwillingly both admit and foster, being well aware how much profit is wont to accrue to them from this source.”

But let us go on to his description of the *monks*: “Next [to the theologians] come those persons who generally call themselves *religious persons* and monks, both being false terms, since both, a goodly part of them, are very far removed from religion, and none do you more come across everywhere [they do *not* live in solitude]. . . . Whereas the general public so abominate this class of men, that they consider even a chance meeting with them a bad omen, still they have a very high opinion of themselves. First they deem it the loftiest piety if they have so far shrunk from contact with letters that they cannot even read. Then, when they bray out (*derudunt*) their psalms, chanted rhythmically indeed, but not understood, then, indeed, they think they are soothing the ears of the saints with great pleasure. And there are some of these who sell their meanness and beggarliness for a great price, and before the doors, with loud bellowing, demand bread, nay, in all taverns, coaches, ships. Not only are they a nuisance with no slight loss to the other beggars. And to that extent these most detestable persons, in their mean exterior, their ignorance, boorishness, impudence, reproduce, as they claim, the apostles for us. And what is more delightful than that they do everything by regulation, as though by mathematical rules, which to transgress is a sin? How many knots their shoe must have, what color their belt, what shades their garments, what stuff, how broad their belt, what shape and how many peaks their

hood must hold, . . . how many hours they must sleep. And who does not perceive how unequal is this equality alongside of so great an inequality of bodies and minds? And still, with these futilities they not only despise others, but also they condemn one another, and men who profess apostolic charity, on account of a garment differently girdled, on account of a slightly darker shade, make a tremendous hullabaloo. . . . There are some who shrink from the touch of money as from a poison, but who meanwhile do not refrain from wine nor from women. . . . Their zeal is not to be like Christ, but to be unlike to one another. Further, a great deal of their felicity is in names; some are called Cordeliers (their zone a rope), and of these some are called *Fratres Minores*, others *Minimi*, others *Bullistae*. Again some are *Benedictines*, others *Bernardines*, others of *St. Bridget*, others *Augustinians*, others *Wilhelmites*, others *Jacobites*, as though it were too little to be called simply *Christians*. A great part of these rely so greatly on their own ceremonies and the little traditions of men as to think that a single heaven is not worthy enough as a reward for so great deserts; not thinking that Christ, despising all these things, will insist upon His own precept, *viz.*, that of charity. . . . One will point to a little basin stuffed with all kinds of fish. Another will recount an innumerable total of fasts, and charge his belly so many times almost splitting with a single repast. Another will bring forward such a heap of ceremonies as could hardly be conveyed by seven transports. Another will boast that in sixty years he never touched money unless his fingers were encased in double gloves. Another will show his hood: so dirty and coarse that no sailorman would consent to put it on. Another will tell that he spent a life of more than fifty-five years, always attached to the same spot. Another will produce his voice hoarse by incessant chanting; another, a numbness gathered in solitude; another, a tongue dulled by incessant silence. . . . When they shall hear this, and will see that sailors and drivers are preferred

to themselves, with what miens, think ye, will they gaze on one another? . . . And still these men, who are something apart from the commonwealth, no one dares to despise, especially the mendicant friars, because they possess all secrets of all men, from the so-called confessions, which, however, they deem it wrong to betray, unless sometimes, in their cups they wish to, but tell the matter vaguely, suppressing names. But if any one stir these hornets, then in their pulpit discourses they soundly revenge themselves, and brand their foe indirectly, so covertly that every one understands, unless one understands nothing; and they do not stop barking until you throw them a bone. Come now, what comedy-actor, what mountebank would you rather see than those men, rhetorizing absurdly in their sermons, but still in the most charming manner imitating what the rhetoricians have taught about the theory of oratory? How do they gesticulate, how fitly do they change their pitch of voice, how they practise a singsong manner, how they vaunt themselves, how they keep changing their facial expression, how they fill everything with their shoutings! And this art of discourse, like an esoteric matter, one poor monk passes on to the other. Although it is not permissible to me to know it, still I shall follow it somehow by my conjectures. At the beginning they invoke what they have borrowed from the poets; then, being about to discourse on charity, they take their introduction from the river Nile; or when about to expound the mystery of the cross, they make a happy beginning with the Belus of Babylon; or when about to discourse on fasting, they begin with the twelve constellations of the zodiac; or when about to speak on *faith*, they speak in their introduction for a long time on the quadrature of the circle. I have myself heard a certain one particularly stupid,—I beg pardon, I wanted to say particularly erudite,—who, in a sermon before a very great audience, to show that his learning was not commonplace, and to satisfy theological ears, entered upon an absolutely novel path, that is, taking his cue from letters, syllables, and language, then, the agreement of noun and verb,



of adjective and substantive, while most of his hearers were sleeping, and some were quietly quoting the familiar line of Horace:

Quorsum haec tam putida tendunt?

Finally he brought his discourse to this point,—he showed that the image of the whole Trinity was so set forth in the elements of the teachers of language that no mathematician could more clearly draw it in the dust."

But we must take another theme, *viz.*, "Erasmus on Cardinals and Popes," keeping in mind that the famous satire was first published in 1509, in Paris:—

"As for the princes, their style of living is imitated by the popes, cardinals, and bishops from long ago, and with energy, and they almost outdo the princes. Further, if one were to reflect what the robe of linen suggests, with its snow-white color, namely, a conduct of life spotless at every point; what the two-pointed miter, the same knot holding both projections, means: a perfect knowledge of both the New and the Old Testament; what the gloved hands, *viz.*, the administration of the Sacraments free from all contact with worldly affairs; what the way they are shod, *viz.*, the most watchful care of the flock entrusted to them; what the cross borne before them, *viz.*, the conquest of all human passions. These things, I say, and many things of this kind, if one were to ponder on them, should he not lead a sad and anxious life? And now they have a good time in grazing themselves. As for the care of the sheep, they either entrust them to Christ Himself, or turn them over to brothers, so called, or to vicars. They do not remember their own title, what the term *episcopus* really means, *viz.*, toil, care, anxiety. But in netting money they quite fill the role of *ἐπίσκοπος, οὐδ' ἀλασχοπή* (not a vain spying or seeing—a Homeric phrase).

"In the same way [*scil.*, as the bishops], if the *cardinals* were to think that they had succeeded to the place of the Apostles, that of them were demanded the same achievements as those of the Apostles; further, that they are not masters,

but stewards of spiritual gifts, for which in a short time they must give a most exact account; nay, if they were to reflect a little even on their garb and thus think: What means this whiteness of garb? Does it not mean an absolute and particular purity of life? What the inner crimson? Not the most burning love of God? What, again, the outward with its generous folds, and covering even the mule of his eminence, although one would be enough for covering a camel? Does it not mean a charity spreading itself very widely to aid all men, that is, to teach, exhort, console, rebuke, admonish, settle wars, resist wicked princes, and even willingly to shed their blood for the Christian flock, not only their means? And still, what for means, as they are the representatives of the poor apostles? If they were to ponder these things, I say, they would not strive hard for this place, and readily give it up, or at least spend a toilsome and anxious life, such as these apostles of old lived.

“Next the *popes*, who are the vicegerents of Christ; if they will attempt to imitate His life, *viz.*, poverty, toil, teaching, the cross, the contempt of life; if they were to reflect on the name *Papa*, that is, Father, even most sacred, what will there be in the world more troubled? Or who would buy that place with all his wealth, or, when bought, maintain it with the sword, with poison,<sup>1)</sup> and every form of force? How many advantages will he gain by these, if once wisdom has come along? Wisdom, did I say? Nay, even a grain of that salt which Christ mentioned. So much wealth, so many honors, so much sway, so many victories, so many offices, so many dispensations, so many revenues, so many indulgences, so many horses, mules, body-guards, so many pleasures! You see how great a mart, how great a harvest, how great an ocean of good things I have embraced in a few words. In place of these he will assume vigils, fasting, tears, prayers, sermons, studies, sighs, and a thousand wretched labors of this

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1) The allusion to Alexander VI seems to be unmistakable.

kind. And that also must not be neglected, that so many clerks, so many copyists, so many notaries, so many advocates, . . . so many secretaries, so many grooms of mules, so many stable-masters, so many attendants at table, so many procurers (almost I added something still more effeminate, but I fear it may be too harsh to hear); in a word, so vast an aggregation of men which burdens—I blundered, I should say honors—the see of Rome, may be driven to starvation. It would be inhuman and an atrocious deed, and much more to be execrated, to have even the highest princes of the Church reduced to bag and staff. But nowadays, as a rule, if there is work, they leave it to Peter and Paul, who have leisure enough; but if there is any splendor or pleasure, they take it for themselves. And so it comes about . . . that almost no class of men lives more softly and with less anxiety, inasmuch as they think Christ is abundantly satisfied, if they act the role of bishops with a mystic and almost theatrical staging, with ceremonies, with titles of reverences, sanctities, with benedictions and maledictions. It is an ancient and obsolete thing, and not befitting the present time, to perform miracles. To teach the people is troublesome; to interpret the sacred Scriptures smacks of the schoolmaster; to pray is a waste of time; to shed tears is wretched and womanish; to be poor is mean; to be defeated is base, and not sufficiently worthy of him who barely admits even the greatest kings to kiss his saintly feet; finally, to die is unlovely, and to be raised to the cross is infamous. There remain only these, arms and sweet benedictions which St. Paul mentions and with these some [*scil.*, popes] are indeed lavish, to wit, interdicts, suspensions, aggravations, redaggravations, anathematizations, penal pictures, and that awful thunderbolt, by which, by the mere nod, they send the souls of men to the deepest hell. This the most saintly fathers in Christ and vicars of Christ hurl against none the more keenly than against those who at the devil's instigation attempt to lessen, or gnaw at, the patrimony of St. Peter. When his utterance is recorded in the Gospel:

'We have forsaken everything and followed Thee,' still they call *his patrimony* lands, towns, revenues, harbor-dues, sway. While they, inflamed by their zeal for Christ, fight for these<sup>2)</sup> with fire and sword, not without the shedding of a great deal of Christian blood, then only they believe they are defending the Church, the Bride of Christ, in an apostolic manner, having bravely routed the foe, as they call it; as though there were any foes of the Church more pernicious than wicked popes, who allow Christ to pass out in silence, and bind Him with statutes concerned with material profit, and adulterate [the sense of His words. E. G. S.] with forced interpretations and slay Him with a corrupt life."

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E. G. SIHLER.

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