

CANONIZING SAINTS.

With us, as with the apostles in their writings, the word *saint* is used to designate the *truly consecrated* among professing Christians. See the use of the word in Rom. 12:13; 15:25,26,31; 16:15; 1 Cor. 14:33; 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 13:33; Eph. 3:8; 4:12; 6:18; Phil. 1:1; Jude 3. But as the early church began to grow popular with the world, this Scriptural use of the word ceased very generally. Really the great mass of those who then came to profess Christianity because of its popularity were heathens and not truly converted to Christianity; and generally they were far from claiming full consecration of thought and word and deed to Christ's teachings and example.

It was at that time that the papal system was gradually shaped. And taking advantage of the idolatrous tendencies of the heathens then claiming to be Christians for the sake of worldly advantage and favor with the emperor, the idea was conceived and acted upon, of designating certain notably good or zealous persons of the past as saints, worthy of adoration and privileged to be meritorious intercessors between God and men, who might therefore be prayed to by the people. Thus Papacy presented to the heathen mind something very closely resembling the heathen worship to which they had long been accustomed. Their many gods found correspondence in the so-called trinity, the worship and images' shrines, etc., of Diana and other heathen goddesses were supplanted by those of the virgin Mary, styled The Holy Mother of God and Queen of Heaven; and the dead heroes, the demi-gods [lesser gods] of Greece and Rome were supplanted by the *dead saints* whom the Papacy specially authorized the people to make pictures and images of and to pray to. The work of formally declaring any man thus a "saint" is called canonizing, and is usually deferred until several hundred years after his death, when his sins and sometimes crimes were generally forgotten, and his virtues and graces then multiplied

and garnished with accounts of wonderful fastings, miracles, etc., performed by him. Such, by Papacy's decree, suddenly became saints to be adored and revered.

One might suppose that such nonsense would be discontinued now; and that persistence in it would only expose Papacy to the contempt of the civilized people. For quite a long period indeed they were discontinued, and no new saints were canonized, but the present pope is a keen reader of human nature and sees that people of to-day "like to be humbugged," as Barnum expresses it, and he is reviving many of the old customs, and among others the canonizing of more saints.

It is not necessary to directly criticize this procedure; our readers, acquainted with God's Word, well know that all the true saints will be heralded and canonized in a much grander manner when the due time shall come; and by the true Christ, and not by a representative of Antichrist.

We present below a description of a recent canonization in the city of Rome, as given by a Protestant missionary there

– Mr. M. C. Van Meter. He says: –

"The Hall of Canonization is over the vestibule as you enter St. Peter's. It is about 300 feet long, 90 feet in width and 75 feet to the ceiling, in the center of which is a golden halo with a dove descending through atmosphere such as veils Mount Blanc on a clear summer day. It was spanned by luminous arches of marvelous beauty and the place was flooded by the soft light of thousands of wax candles. At the far end where the pope was enthroned, stood his altar. Behind and above this was an indescribable 'glory,' the bright soft golden rays of which melted away in a pure atmosphere. In the midst of this halo was a silver ground, with nothing upon it, so far as we could see, but at the appointed moment figures began to develop until we had the Trinity in this 'glory,' surrounded by cherubim. The Father

appeared like a monk; the Son as a little baby in his mother's arms, smiling as if pleased to see so many pretty things; the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, but the virgin Mary was the great object of adoration. As represented there and accepted by the Pope, the Trinity was merely to 'fill up the picture.'

"Separated from the people were the reserved seats on either side, raised one above the other, covered with costly damask with golden cord and fringe. These were occupied by the various orders, viz.: Cardinals, archbishops, bishops, diplomatic corps, Roman nobility, the Pope's relatives, the representatives of various ecclesiastical orders, the Cardinal Secretary of State, with his officers, the major-domo of the apostolic palace, the pope's singers, etc. The Swiss and Palatine Guards, in their fantastic costumes, were the guards of honor. The galleries were occupied by distinguished visitors from all parts of the world.

"As early as 5 o'clock the people began to assemble in the square in front of St. Peter's, though the ceremonies were not to begin until 9 o'clock, and they knew they could see nothing until that hour. At least 50,000 people stood from three to six hours and looked at the building in which such mysterious work was being performed. This was the order within. First, congregation of the orders, procurators of the college of cardinals, lawyers of the consistory, private chaplains, cross-bearers, priests in chasubles (long gowns), two hundred bishops with white mitres and capes of silver cloth, embroidered with gold, archbishops, among whom were many Armenians, Syrians and Greeks, dressed with a richness and magnificence beyond description. After these came forty cardinals in their official robes, preceded by vergers, followed by their 'tail bearers' and 'gentlemen in waiting.'

"When all were seated, there was for a few moments the silence of the tomb. Then the Pope in his sacerdotal chair, under a golden canopy and *flabelli*, or immense fans, of ostrich and peacock

feathers, surrounded by the pontifical court, was carried into the hall and seated upon the 'throne of God!' Extending his foot from under his royal robe, cardinals, archbishops and the others, in their order, came and kissed his hand, knee or toe, according to their rank. When this disgusting performance was ended the lawyers read the petitions for the canonization of these people, to which the Pope replied. Then he sang, 'Veni Creator,' placed the miter upon his head, and pronounced them saints! At this moment the great bell of St. Peter's was rung and in a moment the thousands of bells in the city were rung wildly. The telegraph, by arrangement, told the news in other cities, and thus, all over the land, bells were rung to tell the people that now there were others in heaven to plead for them.

"The Pope then signed the papers testifying that they were real saints and could be prayed to. Then he said mass and received the offerings for the occasion, consisting of a large historical candle, on which were painted historical scenes in the life of the saint, a silver cage with turtle doves, wild pigeons, canaries, and a box of bread and wine. He then bestowed the papal benediction and was borne out, and all retired in the order of their entrance. Thus ended this blasphemous demonstration of paganized Christianity."

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This is the idolatrous and blasphemous system to which so many leading Protestants (so-called) are again turning with flatteries and compromises to gain her favor. This is the church which a Methodist bishop proclaims as a "great Christian camp;" which a Presbyterian minister affectionately owns as the Mother church to which he feels indebted for every doctrine he holds dear (Yea, verily!); which others declare must be conciliated by repeated concessions, until she is willing to own them as co-workers together with her.

We have no idea that the mass of *nominal* Christians will be able to discern the hypocrisy, idolatry and blasphemy of this imposing and deceitful counterfeit of the true church glorified; but

the Lord's true sheep, who know the voice of the true Shepherd and will not follow another, need only to be informed of facts, to see plainly the steps they should take – that if they are in any district of Great Babylon, either Papal or Protestant, they should obey the call, "Come out of her, *my people.*"
