

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.
CCCLXII.

The Presbyterian Witness says: "In Christ alone is found the true refuge from atheism."

True. But the Witness goes on to make peculiar applications of this truth. These applications seem to mean that Catholics, at least large classes of their leaders, are not in Christ and so teach religion as to drive their pupils into atheism.

It goes on to say: "Voltaire was a pupil of the Jesuits, who would not, if they could, leave the slightest exercise for reason in relation to religion."

Now, even if this were true of the Jesuits, it would not be the point. Voltaire's religion, like himself, was frivolous and shallow, but he was not an atheist. He was a very decided Deist, and wrote in defence of Deism. Moreover, there was sufficient energy in his Deism to drive his disciple, Robespierre, into sending a good many people to the guillotine because they were atheists. The middle part of the Reign of Terror has been defined as a successful struggle of Theism with Atheism.

In Voltaire's odious motto *Erasme: "Crush the Wretch,"* *l'infame* does not mean God, but Christ. There seems little reason to regard Voltaire's hatred of Christianity as due to any reaction against Jesuit influence. In his contempt of the Gospel, he naturally speaks more or less contemptuously of the Jesuits, less as Jesuits than as Christians. Besides, as the current was then running decidedly against the Society, he would hardly have been Voltaire if he had not what he dearily desired. Yet, as a former pupil of the Jesuits, he bears affectionate testimony to their friendliness, their purity, their piety, their simplicity, their disinterestedness, their skill and diligence in their calling. Had he been a man of deeper religious character, there really seems little reason why he might not have become one of them. In that case his incomparable wit and sagacity would have adorned his wit of profundity, and possibly have enabled him to extinguish the antagonistic influence of Pascal.

His hatred of Christianity seems to have been due to the severity of its morality, so opposed to his frivolous immorality; to the worldly sympathy induced in the higher French clergy (not in the lower) by the mingled oppression and patronage of the State; to the inheritance of intolerant cruelty under which all Christian Europe still labored, and which so revolted his generous temper; to the decline of theological ability induced by the wearisome struggle between Jesuits and Jansenists; and to the obstinacy with which good people, in every age of fresh knowledge, will still identify old superstitions with the Gospel, a temper against which the Jesuits appear to have contended manfully from the beginning. The Jesuits seem to have had little specific responsibility for Voltaire's hatred of Christ.

How strange, to say that the Jesuits would not allow reason any scope in religion if they could help it! This of the Order which its Founder directed to build on St. Thomas, that reasoner of the reasons! Where did the Jesuit Bellarmine obtain his wonderful fairness of presentation in the Protestant controversy, if not from the Angelical Doctor, who marshals the arguments of either side of every conceivable proposition, from the being of God to the question whether the Minor Orders are a sacrament, with such impartiality, that it is only the conclusion by which we learn how he himself leans? The Doctor who draws into service the philosophy of the pagan Aristotle, of the Jewish Maimonides, of the Mohammedan Averroes and Avicenna!

Yet, although the Jesuits began with St. Thomas, we know how freely they have varied from him where they saw occasion. There may, perhaps, be divines who treat his definitions as if they were of faith, but the Jesuits have always known how to distinguish between even this great Schoolman and the Catholic Church. We know how their freedom in dealing with the forms of expression, and with many current opinions, for a good while rendered the Spanish Inquisition very suspicious of them. Indeed, more than one Jesuit fell a victim to its harshness, not to say that St. Ignatius himself was a prisoner by it, and St. Francis Borgia, the third General, found it expedient to leave Spain for the more friendly asylum of the Holy See.

We know how there long prevailed within the Order itself, between Molinism, represented by the General Aquaviva, and the stricter predestinationism of the eminent Mariana, a sharp controversy, spreading thence into the Church at large, the Apostolic See refusing to condemn either side. I wonder whether the Witness imagines that the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism had been carried on without the strenuous exercise of reason. Yet this intra-Jesuitic controversy bears a close analogy to it, although Molinism saves the electing purpose of God, which modern Arminianism seems to abandon. Indeed, it was a Catholic divine, and I believe a Jesuit, who first effectively defended the Calvinists against certain popular caricatures of their system.

There is hardly a more decided test of independent conviction than the measure of courage with which a new school of thinkers deals with popular acclamations to the truth. This is seen in the freedom with which the Bollandist Jesuits have dealt with the Lives of the Saints, throwing out legend after legend which had come to be popularly accepted almost as if it were a part of the faith. Herzog-Plitt remarks on Jesuit independence in such matters. Yet often, we know, it is safer to propound a heterodox tenet, somewhat disguised, to attack a popular tradition. When a Swiss first impugned the legend of William Tell, he was condemned to be burnt alive, and only escaped because he could not be found.

This spirit of courageous independence does not seem to have forsaken the Order. At a late Catholic Congress it was a Jesuit who called attention to the many superstitions and unwarranted legends which Catholic scholarship has yet to uproot, and who reminds us that while pious feeling, intertwined with a pious tradition, is to be reverently regarded, only Apostolic Revelation is of the faith. Indeed, some of his illustrations were of a boldness which surprised me. I submit to the Witness that if its editors will keep their eyes open, they will find that the Jesuits are by no means afraid to use the graining-knife of reason in matters of religion.

For some fifteen centuries the Church had included in her Canon Law an implication of the possible salvation of non-Catholic Christians, living in piety and good faith. Yet the statement is embryonic and in the constant varieties of the centuries had scarcely come into Catholic consciousness. Now, for two hundred and fifty years the Jesuits have applied themselves to develop this embryonic statement into full distinctness, using the weapons of reason, of philosophy, of tradition, of pious feeling. Their first great victory was achieved in 1713, when Rome condemned the Jansenist position: "Grace is not given out of the Church." In 1718 they were arraigned before the Inquisition of Naples, on the ground that that which they taught that "many heretics, and even many heathen would probably be saved." They did not answer and the Inquisition did not act.

Thenceforward they went on developing the implications of the Canon Law and of the Schoolmen, until, remarks Cardinal Newman, whose satisfaction is shared by Cardinal Manning and by Mr. Ward, there appeared, August 10, 1853, the first authoritative papal declaration, making no distinction of race or religion, that all persons whatsoever, being withheld from Christian and Catholic Communion only by the invincible influences of education, but honestly doing the will of God as far as known to them, "are able by the operation of divine light and grace, to lay hold on eternal life." Nor, except in official form, is this anything new for says the Pope to the Bishops of Italy, "it is already known to us and to you."

Then, at a time when the American Board, and other Protestant Boards, were speaking of the heathen as "going down in one unbroken array to eternal death," the substance of the Pope's encyclical, supported by Jesuit teaching, was already a commonplace in instructed Catholic circles. The infinite importance of knowing the gospel of Christ, in its authentic form, was not disparaged, but the extravagance of our common Protestant talk about the heathen had long since been effectively discredited in Catholic circles, not least under Jesuit influence. Really the Jesuits do appear to have made considerable use of their reason.

There are some points yet to be noted.

SALVATION THROUGH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

Salvation is through the Precious Blood. We will take that for our study of Jesus this time. When love is humble, it prays with David to be washed more and more from its iniquity. But there is no washing away of iniquity, except in the Precious Blood of our most dear Redeemer. When love is bold, it prays to be set on fire with the flames which Jesus came to kindle. But it is only the Precious Blood which makes our heart beat hotly with the love of Him. So let us take the Precious Blood for our study now; and let us study it in a simple, loving way, not so much to become deep theologians, though deep theology is near of kin to heroic sanctity, but that our hearts may be more effectively set on fire with the love of Jesus Christ. There is so much to be said that we cannot say it all, because we do not know it all. We must make a choice, and we will choose these six things, the Mystery of the Precious Blood, the Necessity of it, its Empire, its History, its Prodigality, and, last of all, the Devotion to it in the Church.

We must take a saint to guide us on our way. Let it be that grand lover of Jesus, the Apostle St. Paul. His conversion was one of the chief glories of the Precious Blood. Redeeming grace was ever magnifying and praising the Blood of Jesus. His heart was filled with it, and was enlarged by grace that it might hold yet more. After the Heart of Jesus, never was there a human heart like that of Paul, in which all other human hearts might beat as if it were their own, unless it be that other universal heart, the heart of King David, which has poured itself out for all mankind, in those varying strains of every changeful feeling, by means of its sweet psalms. St. Paul's heart feels for every one, makes every one's case its own, sorrows and rejoices with those who sorrow or rejoice, and becomes all things to all men that it may save them all. Among the wonders of creation there are few to compare with that glorious apostolic heart. The vastness of its sympathies, the breadth of its charity, the unwearied helpfulness of its zeal, the delicacy of its consideration, the irresistible attraction of its imperious love—all this was the work of the Precious Blood; and that heart is still alive even upon earth, still beating in his marvellous Epistles as part of the unquenchable life of the Church. It is impossible to help connecting these characteristics of St. Paul's heart with the manifest devotion to the Precious Blood. Let us take him then as our guide amidst the unsearchable riches of Christ and the superabounding graces of His redeeming Blood. As it was with the disciples as they walked to Emmaus with Jesus, so will it be with us as we go along with His servant Paul. Our hearts will burn within us by the way; and we ourselves shall grow hot from the heat of that magnificent heart of Him who guides us.—Fr. Faber in the "Mystery of the Precious Blood."

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

He hath done all things well. (St. Mark vii. 35). The spectators of the double miracle related in this day's Gospel were filled with admiration at our Lord's power and goodness; they could not help exclaiming, "He doth all things well." Would to God, brethren, that such a sentiment of our Lord's love and power filled our hearts! Confidence in God, however, is the very virtue many Christians lack most. True, we say and believe that God is infinitely good—that He is mercy itself. But such language is very indefinite and may express a very dim conception. It is something like saying that a stone is very hard or that water is very wet. We are apt to form pictures of God's attributes in our minds, just as a painter may make a portrait of some historical personage he never saw; many of our notions of God are fancy portraits, all imagination.

But just think of the actual grounds of our confidence in our Blessed Lord. Just realize that this wonderful Being is filled with the tenderest human love for the worst of us, and has all the divine power at His command—being both man and God—to make good His love by bringing about our spiritual and temporal welfare. The Incarnation and the divine Mercy made man for the love of us. Can we suppose that such a Being, having begun the good work of our salvation by giving us the true religion, will leave anything undone, that we will let Him do, to bring us to the kingdom of heaven? Do you think that such a loving Father would teach us, His children, A B C except with the set purpose of going clear through to X Y Z? Just think, that that positively never happened that that positively never happened that that positively never happened, making no distinction of race or religion, that all persons whatsoever, being withheld from Christian and Catholic Communion only by the invincible influences of education, but honestly doing the will of God as far as known to them, "are able by the operation of divine light and grace, to lay hold on eternal life." Nor, except in official form, is this anything new for says the Pope to the Bishops of Italy, "it is already known to us and to you."

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IMITATION OF CHRIST.

OF HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD WHEN WORDS ARISE AGAINST US.

It is hidden for the most part, and to few laid open in everything; yet it never errs nor can it err, though to the eyes of fools it seems not right.

To Me, therefore, must thou run in every judgment, and thou must not depend upon thine own decision.

For the just man will not be troubled whatever happens to him from God. (Prov. xii. 21.)

And if any thing be wrongfully pronounced against him, he will not much care.

Neither will he vainly rejoice, if by others he be reasonably excused.

For he considereth that I am He who searcheth the reins and hearts. (Apoc. ii. 23.)

Who judgeth not according to the face, nor according to human appearance.

For oftentimes that is found blame-worthy in mine eyes, and the judgment of men is esteemed commendable.

Disciple 5. O Lord God, the just Judge, strong and patient, Who knowest the frailty and perverseness of men, be Thou my strength and all my confidence, for mine own conscience suffices me not.

Any man may make a mistake, but none but a fool will continue in it.

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TALK IT OVER

Yes, talk over the question of the best food to give your baby with every one who can help you. Especially talk it over with your doctor. You may have been fortunate during the past summer, but you know of very many mothers who have had serious trouble with their children because the right food could not be found for them. You remember the experiments they made, the constant change from milk to one food or another, and the struggle and danger which it meant.

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MONTREAL

THE SIXTH PRECEPT.

In a previous review it was pointed out that the impediments placed in the way of matrimony by this law were twofold. Namely, those which render the marriage null and void, and those which make it sin of disobedience. All Catholics should thoroughly familiarize themselves with these impediments. Otherwise it cannot be said that they possess an intelligent understanding of their faith.

Such conclusion is certainly not to their credit. Neither is it to their advantage. For matrimony is a sacrament and it is the duty of all who know when and by whom the same may be received. Moreover, without such knowledge misstatement of the law cannot be corrected, nor are persons in position to protect themselves or to counsel others against its penalties. The importance of the duty, therefore, is quite apparent.

First, then, as to the impediments which render marriage null and void. We shall confine our review of those which are of most likely occurrence or least understood. As to those which remain we would advise the reader to consult some good catechism, where all will be found explained at length.

Under this head persons related by blood to the fourth degree are prohibited from marrying one another. So, too, if either party before marriage has made a solemn vow of perpetual chastity. Should such persons marry the marriage is null and void. The same is true should either the husband or wife again marry while both are living. Again, where one who is a Christian, and baptized, marries another who is an infidel, or who is not baptized, such marriage is null and void. Finally, in all places where the discipline of the Council of Trent prevails all marriages which are not contracted before two witnesses in the presence of the pastor are clandestine in character and consequently null.

As the impediments which do not annul the marriage but make it a sin of disobedience, these are four in number. First, where ecclesiastical authority has imposed delay for a specific time and marriage is contracted contrary to the prohibition; secondly, if solemnized within forbidden times; thirdly, not to marry the persons to whom a future promise has been made, if that person lives and the promise subsists; and, finally, to marry after making a private vow of perpetual chastity, or a vow to enter into religion or Holy Orders.

Concerning these impediments we shall say a few concluding words in our next issue.—Church Progress.

Irish Temperance Work

The twenty-fourth annual report of the Father Mathew Total Abstinence Association of Dublin, is a record of steady progress made in a great and holy cause, says a correspondent. The Capuchin Fathers have reason to feel proud of their work done for temperance not a one in Dublin but nearly every part of the country. Among the many interesting items referred to in the report is the establishment of the Father Mathew Union of Total Abstinence Priests. "As time rolls on," it says, "the fruits of the unique assembly are likely to be far-reaching, and every diocese in Ireland will reap the reward of its labors." Another important fact is that the register of total abstinence families established last February is being taken up throughout the country. Five hundred Dublin families alone have joined it and others are joining it every week.

Mother's Ear

A WORD IN MOTHER'S EAR: WHEN NURSING IS OVER, AND THE MONTHS THAT COME BEFORE THAT TIME.

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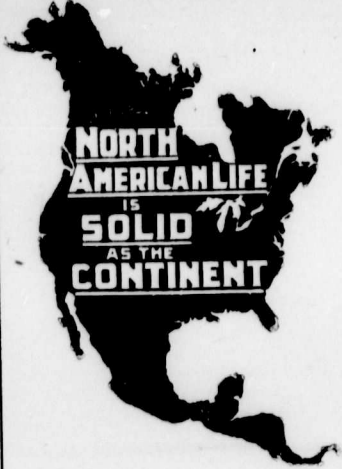
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We are not asked to do great things, to get to Heaven, but only to live every day our plain, momentous life for God's sake, to do our duty, to love our neighbor, to keep from sin and to receive the Sacraments and to practice virtue.—Catholic Columbian.

Don't go for a vacation to a place where there is no church. The obligation to hear Mass on Sunday is in force in the summer just as well as during the rest of the year. Besides, death may come unexpectedly and the last Sacraments are above price at the last 2ur.—Catholic Columbian.

BABY'S DANGER.

The summer months are a bad time for babies, and an anxious time for mothers. Fermentation and decomposition in the stomach and bowels are the cause of the many summer complaints of babies and young children. This is the reason why the hot weather months are more fatal to little ones than any other season. Baby's Own Tablets should always be found in every home, where there are young children and their prompt use during hot weather may save a precious little life. The tablets cure constipation, diarrhoea, and stomach troubles, and are guaranteed to contain no opiate or harmful drug. Mrs. Walter Rollins, Sissons Ridge, N. S., says: "Before using Baby's Own Tablets my little one cried almost continuously with stomach troubles. I can truthfully say I never had any medicine act so promptly and give such satisfaction as the tablets do. I do not think you make any claim for them which their use will not substantiate." The tablets can be had from any medicine dealer or by mail from The Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. Price 25 cents a box.

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