

From the Catholic Advocate.

THE TRUE CHURCH.

[CONTRIBUTED]

The storms of persecution... and the storms of heresy and schism, which raged with the same fury, and the same want of success.

The Saviour had foreseen the whole of these trials to which his Church would be destined to pass in the progress of time; he had a clear view of the efforts which hell would make against his Church, but He promised that it should not only stand, but "stand as his Church"—and that "the gates of Hell:" viz. error, superstition, idolatry, wickedness, and whatever else is contrary to God, and to his law, "should not prevail."

Keeping in mind this consoling assurance of the Redeemer, concerning the invisible character of the Church in its contests with the enemies of truth and righteousness, let us consider some further promises, exhibiting the means of victory, always with the Church, however terrible may be the assaults and attacks of her adversaries.

"I will ask the Father and he shall give you another paraclete, that he may abide with you forever."

"The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive."

In this promise, the Church is assured by her divine founder, that "the spirit of truth" will come "and abide with her" for what purpose should this divine spirit abide with the Church? We learn, in another chapter of the same evangelist, that it was in order to "to teach her all truth."

"But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall teach you all truth."

This spirit of truth, the Paraclete or Comforter, was promised to abide with the Church of Christ forever, in order to teach her all truth. How, then, will error, falsehood, superstition, and idolatry be able, at any time, to triumph over the Church? How can the Church fall away from Christ, while the spirit of truth, from the express promise of her divine founder, shall always be with her? If she will always continue to have this supernatural aid, (and who can doubt this after a promise so express? she will always teach truth, with unerring authority) To say that she can teach error, is either to suppose, that she can be deserted by the divine spirit which was promised to her as her animating and directing spirit, or to suppose, that she can teach contrary to what the spirit which abides with her will suggest, but neither of these hypotheses can for a moment, be entertained.

The Church, then, solidly founded upon the rock, will have abiding with her the spirit of truth, to teach her all truth, in order that she may fulfil the commission which Christ gave her just before his ascent into heaven, when he said: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever, I

have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Let the reader duly weigh these words, and, by the light of reason, consider their natural import, and by them he will find express confirmation of facts to which we have already invited his attention. We here perceive that Christ establishes, in his Church, a teaching tribunal, and invests it with authority to teach his doctrines; "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations"—"Teach all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

We further notice that this teaching tribunal will unerringly and infallibly teach the doctrines of Christ, because Christ promises to be with it while discharging this sacred and important duty. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Moreover, we perceive, what Christ expects of those who shall be taught by this tribunal. He expects them to observe those things which they are taught. "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." What can be more clear and express than this? Suppose even we had no scripture proof, except this passage, would it not suffice to confound our adversaries, when they rise up against the authority of the Church which has a divine commission from Christ himself?

What would have been the utility of instituting a Chair of doctrine, or of giving a Commission to the Church to teach, if for the want of due attributes, it would be incompetent to attain the great end of its institution, which assuredly it was, the dissemination of the true doctrines of Christ? If fallible, and liable to each error as the true doctrines of Christ, it would certainly be in natura rei, in the very nature of things, inadequate to accomplish the end for which it was instituted and commissioned. And precisely to make it competent, as well as to certify to the world that mankind might securely listen to its voice, Christ promised, not only to remain with it himself all days, even to the end of the world, but also, that the divine spirit of truth, the paraclete, should abide with it forever.

Did those promises of Christ mean nothing? Did they give no pledge to those who carried the sealed commission to preach the gospel and plant the Church? Did they not rather furnish a glorious and consoling assurance of what had been said before; that the Church of Christ would obtain a certain triumph over all the powers of Hell?

But we can still marshal further scripture proof, against those who deny the tenet that the Church of Christ infallibly teaches the doctrines of Christ. The Saviour has so closely and intimately identified himself with his Church, that he says: "He who hears you hears me; he who despises you despises me."

In another place, where indicating the necessity of recurring to the authority of his Church, he declares, that those who

refuse to hear and obey her authoritative decision, are worthy to be ranked with the outcast and accursed.

"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."

Would the Redeemer of the world have thus subjected mankind to the authority of his Church, and required their obedience to its decisions under so grievous a penalty, if there were the least danger that her authoritative teaching should lead them into error and "damnable idolatry?" Would he declare that he remained with the Church, all days, even to the consummation of the world, and that the divine spirit of truth abideth with her forever, if she could teach, as his doctrines, false concepts, human devices, and soul destroying superstitions? The idea is preposterous in the extreme. It involves absurdities and follies without number, and totally frustrates the grand and noble work of the world's salvation, by means of the purifying and regenerating truths of the gospel of Christ. It places mankind in the absolute necessity of yielding obedience to an authority which may be teaching doctrines directly repugnant to those doctrines which Christ requires all to believe who would be saved. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," says the Apostle. And Faith is certainly a belief of the true doctrines of Christ.

And, although these powers be wielded by men, they are not wielded by them as men, but as ministers of Christ. It is not the power of men, but the power of Christ.

"All power," said the Redeemer to his Apostles, "All power is given to me in heaven and upon earth."

"As the Father sent me, so also I send you."

"You have not chosen me; but I have chosen you, and have appointed you."

The apostles felt that they were really in possession of these extraordinary powers and used them. When they acted, with power and "as having authority," the people respected their acts because of the source from which their authority was derived. Jesus Christ was himself the great Lawgiver and Ruler, and they were recognized as his lawfully deputed ministers.

(To be Continued.)

From the Protestant Churchman.

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND. CATECHISM.

The Curate of the Rev. F. Oakley has published "A Catechism for the Use of Young Persons of the Church of England, compiled from authentic sources." The following are a few specimens of the education which the Presbyteries deem fitting for the "children of the Church of England:"

"The Worship of Images.

Q. Are pictures and holy symbols allowable in Church? A. Yes; for they movingly represent to us the life and passions of our blessed Lord, and other doctrines of our just holy faith

Q. Is there any idolatry in honoring the saints and angels?—A. No; provided we honor them only with an inferior honor, as the friends and creatures of God; not as gods, nor with Gods, honor: "Worship of Saints, and the Virgin Mary."

Q. Have we then any communion with the saints in heaven?—A. Yes; we communicate with them as our fellow members under the same head, Jesus Christ; they feeding for us, and assisting us in all holy and kind offices, and we giving thanks to God for their good examples, honoring them for their virtues, and holding spiritual communion with them.

Q. Is it any disrespect to God to remember the saints with glory and honor?—A. Quite the reverse; inasmuch as we glorify and adore God in and through them; for even the greatest saints are indebted for all goodness to Him alone.

Q. Do we keep any other day besides the Feast of the Purification of the blessed Virgin Mary, which remind us at once of our Lord and of his blessed Mother?—A. Yes, the Feast of the Annunciation of our Lady, on the 25th of March.

Q. Are there any other days, which, though not publicly observed, are named in the calendar of our church?—A. Yes; there are several days in honor of the blessed Virgin Mary—her Visitation, on the 2d of July; her Nativity, on the 8th of September; and her Conception, on the 8th of December; with many days of holy martyrs, virgins, bishops, &c.

Q. How then should we keep those festivals?—A. We should endeavour to make ourselves acquainted with the persons or events commemorated, and allow none of them to pass by without thinking of them.

"Duty of Confession.

Q. Does our Church encourage the people to seek counsel of the clergy?—A. Yes; for the disburdening of conscience, and the quieting of scruples and doubts, especially before the holy communion.

"Infallibility of the Church, and duty of a rigid observance of all Fasts and Festivals.

Q. What do you mean when you say, "I believe in the holy Catholic Church"?—A. I mean that Christ has left a society behind him on the earth to be what he was; and that in the sacraments we obtain communion with him through that society.

Q. Are we bound to obey the commandments of the church?—A. Yes; because Christ hath said to the pastors of his church, "Who that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me."—Luke x. 16.

Q. Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain?—A. To humble us before God for our sins, and keep our bodies in subjection.

Q. Will not a Christian, then, feel himself bound to do more in this way than to comply with the mere rule?—A. Without doubt, health permitting.

Q. Are persons in bad and weak health obliged to fast or abstain, or, again, very young persons?—A. No; in all such cases the rule is relaxed; children, for instance, keep abstinence days, when seven years old, but fasting days not till they come of full age.

* Math. xxviii. v. 19 & 20.

† St. John, c. xiv. v. 16, 17.

† St. John, c. xvi. v. 13.

* Luke, c. x, v. 16.

† Math. c. xiii. v. 17.