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## Central Presbyterian.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### Rome and the Priesthood.

PETERSBURG, VA., Aug. 10th, '80.  
Messrs. Editors.—I announced last week my purpose to discard "Rufus" as an exponent of Roman Catholic doctrine, and to accept in his stead "Father Muller," whose teaching has the strongest endorsement of the dignitaries of his Church as being "in the true spirit of St. Alphonsus; its theology sound and solid, its spirit most devout, and its language simple and popular."

I have therefore procured a number of the works of this divine, and propose to give you copious extracts from them that your readers may know what are the real doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. The first of these works has the following title page—

THE CATHOLIC PRIEST. By Michael Muller, C. S. S. R., Priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. Baltimore: Published by Krenzer Brothers, 80 North street. 1876.

It will be seen that this work is not written by some neophyte like "Rufus," who does not know what his Church teaches—or by some lay-rhapsodist, who in his foolish devotion to the priesthood of his Church indulges in language whose extravagance his own religious teachers would condemn,—but by a priest, one commended for his orthodoxy, soundness, and solidity of doctrine. When therefore he tells us what the position and power of the priesthood is, we may accept it as the authoritative teaching of the Church in which he ministers. Let us then open the book and read some extracts from it.

"Every priest can say in some measure with Jesus Christ who sent him: 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth.'" (Page 70.)

"His power reaches to the highest heavens, it penetrates even to the very gates of hell. The treasures of kings are silver and gold—perishable metals—but the treasures of the priest are the imperishable merits and graces of our Lord Jesus Christ. Kings have power only over the bodies of men, but the priest has power over their souls. Kings have power only over their subjects, but KINGS AND EMPERORS ARE THEMSELVES SUBJECT TO THE PRIEST. (The italics and capitals, except where otherwise specified, are mine.) Kings have power to open and close the prison gates of earth, but the priest has power to open and to close the gates of heaven and of hell." (Pp. 71-72.)

"The priest has the power to free the sinner from the bonds of sin and hell and to open to him the gates of heaven. He has the power to transform him from a slave of the devil to a child of God." (Page 77.)

"Seek where you will, through heaven and earth, and you will find but one created being who can forgive the sinner, who can free him from the chains of sin and hell, and that extraordinary being is the PRIEST, the Catholic priest. 'Who can forgive sins except God?' was the question which the Pharisees sneeringly asked. 'Who can forgive sins?' is the question which the Pharisees of the present day also ask; and I answer there is a man in earth that can forgive sins and THAT man is the Catholic priest. Yes, beloved brethren, the priest not only declares that the sinner is forgiven, but he really forgives him. (The italics here are his.) The priest raises his hand, he pronounces the word of absolution, and in an instant, quick as a flash of light, the chains of hell are burst asunder, and the sinner becomes a child of God. So great is the power of the priest that the JUDGMENTS OF HEAVEN ITSELF ARE SUBJECT TO HIS DECISION." (Pp. 78-79.)

It might be supposed that the author really did not mean in this last phrase what it plainly signifies, viz., that God's forgiveness is conditioned upon that of the priest. But his subsequent writings on the same point leaves no doubt, as witness the following:

"It is to the priest that God speaks when He says, 'Judge between me and my people.' *Judica inter me et vineam meam.* (Is. v.) 'This man,' says God,

speaking to the priest, 'this man is a sinner, he has offended me grievously. I could judge him myself, but I leave this judgment to your decision. I SHALL FORGIVE HIM AS SOON AS YOU GRANT HIM FORGIVENESS. He is my enemy but I shall admit him to my friendship as soon as you declare him worthy. I shall open the gates of heaven to him as soon as you free him from the chains of sin and hell.'" (Page 82.)

You may say that the possession of such power as this really makes a God of the priest. Well, our author does not hesitate to claim for himself equality of power with God. He says:

"God has placed on his (the priest's) finger the ring of authority and power. He has given the priest the ALMIGHTY POWER of forgiving sins." (Page 84.)

"To have the power to create new worlds is to partake of God's own omnipotence, but to have the power of forgiving, of destroying sin, is to HOLD THE VERY PLACE OF GOD HIMSELF, it is to perform one of the greatest works of God's almighty power." (Page 85.)

This self-exaltation, (for you must remember that it is a priest claiming this power for himself, and not some blind devotee claiming it for him) by which a mere creature arrogates to himself the power and authority of Almighty God is surely sacrilegious enough—but what shall I say of the language that follows in which this priest declares that in the celebration of the Mass, God himself becomes subject to the authority and control of the priest?

"The eternal, Omnipotent God, in whose presence the pillars of heaven tremble, that God before whom the earth and all that dwells thereon, before whom the boundless universe with all its countless suns and planets, before whom all created things are but as a drop of water, as a grain of dust, as if they were not; that God of infinite majesty and glory IS SUBJECT TO THE PRIEST. He instantly descends from heaven in OBEEDIENCE TO THE VOICE OF HIS PRIEST." (Page 95.)

"There is a man who opens at will the gates of heaven, who speaks to the eternal Son of God, and at his voice the God of heaven descends on earth and SUBJECTS HIMSELF TO HIS CONTROL." (Page 96.)

"When we see a weak sinful man possessing power over God himself, possessing power to bear Him, to place Him, to give Him to whom he wills, we cannot help exclaiming in amazement, 'O wondrous miracle! O unheard of power!'" (Page 97.)

And when we hear "a weak sinful man" arrogating to himself this power, for which there is not the shade of a shadow of authority in the word of God, we are painfully reminded of that "man of sin" whose coming Paul predicts in his 2d epistle to the Thessalonians, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

After following this writer thus far, our readers probably think that nothing he can say will be extravagant enough to surprise them, but there are two or three passages that will even yet startle them. First to be told that Christ did not die to redeem the world but to establish the priesthood will amaze them. And yet here it is:

"So sublime is the dignity of the priesthood that in order to establish it our Lord Jesus Christ had to die. TO REDEEM THE WORLD, IT WAS NOT NECESSARY THAT OUR LORD SHOULD DIE. A single drop of His sacred blood, a SINGLE TEAR, a SINGLE PRAYER of His would have sufficed; but in order to ESTABLISH THE PRIESTHOOD our Lord had to die." (Page 98.)

And so we are told by this "clear, sound orthodox" divine that Christ did not die to redeem the world—that he could have redeemed the world with a single tear or a single prayer, but he died to establish the priesthood. I thought the doctrine that Christ died to redeem the world was the foundation of all Christianity. It was the doctrine of Paul, of St. Augustine, of all the fathers. But the Catholic Church is progressive. It has discovered that Christ did not die to redeem the world. Well, what next?

"To forgive sins, to cause the Holy Ghost to dwell in the soul, to change bread and wine into the body of God are miracles that can be performed only by God himself. Now the priests perform these miracles every day and consequently they may truly be said to be gods. And St. Gregory Nazianzen is right in saying 'the priest is a God on earth and his mission is to make gods of his fellow-men.'" (Page 109.)

A single quotation more as to the honor and obedience which this "sound" and "orthodox" priest claims for himself, and I have done.

"Since God, then, has placed the priest upon the throne of His own adorable sanctity," (where does "Father Muller" get this information?) "since He gives to the priest the title 'Saviour of the world,'" (where is this title given?) "since he calls the priest 'His co-operator in the divine work of redemption,'" (where does he so call him?) "what wonder if he

commands all to obey and honor the priest as they honor and obey Himself. Since the priest has been so honored by God himself, what wonder is it that he should be honored by angels and men. St. Francis de Sales saw the guardian angel of a young priest whom he ordained, go in advance to the right of the priest before his ordination; but after his ordination, the angel went to the left of the priest and followed him. Wenceslans, king of Poland, would not sit down in the presence of a priest. St. Catharine of Sienna and Mary of Oignies, KISSED THE GROUND ON WHICH A PRIEST HAD WALKED. St. Francis of Assisi said that if he saw an angel from heaven, and a priest, he would bow first to the priest, and then to the angel, for the angel is the friend of God, but the priest holds His place." (Pp. 110-112.)

Do our American people understand the meaning of all this? Only let this Roman Catholic theory of the priesthood prevail, let this hierarchy that claims for itself equality with God, firmly root itself amongst us, and the day will come when the sisters and daughters of American freemen ought to believe that "even God himself is subject to the priest," will be found "kissing the ground on which a priest has walked"; and the Church, so far from rebuking them for this degrading man-worship, will commend them, and hold them up as examples to others as it has done "St. Catharine of Sienna, and Mary of Oignies." Whenever a woman reaches the point of kissing the ground on which a man has walked, she is already helplessly in his power. She has sacrificed to him her self-respect which is the guardian of her honor. He may do with her what he will. Painfully enough does the past history of Romanism show how this power has been employed.

T. D. WITHERSPOON.

### NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

#### Southern Presbyterian.

**Sinking Creek Church, Craig County, Va.**—This church was organized about two years ago. Its membership, as yet, is only eight; and its growth in members will probably for years be slow; for Presbyterianism is comparatively new in that section. Rev. W. R. Coppedge is its present pastor. In connection with Sinking Creek, he serves Catawba church in Roanoke county, as pastor, and New Castle and Bethel churches in Craig county, as stated supply. He is much beloved, not only by his own members but also by those of other denominations.

At a communion meeting at this church, in which I assisted the pastor the first Sabbath of this month, one young man was received into the church on profession of faith. On the same day a congregational meeting was held to consider the resignation of brother Coppedge as their pastor, who is contemplating a removal to West Virginia, to take charge of the Salem church in Greenbrier county, and Hillside and Carmel churches in Monroe county. The church resolved not to concur with brother Coppedge in asking the Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation, but requested that Presbytery would give them more assistance than heretofore, while they would endeavor to increase their contributions towards his support. They also resolved to make the effort to secure the pastoral service of brother Coppedge for one half instead of one-fourth of his time. These resolutions were prepared by brother Nielson, one of the most energetic and determined workers in the State of Virginia or any other State. One such elder in any church is a tower of strength to the pastor. The above resolutions have the true ring about them.

There is another fact no less remarkable than the above second resolution, and equally characteristic of the man, I mention it for the encouragement of others that they may go and do likewise, for there are many similar fields in our churches. All the churches of brother Coppedge's charge are weak, numerically and financially. Their minister was without a home and his salary too small to rent one. A short time after Sinking Creek church was organized, brother Nielson determined that a manse should be built. In a short time the manse was built upon his own land and deeded to the Presbyterian Church, he superintending and carrying on the work as if for himself. The whole cost about \$1,000, all of which has been paid by Mr. Nielson; he, after subscribing liberally himself, depending for the remainder upon the voluntary contributions of God's people. At his own solicitations he has received contributions from New York, Boston, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, Ireland, etc. From these various sources, and in response to a circular letter sent out to the churches, about \$400 have been realized, leaving \$500 or \$600 yet unpaid. Brother Nielson is a foreigner, a native of Scotland. Coming among us with such a spirit of determination and work for the Master I want to see him encouraged. Will not every one who reads this send what he can to aid in this cause. Before going and seeing for myself, I thought in the midst of so many pressing calls at home, I could not afford to give anything, but now I think it a privilege to give, and feel sure many others will look at it in the same light when the facts are known. Send your contributions to Rev. W. R. Coppedge (or Mr. Y. B. Nielson) Sinking Creek, Craig county, Va. In conclusion I would not have you forget

the fact that we are making a strenuous effort to build a manse in Giles county, but as yet no Nielson has come to the front. Still we are not without encouragement. A convenient lot of about six acres has been secured near Poplar Hill containing all the buildings necessary except a dwelling house. Most of the lumber is already subscribed. It only remains now to raise money sufficient to pay for the lot and build the house. We have done what we could at home and still we have not a sufficiency. All those who feel "it is more blessed to give than receive," will rejoice to learn that we are now ready to receive subscriptions and donations. Anything from whatever source for this cause will be thankfully received and faithfully applied if sent to W. B. Arrowood, Poplar Hill, Giles county, Va. Yours truly, W. B. A.

**Sabbath School Institute.**—On Saturday, July 29th, the first session of the first round of Sabbath School Institutes for Abingdon Presbytery, was held in the Second Presbyterian church of Bristol, Tenn., of which Rev. J. W. Rogan is pastor. Rev. W. E. Hill, Superintendent of Sabbath Schools for the Presbytery, conducted the exercises, which were interesting and profitable. Among the ministers present were Rev. Dr. Tadlock, Rev. A. D. Tadlock, Rev. J. A. Wallace, and Rev. J. W. Rogan. Rev. Mr. Clark of the Baptist Church, a man of Sabbath School zeal, gave efficient help. There were about 250 or 300 persons present on the interesting sessions which closed Monday night, August 2nd.

**Rev. George Summey**, late of Covington, Ky., is at Orange Valley, N. J., temporarily, on account of his health. He expects to seek a field of labor in the Southern Church sometime during the fall.

**Rev. C. R. Vaughan, D. D.**, who has been preaching during the summer to the congregation of New Providence church, Rockbridge county, Va., has received a unanimous call to become pastor of the church. Dr. Vaughan is chaplain of the University of Virginia, to which office he was elected for two years. He has served only one year.

**Rev. L. H. Blanton, D. D.**—The Kentucky Register says that "Rev. L. H. Blanton's twelve years' ministry at Paris was productive of great good. In 1868 there were on the rolls of the church 121 members, but only about 100 in actual connection. There were added during the twelve years 344 members. During the same period 189 have died, and some dismissed to other churches; more than thirty to the Hopewell and Clintonville churches in Bourbon county. Total membership of the church at this time 255. The church contributed during the twelve years for congregational purposes, \$67,990; for benevolent purposes outside the bounds of the congregation, \$7,620. Total amount of contributions for all objects, \$75,610." Dr. Blanton's remarkable energy and skill, which resulted in so much good in Paris, is regarded by his friends of the University as a guarantee of its success under his able management as Chancellor. The people of Madison county are rallying enthusiastically to its support, and it will, we are confident, receive that patronage, also, from all parts of our Church, which is necessary to make it a college of the first rank.—Christian Observer.

**Revival in Rutherford County, Tenn.**—Ett's Chapel.—Rev. J. S. Arbutnot, D. D., writes to us under date of August 2d: "We closed a meeting of ten days continuance at Ett's Chapel, on the Nashville Pike, about eight miles from Murfreesboro. We have been preaching at the chapel for the last twelve months, in the evening, at 3:30 P. M., and then returning to my pulpit in Murfreesboro. The Lord was with us from the beginning of the meeting, and some fifteen or sixteen professed faith in Christ; eight of whom joined the Presbyterian Church."—Christian Observer.

**The Clinton Church.—"Faith Cottage."** On the 28th of July, the Presbyterian church of Clinton S. C., celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The membership was out in force, and was interested in the historical narrative prepared and read by the pastor. On the Thursday previous, religious exercises had been begun, during which Rev. J. Y. Fair, of Laurens, assisted for two days. During the month twenty-two persons were received on profession of faith, increasing the total membership to one hundred and fifty. This greatly encouraged the brethren. We hardly expected it, as last year only one church in the Synod had larger accessions on profession of faith than this. Sixteen years ago, when the present pastor took charge of this church, it had only forty-three members, and but eleven of them resident in the village, and was without Sabbath School, prayer meeting, or collections for benevolent objects. The church is profoundly grateful that now its school stands second in the Synod in point of numbers; its prayer meeting has just held its 850th session, and its collections for pastoral support and benevolent purposes have increased from a per annum of \$205, to \$1,250. The little flock is greatly encouraged, and acknowledges the Lord's goodness to them.—Southern Presbyterian.

**Dr. Girardeau and Columbia Seminary.**—Letter from Dr. Girardeau.  
Mt. Pleasant, Charleston Co., S. C.,  
August 2d, 1880.

The Rev. B. M. Palmer, D. D., and the Rev. W. E. Boggs, D. D., Committee of the Association of Alumni of the Theological Seminary at Columbia:  
Dear Brethren,—I hereby inform you of my willingness, in conformity to the expressed desire of my brethren to return to the Seminary. I have just received from the Hon. James Hemphill, Chairman, and the Rev. J. B. Mack,

D. D., Clerk of the Board of Directors, a joint letter in which they assume the responsibility of representing the judgment of that body as favorable to my return. I have, in reply, signified to them the fact herein communicated to you, leaving it to the Board, whose prerogative it is, to determine whether the restoration shall be effected, and, in case they so decide, the mode in which it shall be accomplished.

Let me ask of you the favor to express to the Alumni Association, in whatever manner you may think proper, my grateful acknowledgments for the consideration which they showed me in this matter, and my profound appreciation of the confidence reposed in me; no manifestation of which could have been so touching and satisfying as one emanating from men to each of whom the interests of the Seminary are dear, in consequence of past personal connexion with it, and some of whom I had the privilege to instruct.

Accept for yourselves my cordial thanks for the courteous and earnest manner in which you urged upon me compliance with the wishes of the Association in behalf of which you spoke. I am, dear brethren, with great esteem,  
Very truly yours,  
JOHN L. GIRARDEAU.

**Northern Presbyterian.**  
Among the Presbyterian churches of the State of New York, those of the city of Albany rank next to the city of New York in the amount of their gifts for benevolent purposes.

A despatch from Chicago states that on Sunday last Rev. Arthur Mitchell, D. D., for twelve years pastor of the Second Presbyterian church, in that city, announced his resignation. He has accepted a call from the First Presbyterian church of Cleveland.

The committee appointed by the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, to revise the Form of Government and the Book of Discipline, met at Long Branch, N. J., last week, to commence their work.

The Third church, Paterson, N. J., received twelve persons into membership on Sunday, July 25. The church is prospering under the pastorate of Rev. J. B. Galloway.

The First Presbyterian church, Ann Arbor, Mich., has called Rev. Dr. Steel, of the First Reformed Dutch church, New Brunswick, N. J., to become its pastor.

Rev. T. D. Ewing, pastor of the church of Kittanning, Pa., has accepted the call of the church of Fairfield, Iowa, and the presidency of Parsons College.

Rev. Geo. P. Wilson, of the last class in Princeton Theological Seminary, has received a call from the Second Presbyterian church, Lexington, Ky.

**Other Churches.**  
The Christian Intelligencer gives the following summary of the growth of the Reformed (Dutch) Church and the German Reformed.

Growth of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in thirty-two years:

	1848.	1880.	Increase.
Ministers,	293	544	251
Churches,	232	510	278
Communicants,	34,100	80,208	46,108

Growth of the German Reformed Church in thirty-two years:

	1848.	1880.	Increase.
Ministers,	248	734	486
Congregations,	706	1,383	673
Members,	49,035	154,742	105,707

The more rapid growth of the latter arises undoubtedly from the larger emigration from Germany. At the same time, it indicates a direction in which our Church may yet raise itself into one of the largest denominations of the land. It should be borne in mind, also, that the German churches are most numerous in many parts of the country where our own are the weakest, or even entirely wanting, as in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the South. The field for Home Mission work presented by the German population of the United States is of the most extensive and inspiring character, and the opening into it which a union with the German Reformed churches would afford, might well be expected to give a new quickening to the zeal and resources of our people; while the entrance into that field of so powerful and evangelical a force would put new life into the brethren already there, and give quite a new aspect to the field itself.

It is grateful to note that while the debts on the Baptist churches of Philadelphia were about \$161,000 a year ago, the whole of this large indebtedness has been swept away within a few months.

The Reformed Episcopalians are succeeding among the colored population of South Carolina. They have now seventeen congregations, with a total membership of 1,200. Six missionaries are also laboring in the field.

A Successful Church.—Rev. C. M. Sanders preached his fifth annual sermon as pastor of the Congregational church at Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, July 25. Five years ago the church building had been closed, for the most part, for two years. The house was in a state of neglect. There was no Sunday School or prayer meeting held in connection with it. In August, 1875, there were to be found but seventeen members of the church organization in town. Since then the house of worship has been enlarged and improved, a parsonage has been built, \$10,000 in money raised, and 118 persons have joined the church. The present membership is 120.—Congregationalist.

—Rev. E. H. Bickersteth, Vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, England, has given the Church Missionary Society £1,000 to begin a Mission among the Bheels, a hill tribe in Central India.