

tious nature ; is not the fear of imparting disease into his own family an additional motive for refusing his attendance on such an occasion ? A man will often readily expose himself to danger in the way of his duty, though the reflection that he thereby exposes others, and those too the nearest and dearest to him on earth, is capable of damping his ardour, and of causing him to hesitate in the attempt.

A physician, one will say, may have all these motives for refusing his attendance on the sick ; and yet he is seldom, if ever, known to decline visiting his patients, when sent for. A physician, if a skilful one, is not exposed to such danger as a clergyman ; who, being less acquainted with the nature of the distemper, is less able to guard against its contagious influence. Besides the physician is sure of his fee, and what do not men venture for gain's sake ? while the priest has to look for his reward only in the life to come.

2°. A married priest must also endeavour by every possible exertion to provide against the future wants of his family ; lest, when he is taken away from them, they should be left destitute. This conjugal and parental concern must often engross his thoughts and attention fully as much as that of instructing and directing his parishioners. For, as St. Paul says, *he who has a wife, mindeth the things of the world, and how to please his wife : but he that has not a wife, mindeth the things of the Lord, and how to please the Lord.* 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33. The people therefore may think themselves not bound in justice to maintain a wife and a family, who can only be an impediment to their pastor in the discharge of his official duty. On this account the Church has freed them from this obligation, by requiring that her clergy continue to lead a single life ; *mindeth only the things of the Lord, and how to please the Lord.* She thus also facilitates to all the benefits of religion, of which otherwise the faithful must, in many instances, remain deprived. For the hearers are often so very poor, as scarcely to be able to provide decently for their clergyman alone ; much less for a married one and a family. Would it then be according to the spirit of the Christian Church to leave these on such an account deprived of a pastor ?

3°. A Catholic missionary priest, who has the true spirit of his vocation, ought, like an apostle, to be ready, whenever the glory of God and the good of souls require it, to go to the farthest extremities of the earth. But to the married man the incumbency of a wife and a family renders such apostolic, undertakings quite impracticable. And, indeed, had it not been for the law of Celibacy in the Church, we should never have seen the Christian faith extended so far and wide ; and the most distant pagan nations brought into the one fold of the one Shepherd. John x. 16. Our Saviour himself seems to have given the express hint of this discipline to his Apostles, before sending them forth to convert the world ; when he said : *He who does not leave father and mother, sister and brother, wife and children, for my sake, cannot be my disciple.*

4°. There is no saying, besides, how far a priest,

who is entrusted with the secrets of confession, might be induced to reveal them to a wife, his bosom companion ; in order to satisfy her restless and ever prying curiosity : which breach of confidence might be productive of the very worst consequences in a temporal, as well as a spiritual sense.

5°. It may be further added, that if the married state is less perfect than that of virginal purity, as St. Paul so clearly testifies, saying : *He who gives his virgin in marriage, does well ; but he, who gives her not ; does better ;* (1 Cor. vii. 38.) it is not unbecoming the Church to require that her priesthood should aim at what is most holy and perfect. She forbids none to marry, who choose to do so. She even declares marriage a holy state, and has raised it to the dignity of a sacrament.— But she warns all those, who aspire to the priesthood, (which is a matter not of compulsion, but of free deliberate choice made at an age when one is capable of knowing one's self) that they must make up their minds to lead a single life, ere they are promoted to that dignity. If they cannot do this, they are free to marry ; *for it is better,* says St. Paul, *to marry than burn.* 1 Cor. vii. 9. Nay, in spite of all the reasons she has for enjoining celibacy to her clergy in general, she permits those of the Greek rite, who are in communion with her, to follow their own particular discipline in this respect, by marrying before they take orders, and living with their wives and families : but after ordination no one, even of these, is allowed to marry ; or ever to become the husband of a second wife.

This is not then, as some are pleased to alledge, that doctrine of devils, mentioned by the same great Apostle, *forbidding to marry* : no more than the doctrine of fasting and abstinence is that alluded to in the same text, *commanding to abstain from certain meats, as unclean.* 1 Tim. iv. For if the *forbidding to marry*, in the sense I have mentioned were the doctrine of devils ; it is evident from the texts already cited, that St. Paul himself inculcated it, in what he says on marriage and virginity. The doctrine of devils, which he foresaw and alluded to is acknowledged by all the learned in the Christian Church, to be the abominable doctrine of the Manicheans, who held two opposite supreme Beings ; the one essentially good, and the author of all good ; the other essentially bad, and the author of all that is evil. They therefore forbade to marry, and enjoined abstinence from certain meats, *as unclean* ; because they supposed such either of the creation or institution of their evil God.

The Catholic Church, on the contrary, declares marriage, as I have said, a holy state, and a sacrament ; and enjoins fasting and abstinence only at certain times ; and as an act of self denial, and a trial of our obedience : not as if what we abstain from were in any sense unclean. The same trial of man's obedience was made by God himself in paradise ; nor was it the apple which he eat : that defiled him ; but the transgression of his Maker's command. So it is the transgression of the command of the Church, whom Jesus Christ has commanded us to hear and obey, (*Matt. xviii. 17. and Luke x. 16.*) that defiles us ; not the meat itself which we eat.

The practice of fasting and abstinence was always common in the Church of God under the old law, as well as under the new ; and God has often shown how very acceptable it is to him. The great city of Niniveh, which, on account of the sins of its inhabitants, he had threatened by his prophet Jonas to destroy in forty days, was spared by him, because its people proclaimed a most rigorous fast, to appease his wrath, and did penance for their sins in sackcloth and ashes. *Jonas* iii. v. Our Saviour himself fasted forty days and forty nights. (*Matt. iv. 2.*) and laid down besides rules for fasting, *Matt. vi. 16.* He even told his apostles, when they could not on a certain occasion cast out the devil, that such could be cast out *only by prayer and fasting.* *Matt. xvi. 20.*

## ON MAN'S CONNECTION WITH ROTTENNESS AND THE WORM, X

*Putredini dixi pater meus es : mater mea et soror mea vermius.*—*Job xvii. 14.*

*I said to rottenness thou art my father ; and to the worms, ye are my mother and my sister.*

It is truly humbling and mortifying for man to think how in his corporeal part he is so nearly allied and of a kin with rottenness and the worm.— These indeed are so intimately connected with his nature in its present degraded and imperfect state, that not only after death, his body is doomed to become their prey ; but that even through life, and from the very moment of his conception in his mother's womb, till that of his descent into the grave, he is constantly exposed to their tormenting and destructive influence. His terrestrial frame, having once lost its immortal temper by the baneful touch of sin, became liable to corruption and dissolution ; and, in order to humble him the more, who had sinned through pride, wishing to be greater than God had made him, even like unto God himself, knowing both good and evil ; the mighty minister chosen to work him all this mischief, and to be the constant disturber of his quiet, the spoiler of his beauty, the underminer of his strength, and the triumphant subduer of all his might, is nothing for the most part, but a diminutive worm ; often a mere living atom, and one of the numberless imperceptible animalcula, whose evanescent tribes are brought back within our sphere of vision by the microscope ; that window through which we peep into another world of pigmy beings : though still we cannot discover among them but only the largest and most gigantic forms.

We have been enabled through this medium to ascertain that worms and animalcula are the cause of many, perhaps of most of the distempers that afflict the human race. Of those that are epidemical, several may be traced to this origin. That of the small pox is evidently occasioned by an insect, which is seen to burrow in the skin, making its nest where the pimple is raised ; and hatching there its eggs with that degree of profligence and quick-imparted animation, which is common to insects ; and which seems to increase in proportion as they diminish in size. Their prodigiously rapid propagation where they happen to find some fa-