

Sacred Heart Review. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCLV.

Professor Foster, in Part II., Chapter I., of his work, says: "The central point in the controversy of Protestants with the Roman Church is the claim which that Church makes to possess divine authority to prescribe the doctrines which must be believed, as well as the course of practical conduct which they must pursue."

This form of statement can not be called happy. The natural sense of it seems to be that doctrine and morals are believed to be discretionary, like discipline. Christ is held by Catholics to have committed to the Roman Church the full power of the keys over all disciplinary purposes, so that Rome determines, not by immediate direction from God, but by her present judgment, what Bishops shall occupy what sees; what shall be the conditions of a lawful episcopal institution; what rights pastors or chapters, or monastic foundations, shall enjoy over against the Bishops; what local usages shall be allowed to derogate from general canon law; what parts of the Church shall be under propaganda and what not; in what regions a married priesthood shall be allowed and in what not; where Latin, where Greek, where Slavonic, or other tongues, shall be used in the Mass; what form of the liturgy shall prevail in what district; what conditions of valid marriage shall be imposed in each country; what fasts and feasts shall be locally obligatory.

All such matters, being in themselves "indifferent and alterable," are held to have been by Christ committed wholly to the discretion of the Roman See. As Bellarmine and St. Alphonsus Liguori remark, extremely manifest un wisdom or oppressiveness could alone excuse from obedience. As Dr. Byrne says, no simply ecclesiastical law binds Christians to incur grievous incommo dity. Yet the presumption is always for a compliance, especially since, as observed by three eminent Episcopalians, Dr. Briggs, Bishop Creighton, and Bishop Stubbs, Rome has from of old been remarkable for a calm and central view of things, and in general for a tolerant reasonableness in her disciplinary enactments.

Now I can not believe that Dr. Foster really supposes that Catholics view Rome as having the same discretionary power of prescribing faith or morals as of prescribing discipline. Yet the word "prescribe" naturally signifies that anything is a matter of optional enactment. Moreover, most Protestants vaguely imagine Rome to claim very nearly the same power of altering faith or morals as of altering discipline. Nay, when a Baptist paper (and that not Southern Baptist) lately declared that Catholics hold the voice of the Church to be as good as the voice of God, "or better," in determining all matters whatsoever, the unpeppery foun dness of this horrible calumny appears not to have evoked the faintest remon strance from any one of its many readers.

Of course I do not for a moment im agine Dr. Foster to stand in the cate gory of such evil men as these two Northern Baptist editors. He is plainly a Christian, a scholar, a thinker; never falling into virulence, and sincerely solicitous to present Roman Catholic doctrine objectively as it is. Perfectly candid he is not, for, as Albert Reville says, who of us is perfectly candid in controversy? Where you find candor perfect, as in Augustus Neander, controversy has disappeared. You may say the same of Mandell Creighton. On the other hand, when Luther is discussing with Rome, or with Henry VIII., you do not find in him the remotest approach to truth, honesty, decency, or to any Christian quality whatever. I have read two of his works through in the German, his answer to Henry, and "The Freedom of a Christian Man," and as Dr. Janssen points out, it is astonishing to see the contrast between the marvelous spiritual beauty of the latter, and the embodied rutilianism of speech and temper, in such works as the former. Therefore, when we are talking of Luther we ought always to signify which Luther we are talking of, for it almost seems as if there were two souls in the one man.

To come back to commonplace men, like Dr. Foster and me, I have no doubt that we would be as nearly detached from Protestant prejudices as I can claim to be, in his presentation of Catho lic doctrine, had he too had a child hood fusing the remembrances of the two religions, and then been for years secluded from ecclesiastical urgencies among the tropical mountains, and afterwards in an invalid's chamber. As he has not been thus dealt with, he is still, with all honesty of purpose, im perfectly able to detach himself from the commonplace of Protestant prej udice. Otherwise he would hardly use "prescribe" for the profoundly differ ent word "define" or "declare," or "expound," or for "set forth."

There is the more occasion here for insisting on the utmost exactness of ex pression, as so distinguished and deeply read a man as Mr. Henry Charles Lea evidently imagines doctrine at least, if not morals, to be alterable at the will of the Church. As I have several times cited his words, he expressly declares his belief that Catholics hold it to be within the power of an infallible Pope, assisted by an infallible Council, to convert an article of faith into a simple provision of discipline, or to make the same thing a matter of faith here and of mere discipline there!

We see here how sometimes no possible breadth of reading will enable a man to penetrate into the interior apprehension of a system from which he is alienated by inveterate prepos sesions. Mr. Lea is one of the great writers of the day, yet here, in a vital point, he suddenly lapses into as vulgar a misapprehension of Roman Catholic doctrine, although certainly into no such vulgar expression of it, as would have been possible to a Townsend

of a Lansing. His blunder over the attitude of the Church towards Jews and Saracens, and how the Nation had to help him out of it, I have already mentioned.

Such a fundamental misunderstanding is the less excusable, inasmuch as the Vatican definition has taken the utmost pains to render it impossible. The Pastor aeternus expressly reminds us that the Holy Ghost has not been given to Peter and his successors in order to communicate new doctrines, but in order to render them faithful in the interpretation of the original revela tion.

Therefore the Church does not for a moment imagine that she has any power, through Pope or Council, to prescribe faith, as she can prescribe discipline. She can only declare faith, a doctrine of faith as it has been from the beginning, and will be to the end.

In two senses only can she be in exactly said to prescribe faith. Where an opinion is disputed in the Church, some holding it to be a part of the apostolic revelation, others holding it, even if true, to be not revealed, there the Holy See is held to have the power of defining whether or not the former opinion is true. After an affirmative decision, but not previously, to deny it is to deny the faith of the Church.

So also when an article of faith is held, but in a somewhat ambiguous form, the Church has authority to substitute a more explicit expression of it, and to forbid a reversion to the vaguer formula. In these two senses only can there be talk of prescribing faith, and as there are half-a-dozen words which express the same, but are not, like "prescribed," complicated with the notion of arbitrary discretion, as in the case of discipline, prescribe ought, above all in controversial treatment, to be carefully avoided, especially by Protestants, who are so peculiarly tempted to take it in a false sense.

I have myself experienced what singular fatality of apprehension may prevail even in a great organ of opinion. One of the foremost New York papers once spoke of the Pope as being sup posed by Catholics to have the power of requiring them to believe anything that he pleased. I reminded the editor of the Pope's express denial of being able to impose anything on faith which is not fairly to be inferred from the original revelation. To my astonish ment I found that the editor supposed "original revelation" to mean the decree of 1870! I found that this great newspaper had no other notion than that the Pope claimed, like Mohammed, to have had a revelation in 1870, and then another revelation in 1871, modifying, and partially contradicting, what he had said in 1870. I found that my attempt to get the editor out of the bog into which I plunged him the deeper into it.

I may remark that this is the same newspaper which, about the same time, informed inquiring readers that the one principle of the Jesuits is, to agree with every opinion of their General for the time being. Of the comicality of this simple-minded exposition with the whole history of the Order, from Aquaviva to Oliva, from Oliva to Gonzalez, from Gonzalez to Beckx, the worthy editor has not the faintest conception.

I may remark that Dr. Foster him self, on May 166, speaks of "immediate inspiration" as a claim of the Roman Church. The above mentioned editor, being a mere layman, may be in a man ner excited; but as a theologian, and that in a formal treatise on the claims of Rome, is inexcusable.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK. Andover, Mass.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. Third Sunday After Pentecost. TRUSTING IN GOD. "Casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you." (1 St. Peter v. 7.)

This spiritual direction of the chief of the Apostles should bring to our inmost souls the greatest consolation. If we but keep these words in our hearts and recall them to our minds the moments we need them, they will in crease our faith, arouse our spiritual energies, and secure to us that victory which we must gain in order to possess even a small part of the peace of God in our souls.

But what is meant by "casting all your care upon Him"? These words mean that we are to cast all of our care upon God; not merely a part of it, not a few of his cares, but all care, without exception. What are the things that become a care to us? First, our immortal souls. These are a care to us, the greatest of all our cares and the source of our greatest anxiety.

Why is this? Because eternal joy or woe depends upon our own action; in life; because we do not know with positive certainty that the salvation of our souls will be secured. The thought of this makes all tremble, even with terror at times, for their salva tion. We examine our consciences and recall all the sins of our past lives. These show to us how small the amount of our merit is. Temptation to give up all and to despair begins to assault us. How are we to do them? Cast even that care upon God. But how? By remembering that God's mercy is exalted by Him above His justice. Therefore, making an act of contrition, we must then cast the care of our salva tion upon that mercy that is never withheld when asked for in sincerity; by remembering the fact that "by grace we are saved," and by going to confession to get that very grace which is the eternal life of our souls, insur ing our salvation. Follow this by a good Communion, that by receiving worthily we may again begin fervently persevering reunion with God. The light by which we see our past lives, our little merit and our great demerits—that light is sent into our souls in order to make us, to drive us to con fession, to Communion, and a new life.

grace for to-morrow. God's grace will not be wanting, but is sure. Those who talk in that way yield to their tempta tions before they come. This is a form of despair. We are commanded most stringently and most positively never to despair of our salvation at any time, in any place, nor under any circumstances. To do so is to add to the list of our sins the gravest of all, final impenitence. Despair of our salvation is the same thing.

What other things are a greater care to us? Our bodies, our human life in this world, with all that belongs to it, called worldly advancement and suc cess. We must remember, however, that the great care these things give us comes in great part from our making too much of them. Practically, the vast majority of mankind, and of Catholics also, seem to think and act as if life in this world is our all, and that success, honor, wealth, and social position once secured here, men can die in peace, without any thought of that great future, eternity. When the vast major ity cannot get these things; try and try again as they may, they fail as often, even when about to succeed. Because of these failures, in many cases, even they turn against God and lose their faith. And why? Simply because they did not and do not "cast the care of these things upon God, Who would not and will not permit suc cess in this world to be enjoyed by those He loves with a special love, and that success will be sure to ruin their souls in this life and in eternity. Let us, then, stop for a moment and examine our hearts in order to see if we have been regarding this life, with its concerns, as if it be our all. If we have, let us cease to care so much for it, commit our success or defeat in this human life and its concerns to the lov ing providence of God, so far, at least, as to be able to say from our hearts when we fail: "God knows what is best for me. I am contented." In suc cess we should tremble lest we offend, and in defeat bless God, Who has kept us from many temptations and sins by sending defeat instead of success. The unsuccessful can say always, "At any rate, my soul is safe from any new sin."

But how are we to know that we love this life and its concerns too much? By the way we act as Christians. If we are careless about our duties to God, if we do not obey the laws of our holy religion, if we follow the ways of the world and feel ashamed to acknowledge courageously that we are Catholics, then we know that the world has almost passed? It is the result of our failure to love only what God desires us to have, of our failure to live always under His providential care, by checking our desires and aspirations so as not to be driven too far by them, and because we have thrown aside God's care of us.

But how are we to remedy as well as prevent this unholy state of soul? Only by ceasing to pursue too eagerly anything that can last only the few short years of human life in this world, by subjecting all things to the rule we must follow in order to lead good lives as good Catholics, and by doing as the text tells us: casting all our care upon God, for He hath care of us.

THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST. Paganism conquered by aggression. Christianity conquers by submission, and her victories are more lasting. Attila and Leo; Gregory and Henry; Napoleon and Pius VII.; Bismarck and Pius IX. What mighty deeds, what glories, what power, what might, what influence, what might that is from above, prevailed by the might that is from above, with their legions behind them. Yes! the end is always certain: victory is to the just. But what almost infinite patience is required to watch for that end, and to be satisfied with the fruition of victory! For one naturally argues: Can victory give back all that was sacri ficed to win it? Can it recompense us for the weary suspense, the sleepless anxiety, the bruised feel ings, the ignominy, the shame, the sor row? And, on the other hand, will a mere black mark in the judgment-roll of History be accounted sufficient tribu tion for pride, injustice, and aggression? Doth not the whole man arise in protest against wrong? And is there not something fiercer in the human heart in its revolt against injustice than the plaintive wail of the exiled Pontif? "I have loved justice, and hated iniquity; therefore I die in exile?"

Human nature is unchangeable; and to-day there are few who have been in contact with men that do not suffer an almost irresistible temptation to despise them. The law of rape, which is so pre dominant among the nations; their little souls are so weak, so fragile that their life-time is so short; and they play their wretched little parts so badly, that one is tempted to hiss the whole company from the stage forever. Human history is but a record of human weakness and brutality. The cross has been planted in the Coliseum; but the evil spirits that lashed with lust and fury the sixty thousand spectators, who seemed to drink with their eyes the blood of their victims, have sought better sweep and cleaner places. But they are by no means excused or banished from the earth. Let the battlefields of the world, the cries of the oppressed, the wretched lives, the broken hearts, the wrecked lives, to testify to it. What then? Are we to grow impatient with these little minnies? Are we to dream

of a greater and stronger and more spiri tual race than we behold on our planet? Perhaps so! Yet it would be better to restrain our judgments, and imitate "the soft yearnings of infinite pity," conscious that the key to the mystery of so much meanness and so much weakness is somewhere. "Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner!"

It is this divine resemblance to the toleration of His Father, this reflex of divine magnanimity that should put all questions of our Lord's Divinity quite outside the pale of controversy. He was amongst men, but not of them. Their quarrelsomeness, their jealousy, their doubts, their powerlessness to lift them selves above the merely human are per petuated in human lives to this day; and are not the characteristics of any race or nation, but are the common and univer sal inheritance of all. Yet, how calmly God looks down not only upon this pro voking meanness and littleness, but even holoocaust before His throne! And how infinitely in His toleration and even be nevolence in view of such ingratitude, for His times and seasons revolve as if earth were an altar of sweet-smelling sacrifice, and His sun shines, and His dew falls alike on the saint and sinner! Behold the patience and love of our Lord re flected in the larger operations of His Father! No wonder that men should say: He hath done all things well! No wonder that the lonely prisoner in St. Helena, once the Emperor and world Cesar, should exclaim: "I know men well; and I say that Jesus Christ was more, upon the mighty mass of iniquity that seethes in great cities and in coun try hamlets, and steams up a sickening not a man!"—Rev. P. A. Sheehan in The Dolphin.

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord makes us familiar with the idea that He is interested in me; that I am present to His mind and have my place in the thought of One so full of sym pathy; that He thinks of me and loves me as if there was no one else to think of me and to love.—Father Dignam, S. J.

As this is the month of the Sacred Heart, each member of the League should try to increase his devotion dur ing this period. It is the month of roses—red like the Blood which was shed for us, and fragrant and beautiful as the love which glowed in the Saviour's Divine Heart. Do we realize what His sufferings meant? Then let us honor Him specially and deeply in this month devoted to His Sacred Heart. Remem ber the general intention—make a partic ular memento for all wandering and sinful and weary hearts. He loved the sorrowful; let us love them, too, for His sake.

An inquiry has been received as to the meaning of the "Treasury of Good Works" mentioned in the leaflet. The treasury is a spiritual record of all good actions done specially and actually, as we learn by the Handbook, for the intentions of the associates. The Director-General has decided that the good work must be performed expressly for the petitions of the apostleship, and that it must be offered by an actual in tention for this purpose. For every such good work, whether marked on the Treasury blank or not, there is in dulgence of one hundred days. Hence the Morning Offering does not suffice to make every action of the day an offer ing for the Treasury, although it does influence and extend its force to all of them and add to their merit and virtue.

The Treasury, properly recommended, can be made a powerful help to perfec tion. It should be used in all simplic ity, without a foolish dread of vanity, or hypocritical modesty, as David says, "The simplicity of my heart." It has offered These all these things. The good works that make up the Treasury are the ordi nary actions of a Christian life, and one should be ashamed of not doing them rather than be vain at having done them. Finally, these blanks always leave a space for "special thank givings," for it is taken for granted that associates will always have reason to give thanks and that, as lovers of the Heart of Jesus, they will be always minutes of the special devotion of gra titude, for which His Heart craves.

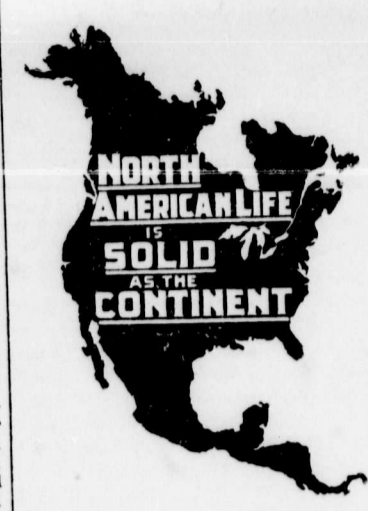
THE HEROIC MOTHER LOVE OF SAINT RITA. To the present writer, there is nothing more heroic in the long life of Saint Rita than her prayer for the death of her sons.

Saint Rita was married at an early age to a rude and violent man, "the terror of the whole countryside," as a quaint old chronicle describes him. The holy child, for she was little more when she became a wife—was not moved to her marriage by affection for the man or preference for life in the world, but simply because it was the only way in which she could provide for her aged parents and make to them that return of duty which is acceptable to God.

But woman-like—for the saints are true human beings, not freaks—she soon grew to love that which was hers, the more so as he last responded by a better life to her unceasing prayers and devoted ministrations. When he died the violent death so common in that time, she mourned him as a loving wife, and mourned a far better husband. She had borne him two sons, boys at this time still in their teens, but with the precocious bodily and mental de velopment of Italians. They had in heritance their father's passionate and vindictive nature, and their first thought was to avenge his murder. Vainly they sought a mother's blessing, they forgave the murderers, after the example of our Divine Redeemer and for the weal of their father's soul. Then, she turned to God, and rising above the natural motherly affection of her warm Italian heart, entreated Him to stain their hands with the blood of their fellow-men. God heard this heroic prayer, and both were stricken with mortal illness, and died repentant of their evil desires. But their mother was alone. She had won her son's salva tion, but her house was left unto her desolate.

Braver than the Spartan mother whom

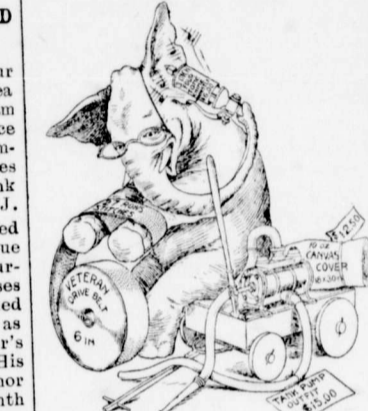
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