

A LIVELY CONTROVERSY IN PALMERSTON

The following further letter from the Rev. Father J. Lynch appeared in the *Palmerston and Waikouaiti Times* of April 25:—

'Sir,—Incidentally this controversy has had one good result: it has induced the Rev. Mr. Clarke to give our envious eyes a glance at his magnificent collection of Standard Catholic Theological Works—viz., a penny catechism and a sixpenny popular work. Hold your smiles, my friends! With these he graciously volunteered to help me in the revision of my theology. Really, Rev. Mr. Clarke, I beg leave to decline the offer. Here I may forestall a possible misunderstanding by pointing out that I do not despise or object to the authorities Rev. Mr. Clarke has cited against me; but I do most emphatically protest against the false interpretation he has put upon them. I may remark, in passing, that I am pleased to see that the Rev. Mr. Clarke recognises the financial advantage which the unmarried Catholic priest has over the Protestant minister who groans beneath the weight of "family responsibilities." St. Paul, who evidently did not set so high a value on money as the Rev. Mr. Clarke does, overlooked the monetary advantage; but he laid great stress on the spiritual benefits that accrue to the Church and religion when the ministers thereof were unmarried. He says: "But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided."—(Cor. vii. 32, 33.) I protest that I am not suggesting that the Rev. Mr. Clarke should, at this period of his life, get rid of his encumbrance by seeking a divorce. God forbid! The end would not justify the means.

'I now proceed to prove my charges against the Rev. Mr. Clarke. I charged him (1) with wilfully suppressing the plain truth. The words of the Creed of Pius IV. quoted by Mr. Clarke are: "I (A.B.) do at this present freely profess and sincerely hold this true Catholic faith, out of which no one can be saved."

'Four lines below is given in a note the explanation of the words, "Out of which no one can be saved." The note reads thus: "This expression should not appear too strong, as it is only a repetition of what Christ said, 'But he that believeth not shall be condemned' (St. Mark xvi. 16). This condemnation is not intended to apply to the earnest Christian who has not the means of knowing the Catholic Faith, for he thus belongs in some sense to the Catholic Church, being excused, on account of involuntary or invincible ignorance. This remark applies also to those who are altogether out of the light of the faith (namely, Pagans, Jews, Mohammedans), but who follow with fidelity the light of the natural law they possess written in their hearts. (See chapter xlv., some things that Catholics do not believe, No. 7, page 244.) Here is what is said in chapter xlv., No. 7: "Catholics do not believe that Protestants who are baptised, who lead a good life, love God and their neighbor, and are blamelessly ignorant of the just claims of the Catholic religion to be the only one true religion (which is called being in good faith), are excluded from Heaven, provided they believe there is one God in three Divine Persons; that God will duly reward the good and punish the wicked; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God made man, Who redeemed us, and in Whom we must trust for our salvation; and provided they thoroughly repent of having ever, by their sins, offended God (pages 219-220). Catholics hold that such Protestants who have these dispositions, and, moreover, have no suspicion of their religion being false, or have not means to discover, or fail in their honest endeavors to discover, the true religion, and who are so disposed in their hearts that they would at any cost embrace the Roman Catholic religion if they knew it to be the true one, are Catholics in spirit, and in some sense within the Catholic Church, without themselves knowing it. She holds that these Christians belong to and are united to the "soul," as it is called, of the Catholic Church, although they

are not united to the visible *body* of the Church by external communion with her, and by the outward profession of her faith" (page 220). Mallock, an English Protestant, thus states the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the salvation of all those outside her fold: "There is no point, probably, connected with this question, about which the general world is so misinformed and ignorant as the sober but boundless charity of what is called the anathematising Church (Catholic Church). So little, indeed, is this charity understood generally, that to assert it seems a startling paradox. . . . It is the simple statement of a fact. Never was there a religious body, except the Roman, that laid the intense stress she does on all her dogmatic teachings, and had yet the justice that comes of sympathy for those that cannot receive them. . . . The holy and humble men of heart who do not know her, or who in good faith reject her, she commits with confidence to God's uncovenanted mercies; and these she knows are infinite. . . . Her anathemas are on none but those who reject her with their eyes open, by tampering with a conviction that she really is the truth. These are condemned, not for not seeing that the teacher is true, but because, having really seen this, they continue to close their eyes to it" (*Is Life Worth Living?* chapter xi, 283-285). Another Protestant, Philip Schaff, professor in the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, says that the ancient maxim, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside of the Church there is no salvation) "is perfectly correct." Again he writes: "The fundamental proposition, "Out of Christ no salvation," necessarily includes the other, "No salvation out of the Church." Schaff points out that this axiom must be always understood with certain limitations (see *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. I., pp. 10-11). Yet Rev. Mr. Clarke has tried to prove that the Catholic Church teaches the wholesale damnation of those who are outside her fold! Whose testimony shall we accept? That of the two learned and eminent Protestants, Mallock and Schaff, or that of Rev. Mr. Clarke? Nay, more: Three Protestant confessions of faith contain more or less explicitly this axiom.

(1) The Helvetic Confession (*Helvetica Posterior*, 1566 A.D.): "But we deem communion with the true Church of Christ of such importance that we deny that they can live in the sight of God who are not in communion with the true Church of God, but separate themselves from her."—(See Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, p. 276.)

(2) The Anglican 39 Articles (see Schaff, *op. cit.* pp. 499-657) also contain the axiom.

(3) Weigh well the words of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The visible Church universal is there declared to consist of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and (to be) the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.* (See *Confession of Faith* (Westminster), chapter 25, page 105.) Instead, therefore, of being sheeted home to the Catholic Church, the accuser's indictment recoils on his own head. Every attempt to fix the stigma of intolerance on the Catholic Church only serves to implicate his own creed also. Rev. Mr. Clarke's accusations remind me of McFingal's muskets, which

"So contrive it
As oft to miss the mark they drive at,
And tho' well aimed at duck and plover,
Bear wide and kick their owners over."

'J. LYNCH, P.P.

'Catholic Presbytery, April 9.

'P.S.—I have handed in to the editor of the *P. and W. Times* Very Rev. Faà Di Bruno's, D.D., *Simple Exposition of Catholic Doctrine* to enable those who wish to see for themselves how Rev. Mr. Clarke, as I have pointed out in my letter, has wilfully suppressed the explanation contained in the said book of the Catholic teaching on the point at issue.—J.L.'

When shopping with our advertisers, say 'I saw your advertisement in the *Tablet*.'

ARE YOU AWARE . . .
Young and Anderson

ITALIAN WAREHOUSEMEN, HEALTH FOOD SPECIALISTS, HAM
AND BACON CURERS, 18 PRINCES STREET, DUNEDIN . . .
are open all day Wednesday late night Friday—close 1 p.m. Saturday.