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THEY'RE DEAR TO GOD.

O that when Christians meet and part,  
These words were graved on every heart—  
    They're dear to God!  
However wilful and unwise,  
We'll look on them with loving eyes—  
    They're dear to God!  
O wonder! to the Eternal One,  
Dear as His own beloved Son;  
Dearer to Jesus than His blood,  
Dear as the Spirit's fixed abode—  
    They're dear to God!  
When tempted to give pain for pain,  
How would this thought our words restrain,  
    They're dear to God!  
When truth compels us to contend,  
What love with all our strife should blend—  
    They're dear to God.  
When they would shun the pilgrim's lot  
For this vain world, forget them not;  
But win them back with love and prayer,  
They never can be happy there,  
    If dear to God.  
Shall we be there so near, so dear,  
And be estranged and cold whilst here—  
    All dear to God?  
By the same cares and toils opprest,  
We lean upon one faithful breast,  
We hasten to the same repose;  
How bear or do enough for those  
    So dear to God!

SALVATION BY CHRIST THROUGH SACRAMENTS.

We had our say last week about the difference between ourselves and the Church of Rome in regard to the method in which God pardons or

justifies a sinful man. Both churches say God pardons only through the merits of Christ: but Rome teaches that these merits can only be bestowed through sacraments, by which we become just, and in proportion as we become just through them, to that degree we are justified. This is what Trent says: "As we are ushered into spiritual life by means of the sacraments, so by the same means are we nurtured and preserved."—The Bible teaches, and this Protestant Church of ours teaches, we are justified completely, not by sacraments, or by outward or moral deeds, but only by faith; that while Christ is the meritorious cause of pardon, faith is the alone instrumental cause, the hand stretched out to receive the gift. And when the gift of pardon is received, it is a complete pardon; not a thousand sins forgiven and two thousand left unforgiven; but all are forgiven by the merits of Christ, received by simple faith, and only by simple faith. There is hope in this; men thereby may live in the brightness of God: men thereby may die without a fear, knowing that if their earthly home be destroyed they have a building of God which is eternal.

Let us look into this justification taught by Rome, and by the Romanizers as well, and which is received through sacraments, and see what it can do for us. Nothing ever spoke so loud and did so little as do these sacraments. To the ear, all is peace and power and goodness; for the life here and hereafter, nothing but failure and sorrow.

Rome teaches we get our first justification in baptism. And to know what wonderful things baptism does for us we have only to listen to Trent. "Infants unless baptized cannot enter heaven." "The remission of all sin is the peculiar effect of baptism." "All the punishment due to sin is remitted." In baptism "sin is entirely removed," "totally eradicated," "cut away so as to leave no roots firmly fixed in the soul." These are most extraordinary gifts; and now one would think the baptized had little to do in order to get to the kingdom of the blessed. Gently. The baptized, if they live, always lose these wonderful gifts, which are bestowed only to be lost! Sin "totally eradicated" by baptism, but sin always comes back, and pardon and goodness lost.

Yet there is hope. Baptismal graces gone, there is another sacrament—confirmation. The man goes to confirmation, and by it "becomes," says Trent, "a perfect soldier of Christ." Well, now he is safe, this perfect soldier. Alas! for our perfect soldier; he goes out into the fight, and the first thing he does is fight and fall, and lose this perfection. Amazing perfection this, to be lost in the first battle!

But despair not. The church has another sacrament for her perfect soldier that always fails—"the sacrament of the eucharist"—in which the baptized and confirmed partake of the very flesh and blood and soul and divinity of Christ, and are hereby nurtured into eternal life. He goes and partakes of these tremendous blessings—but alas! he loses them; partakes again, and again loses. He eats Christ, and the eaten Christ cannot help him; loses as fast or faster than he gains.

But let him not be cast down; there is another sacrament for him—"the sacrament of penance." You have fallen into sin after baptism; so "the

sacrament of penance is as necessary to salvation as baptism;" "penance washes away all sins of thought or deed committed after baptism;" "the voice of the priest is to be heard as that of Christ himself, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'" Surely this is wonderful sacrament; surely now, after all his past experience, the man can live acceptably to God. Not at all; he must go again and again and yet again have all his sins pardoned; but the pardon does not last; gets it to-day, gone again to-morrow. What shall he do? He is about to die. Once more he gets priest's pardon. Surely now he will sin no more? This being doubtful, there is another sacrament for him—"extreme unction"—to afford us, says Trent, who are departing this mortal life "an easier access to heaven." Well, he gets that. Now surely it is easy for him to get into the blessedness. Fortified by all these sacraments he departs: is about to enter heaven so easily; but alas! he is stopped; no entrance here; you must go to purgatory. Yes, "the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of just men are cleansed by a temporary punishment, in order to be admitted into their eternal country. This is the end; and after ten years, or a thousand years, or a million years—nobody can tell—after being roasted in these fires, you may get out and enter heaven!

Such is the theology of Rome and virtually that of the Romanizers. Such is the justification which Rome teaches. Such is the justification received through Christ's merits by sacraments. And yet Rome never seems to consider, nor Romanizers, that if the reception of these sacraments by the sinner cannot save from purgatory, how much less can these sacraments offered for the man in purgatory get him out! The good pope, or bishop, or priest dies; goes to purgatory; they want to get him out; so pray for him, offer the "holy sacrifice" for him. But if these failed when offered by himself, much more will they fail when offered by another. And if there be any such place as purgatory, of which the Word of God knows not a word, we fear he will continue there as long as this imaginary place has being.

"There is no condemnation to him who is in Christ Jesus." So says the Book.—No condemnation. Oh! that these words might make such impression upon the church, that it would turn from all things to Christ; read the Bible to get to Christ; go to prayers and church to get to Christ; go to sacraments, not as charms, but as helps to get to Christ and be more like Christ. But for the man in Christ there is no condemnation. And every human being is either in Christ or out of Christ. Out of Christ, nothing but condemnation; in Christ, no condemnation, no condemnation; no condemnation to the man in Christ by faith.

We are justified by the merits of Christ, which justification is received only by faith in Christ. And this justification is complete; pardon is complete; every sin is pardoned; and there is no condemnation to that man; none here, none there; no condemnation to the man who is in Christ Jesus. Now if we believe this, let us be neither Romanists nor Romanizers; but hopeful, healthy, faithful Christian men, making thereby daily protest against the pope and the devil.—*Southern Churchman.*