

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCCXXXVIII.

We have seen how Catholic theology limits the authority of the Church and of the Pope by the law of God, both natural and positive, so far as this latter is given with the note of unchangeability.

Do Protestant governments acknowledge such a limitation? One limitation they do acknowledge. It has been declared, both by English courts and by the Supreme Court of the United States, that a statute "contradicting natural morality" would be null and void.

I am afraid, however, that Protestant governments stop here. Many statutes are possible, not exactly outrageous like the one supposed, not intruding upon the rights of property, or marriage, or highway robbery, or murder, which, although not descending to the depth demanded by a George Meredith, or by that brazen company of Kansas women, yet might command what was distinctly wrong.

Personal servitude, I take it, has not always and everywhere been wrong. Indeed, even at the South, I doubt not that very many masters and mistresses limited their rights to what they judged, rightly or wrongly, consistent with the best good of their servants.

Yet the legal theory of slavery at the South was explicitly that the slave was a simple instrument of his master, a relation to which he can never be lawful to reduce a human being.

The late Dr. George B. Cheever, who was equally bitter against what he called Rationalism and what he called Romanism, declared that he took some little comfort when he heard the edicts of the Sacred Synod pronounced by a Catholic Chief Justice. True; nor do I know that Catholic slaveholders at the South differed particularly from others. We know that men are continually drawn, by covetousness and ill-example, into courses which they must own to be contrary to their religion.

We can not deny that Latin legislation concerning slavery has been very much milder than Protestant. We may ascribe this in part to the greater willingness of the Southern Europeans to intermingle with negroes and Indians but we must allow unless we are very ignorant or very disingenuous, that it was largely owing to the steady pressure exercised by the Spanish and the Portuguese orders and Bishops, unfailingly supported by the Holy See, for securing to the inferior races their essential human rights, and for facilitating their manumission.

To examine the conscience well before going into the confessional, and thus avoid unnecessary delay. For a penitent to take his proper turn in going into the confessional, and not to try to get in ahead of some one else.

To ask courteously the one ahead for his turn if it is absolutely impossible to wait. For a woman of leisure and piety to offer her turn to a man in a hurry, or to a working-woman whose time is precious.

To reserve all matters extraneous from present sins about which one may want the advice of the priest for some other time than Saturday evening, when the confessional is surrounded by weary-waiting sinners.

To speak in a whisper, but distinctly, in a tone audible to the confessor but not to those kneeling around the confessional.

To recite the Confiteor before going into the confessional, if time is a consideration.

To begin with the formula, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. Since my last confession, which was one month ago" (or one week, two weeks, as the case may be), "I have" — then follow the sins.

until we were able to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. Many maintain that to be right in itself, but to them, of course, our reasoning does not apply. The others, allowing that this law was contrary to God's law, nevertheless maintained that we were bound by it even in contravention of God's law. Had they been entertained with the frequent and abominably calumnious fiction, that the Pope claims the power to turn wrong into right, they would have been terribly scandalized; yet they did not hesitate to ascribe this blasphemous authority to the Congress of the United States.

When Mr. Seward, in answer to those who urged that since the law commanded us to hand over fugitive slaves to their owners, we were bound to do so, declared that there is "a higher law," he was overwhelmed with denunciations. Daniel Webster, consumed with thirst for the Presidency, mocked at this simple statement of natural conscience and apostolic Christianity as at an anarchical fiction. From leading pulpits throughout the North—I am thankful to say, by no means from the greater part—we heard it proclaimed, under various flimsy disguises: "We ought to obey men rather than God."

I believe Protestantism to have great and beneficent characteristics, and do not look for a reunion of Christians that shall let the go. A throned Catholic divine, Meher shows, the Reformation was by no means a mere movement of revolt, but had many excellent aims, which, however, he believes to have been pushed into calamitous and disintegrating excess. Even our Puritan countryman, Professor Foster, treating of its distinctive principle, Justification by Faith, remarks that the Catholics were nearer the truth here than the Protestants. One thing we must allow, for it is allowed even by Professor Nippold, savage assailant as he is of the older religion. The Reformers, shut up between the Hierarchy and the Crown, almost everywhere sold themselves to the Crown. A compact with the devil could hardly have been more complete and more calamitous, Bucer, as cited by Janssen, expressly declares that we are bound to obey the prince even if he commands us to disobey God.

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me, Father, for I have sinned. Since my last confession, which was one month ago" (or one week, two weeks, as the case may be), "I have" — then follow the sins.

To tell the number of times a sin has been committed, also any circumstance that would change the nature of the sin, so as to save all need of questions on the part of the priest.

To go up to the front of the church to say one's penance and other prayers so as to be out of the way of the waiting penitents. — The Correct Thing for Catholics.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

HOW TO MAKE CONVERTS.

The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.

By the kingdom of heaven is meant in this Gospel, as in many other places, the holy Catholic Church; the spiritual kingdom of God, which is of heaven, though on earth; and leaven is another word for what we call yeast, and is used in the making of bread.

Our Divine Lord, then, tells us that His Church, to which we belong, is like yeast; and His meaning, if we consider a little, is plain enough. It is, that as a little yeast is put into a mass of flour or dough, to raise it, as we say, so He has put His Church, which was in the beginning a very small thing, into the world, to raise the world to life and the knowledge and love of Him.

And certainly His comparison of the Church to yeast was fully justified. In the beginning the world was every where attracted and moved in spite of itself by the lives of the first Christians. The heathen could not help admiring their mutual charity, their patient and forgiving dispositions, their temperance and self-sacrifice; and they could not refrain from asking themselves and each other: "Who are these that they call Christians? What do they believe, and what do they teach? What is it that makes them so loving and so amiable, so calm and peaceful, so happy in all their troubles, so ready to assist and serve not only each other, but all the world beside?"

But no one could answer these questions but the Christians themselves; so the heathen had to go and get instructed in this faith which had been made so charming to them. Thus they were converted, and in their turn became apostles in the same way to others.

So the leaven spread through the mass; the contagion, so to speak, of faith, piety and virtue was diffused over the world; people caught it from their neighbors. The Apostles had no need to make many converts in any one place which they visited. If they got a few, these few would take care of the rest. The little congregations which they founded grew and multiplied wonderfully, in spite of distress and persecution, by the force of the holy lives and good example of their members.

But was this way of growing only meant for God's Church in the beginning? No, by no means. Our Lord says that the leaven of His kingdom was to go on working "till the whole was leavened." Does it, then, still move the world in this way? If so, how rapidly ought the Church now to increase, when there are a thousand faithful for one in those early days!

Yes, my brethren, it ought. For in spite of the boasts which the world is making of its reformed religion, especially just now, and of its progress and civilization, it feels at heart very uneasy. It has fallen away from God, and lost the truth, and in its inmost soul it knows this; and it is looking for some one to bring light to its darkness, and to put its confusion in order.

Why, then, does not the Church increase more rapidly? Why does not the world now come to us as it did in the former days of its anxiety and doubt? Prejudices it has no against us, I know; but it had its prejudices then, too. There are many slanders believed against us, but that has been so from the very beginning; and our Lord warned us of this, and it is a mark of His true Church to be thus belied. So this is not the real trouble; no, the trouble is that most Christians do not by the good order of their lives induce the world to enter into their faith, and thus overcome its prejudices. We may argue till we are weary and are ready to drop, but we shall never be as the first disciples were—the leaven of God's kingdom—till we show by our lives that there is something more in us than the natural feeling, good or bad, which make up the lives of others. Christians who forgive and excuse their enemies, who have charity for all, who are chaste and pure in word and deed, who are humble and self-denying, those are the ones—and, thank God, such there are—who make converts; and if we want the leaven of the kingdom to spread and raise the world to Christ we must be like them.

Personal devotion to Jesus Christ, familiarity with Him, is an obligation for us. It must be the fruit of study and prayer. We say of those whom we love, and with whom we are familiarly acquainted, "He would say this, he would act in this way, this reminds me of him, this is like him." So must we come to know Christ, our Lord, that we must conform ourselves to Him, and bring out His characteristics, some in one way, some in another.

LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS

A. McTAGGART, M. D., C. M., 75 Yonge Street, Toronto.

References as to Dr. McTaggart's profession of standing and personal integrity permitted by Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice, Hon. G. W. Ross, Premier of Ontario, Rev. John Potts, D. D., Victoria College, Rev. William Cayton, D. D., Knox College, Rev. Father Teafy, President of St. Michael's College, Toronto.

Right Rev. A. Sweetman, Bishop of Toronto, Hon. Thomas Coffey, Senator, CATHOLIC RECORD, London.

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Don't Pour Oil on the Fire.



IT'S JUST AS FOOLISH