

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### IN RE "LETTERS TO HIS HOLINESS."

The Roman Catholic Church is a great institution which satisfies the religious needs of many millions of people. It can scarcely be denied that there are men who stand in need of exactly such a kind of ritual, of such doctrines, of such supervision of their consciences, and the editor of this periodical is far from the intention of assuming a hostile attitude toward this most remarkable faith which commends itself in many respects. But a cry for reform came to him from the very ranks of Roman Catholic priesthood so intense and fervid that it seemed wrong not to heed it. This Modernist who has written the *Letters to His Holiness, Pius X*, only wants to warn the Church and effect a reform that would bring this venerable institution abreast with the age. He wants especially to reach the priesthood and he sums up the purpose of his book in these words:

"What is the purpose of the Christian Church? This and this alone: to extend on earth the kingdom of righteousness; to preach the Christ-life; to witness to the unseen ideals of truth, goodness and love. The Church's kingdom is of this world inasmuch as it deals with men, their motives, aspirations, character, and moral activities. It is not of this world inasmuch as it should have no direct concern with temporalities and no perverse meddling with the things that are Caesar's. To the extent that it conflicts with human progress, antagonizes the national spirit of this people or that, clothes itself with secularity; assumes an attitude of harshness, provocation or defiance, it turns aside from its one reason for being, excites those deplorable oppositions of which we hear so much, between religion and science, religion and civilization, religion and the state, and stands in the way of winning the world to the spirit of Christ.

"Elementary as this statement is, churches are prone to forget it. The Church is composed of men after all; and men in every age from apostolic times to our own, have brought into the sanctuary the spirit of pride, domination and severity. Look into every revolt from the Church, and at the bottom of it you will find an abuse, a forgetting of purely spiritual purposes, an arousing to exasperation of the conscience, patriotism, or self-respect of mankind.

"Now abuses are corrected by either reform or revolt. If the Church herself, moved by the protest of her earnest sons, removes the abuse, it is reform. If, heedless of warning, she neglects to remove it, the result, the deadly result, is revolt. No greater question confronts the Church than this: Will she acknowledge abuses and quietly correct them; or by stubbornly ignoring them, invite revolution or decay?"

In announcing the book many circulars were sent out, and these have been acknowledged by a good many orders and sometimes by the expression of unflattering opinions with regard to the author. The following humorous message, evidently intended for his benefit, was returned to us on such a circular sent to each of the priests in a medium sized town of Massachusetts:

"Protestants had cleared the Church good enough in 16th century. Join them. Direct your letters to Luther; his adress is so: Lucifer, Manager of the Hell, for his friend Luther. If Vatherland of cleared Church or Hell is too far, go to Utah; there is Church and Religion convenient for you and your adherents. D— f—." (The spelling of these words in the original manuscript varies from the customary usage.)

We assume that the writer is a foreigner, and judge that he must be an interesting character. We would be glad to have an opportunity to make his personal acquaintance.

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### BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS. By *R. Waite Joslyn*. Elgin, Ill.: Normalist Pub. Co. Pp. 200.

This essay is described in a secondary title as "a consideration of normalism," and normalism as a principle is defined as "a philosophy of life that depends for its justification upon no particular creed or doctrine, upon no particular interpretation of the activities of nature, but upon knowledge of nature's unchanging laws, and has for its foundation the fact that in the life of each individual there is a normal way of conduct and being, and its realization in practice brings man his best and highest good....Not closing its eyes to the mysteries of life and being, it yet holds that the conduct of life and the relations of man to man are of first importance. To live within the conditions of life as determined by those laws of life that rest eternal in the universe to the end that happiness and high developments may be attained, is the first aim of its faith."

It is clearly the intention of the author to provide a manual of ethics for the conduct of life according to the ideals of "normalism." The value of its lesson, however, is partly vitiated by too frequent use of poetical forms of common words, inverted position of phrases, and in parts by too generous sprinkling of commas, dashes, and italics, all of which tend to call attention to the writer's mode of expression to the serious disadvantage of the thought expressed.

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DAS CHRISTENTUM UND DIE MONISTISCHE RELIGION. Von *Max Werner*. Berlin: Curtius, 1908. Pp. 202.

The first half of this book is devoted to a critical discussion of Christianity beginning with the pre-Copernican world-conception, the Pentateuch, revelation and the influence of Zarathushtra. It then considers in detail various dogmatic questions: the Christ, the human Jesus, the Gospels, the birth, miracles and resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles' Creed and finally the Pope's encyclical against modernism. The spirit is earnest but rather destructive; since the Church has erred, for instance, in assuming that the sun moves around the earth, it of course ceases to be infallible and therefore can never guarantee that it will not err again. The argument no doubt is logical, but there is no recognition of the part Christianity still should play in modern