Sacred Heart Review.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

CXXX.

In my paper of Feb. 9, I say that there were five distinctively Protestant bishops in England at Mary's accession, that all five remained, and all were burned. All five that remained were burned, it is true; but there were five more who fled. Their comparative obscurity has made them easy to forget, although I might have remembered that at least three of the four who consecrated Archbishop Parker must themselves have been consecrated before Mary's reign, since only bishops other appointment accepted the new order.

Speaking of the firm opposition offered by the English Catholics to the bull of deposition issued by Pius V. against Elizabeth, I have said that this Pope withdrew the deposition. It was not this Pope that did so, but his successor, Gregory XIII.

Cardinal Hergenrother is entirely in error when he says that the English Catholics regarded Mary Stuart, not Elizabeth, as legitimate Queen of England. They held Elizabeth, indeed, for an illegitimate child, as well they might, but the most of them owned her for legitimate Queen. The great Jesuit, Edmund Campion, whom "Johnson's Cyclopedia" rightly calls one of the English worthies, said expressly to Elizabeth, in presence: "I own Your Grace for my native and lawful Queen." The highest legal authority of England, the Blessed Thomas More, had laid down the English doctrine, uncontradicted, in these words: "He whom Parliament makes King, is King." Many of the Catholics were willing to rise in order to compel the Queen to proclaim Mary Stuart her presumptive heir, but few of these wished to put her off the throne. When Philip II. attempted this, we know how Catholics and Protestants rose as one man in defence of their country and their mistress. Even Coffin, for all his boundless virulence, dwells on the loyalty of the English Catholics, and goes so far as to repeat the story that Elizabeth made a Catholic nobleman admiral of the fleet. The Queen had courage and confidence enough to have done so, had there been occasion, but it is as good as certain that her kinsman Lord Howard of Effingham, was not a Catholic. Indeed his advice for the execution of the Queen of Scots sufficiently shows this.

These American Protestants who are so in terror lest the Catholics among us, being in so tremendous a majority, may rise some fine day and cut all our throats, will do well to call to mind that when a wide difference of judgment appeared between the Pope and the English Catholics in a matter of civil allegiance, the Holy See did not insist on carrying its own judgment through, in this matter of temporal policy, but accepted the judgment of the English. Nay, the secular clergy wrote to Rome: "If Your Holiness will come hither as a missionaty, we will die at your feet. If you come as an invader, we will die in resisting you." Yet no excommunications or despositions ensued upon this plain statement. Indeed, the clergy, although unquestionabjy, in their better knowledge, differing from Cardinal Bellarmine's opinion of the particular facts of this case, were only applying the principle laid down by the great Jesuit in the "De Romano Pontifice," when he says that if the Pope should interfere in a matter of mere civil expediency, he is to be resisted to the utmost, "by refusing to do what he enjoins, and by putting positive obstacles in the way of his will."

So thoroughly does this high Roman and Jesuit authority bear out the statement of the Review, that it is mere folly to imagine that Catholics are bound to obey every command of the Pope merely because it is his command, without inquiring into the question whether it is within the papal competency, and if it is, what are the circumstances of its promulgation and the probable consequences of its execution. Even in a matter purely religious, as Vicar-general Dr. Byrne explains, a Church law, if not of divine right, does not bind to obedience where the consequences of obedience would be calamitous. Rome has always been firm in the maintenance of her superintending authority, but it can not be reasonably denied, that for the most part the successive Pontiffs have honestly tried, in their discipline, to bear in mind Christ's words: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." And as the principles of law become more and more developed, the caprice of an individual, even though he be clothed with "the great mantle," goes for less and less, and, as Dr. Edward McSweeney admirably says, the reason of things goes more and more. Indeed the question might perhaps now lie open whether it is not to be desired that a pontificate should come which, without rude arbitrariness, should startle a sleepy world by a fresh vigor of judicious application of the law of Christ.

Bellarmine puts the principles of obedience in the following form. A papal command, reasonable, and within the papal competence, obliges to obedience, of course after publication by the bishop. A papal command, not sinful, but unreasonably burdensome, may oblige to obedience casually, but not intrinsically. A papal command, if sinful, obliges to positive disobedience. A papal command outside the papal competence must be both passively and actively resisted. There certainly does not seem to be much despotism here. Indeed, Pope Sixtus V. thought that the Cardinal cut the papal authority too short, and either ent the work into the Index or was about to do so when he died. I have seen both statements. Yet as the benignant Urban the Seventh, and all his successors, have refused to confirm this somewhat precipitate opinion of the illustrious peasant-pope, Rome has thereby given her conclusive judgment that the "De Romano Pontifice" makes all due provision for papal supremacy.

However, when bellowing declaimers snuffingly exclaim, with upturned eyes: "What a solemn thought, that there are seven hundred Popish officers in our army, and that if involved in war, a papal command of withdrawal might suddenly paralyze us by depriving us of the whole seven hundred!" such people ought not to be contradicted. Idiots must be allowed their harmeless idiotical amusements. We can not shut them all up in madhouses or orthopaedic schools.

By the way, I should like to know if any one can produce one instance, occuring since the Reformation, in which a Catholic officer or soldier, serving under a Protestant government, has received and obeyed a papal command to quit the service. I do not believe there is such a case, but I am open to the force of facts. They must be very few, for after many years' reading of religious history, I am not able to call a single instance to mind.

There are deepening degrees of idiocy. One poor soul that has slipped his keeper, declares: "The battle of Winchester would have been lost to the Union if General Sheridan, on his famous ride, had chanced to meet a priest who ordered him to turn about." I am afraid that would have been the priest's last order.

Yet, as men of sense sometimes catch a contagion of lunacy, I would explain to any that are in such a danger that a priest has only spiritual authority, and that only over his own parishioners; that a bishop has only spiritual authority, and that only over his own diocesans; and that although the Roman Church, like every other religious authority in Christendom, claims a right to forbid even a temporal act which is manifestly contrary to Christianity, this interconnection must be one that is capable of evident demonstration.

We have now enjoyed a long familiarity with Dean Hodges, and are sorry to part with him. His manifold blunders have resulted neither from dulness nor ill will, although we must own that they sometimes bear witness to astounding negligence. His portraitures, whether of men or events, are always genial, and often very illumining, and are always informed by the most admirable spirit. Facts, whether working against me or against him, are merciless things, and we ought to desire to be thoroughly ploughed up by them. Yet, for a total result of both justice and kindness in viewing the history of the sixteenth century, he well deserves the praise, which is all that many of us can claim:—

"For one ye'll find better it's waur ye'll find ten." Now, once more, disagreeable as it is, we have to descend to that prince of illiterate calumniators, the Rev. Isaac J. Lansing. There are things still left in that bad book of his that need "redding up."

CHARLES C. STARBUCK.

Andover, Mass.

FIVE MINUTES' SERMON.

Palm Sunday.

SACRILEGIOUS COMMUNION.

"Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord." (Cor. 11, 27.)

The solemn entry of our Lord into the royal city of Jerusalem, reminds us of His coming at Easter into our hearts in Holy Communion. That which the enthusiastic crowds of people did to celebrate this triumphal entry, should teach us in a significant manner what we should do to prepare ourselves for a worthy reception of Holy Communion. The multitudes divested themselves of their garments and spread them on the way; we also should divest ourselves of the garments of sin and cast them at the foot of our Saviour, that He may trample upon, and destroy them. The concourse met our Lord with palm branches, we should also meet the King of Angels with the palms of faith, hope, charity and earnest desire. The jubilant throng say: "Hosanna to the Son of David." We also should receive our Lord in our hearts with earnest prayer and exultation.

All the Jews, however, did not have palm branches and words of joyous acclamation for their Saviour. All did not join in the Hosanna, but a great number gnashed their teeth in hatred and prepared to put Him to death. And is this not—O terrible thought—the case with many Christians? Into all hearts our Lord desires to enter at the holy time of Easter, but many have not been divested of the garment of sin, and no Hosanna is sung in His praise; in place of Easter being celebrated in the soul, it is still Good Friday and "Crucify Him" is still heard. You will readily understand of what Christians I speak. I mean the traitor Christians, who knowing they are in a state of mortal sin, unworthily receive the great Sacrament of the Altar.

What does faith teach us of the guilt of such Christians? They commit like Judas, a sacrilege, and draw eternal damnation upon themselves; they commit a sacrilege, yea, the most terrible that can be conceived. A sacrilege is, as you all know, a desecration of something holy; the holier the object is that is desecrated, the greater is the crime that is committed. What is the most holy object in religion? Is it not the Blessed Sacrament? for our Lord is truly, really and substantially present. If this be desecrated, the holiest of all mysteries, there is no sacrilege that can be compared with it in malice and wickedness. If I tear a crucifix from the altar, spit upon and trample it under foot, it is certainly a great crime, but I merely insult the figure of my Saviour. If I blaspheme Jesus it is certainly diabolical, but I insult Him only in words. If, however, I receive Him in my heart in a state of mortal sin, then I do the same as did the executioners on Calvary. I outrage His own person and nail Him anew to the cross. The Apostle St. Paul has said: "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and the Blood of the Lord." (Cor. 11, 27.

Such malice and wickedness can be compared only with the crime of Judas, who betrayed his Lord and God. What did Judas on that unhappy day? he went to the high priest and said: "What will you give me and I will deliver Him to you." (Matt. 26, 15.) They appointed him thirty pieces of silver. Now, what does the sacrilegious Christian? He goes to the devil, to agree with him on a price for which he will deliver his Lord and God; either for a grievous sin which he has concealed in confession: a crime for which he has no contrition; or for an unjust good which he will not restore; in short, he consults the devil concerning the manner of making a sacrilegious confession. Judas did not perform his satanic deed without warning, neither are the admonitions of Heaven wanting for the sacrilegious Christian. Our Saviour warns through the voice of faith, the voice of conscience and the inspirations of grace; but in vain, the sinner's heart is like that of Judas; it remains callous. The traitorous apostle proceeds from the intention to the act. A kiss, a sign of greatest love is the mask of his terrible, treacherous act. Under the same appearance of love, the sacrilegious Christian performs his diabolical deed. With folded hands and downcast eyes,—the image of piety—in presence of the whole congregation, he approaches the table of the Lord and presses his profane lips to the Precious Body of the Lord, and casts Him into the hell of his heart where the devil is enthroned. The fearful crime is consummated, the holiest is desecrated; Satan is triumphant and woe—a thousand woes—resound from the mouths of the angels as well as from the lips of our Lord Himself; "It were better for him if that man had not been born." (Matt. 26, 24.)

My dear Christians, whose heart is not filled with terror at such a fiendish crime? Does not the longanimity of God surprise us, that He does not instantly open hell at the feet of such criminal to engulf him? The justice of God, however, will not be wanting: it will crush even here on earth; it will strike him with blindness, impenitence and hard heartedness. Unless he does sincere penance for his terrible crime it will point out to him in the hour of death the place in hell that is reserved for the most abominable of all sinners.

This, my dearly beloved Christians, is a sacrilegious Communion in its terrible malice and fearful consequences. Oh, should we not tremble before so diabolical a crime? Should we not according to the admonition of the apostle, prove ourselves, i. e., earnestly examine ourselves if our souls are endowed with the wedding garment of grace and for this purpose make a sincere and good confession? Ah, yes, whosoever loves God and desires to save his soul understands my words and will follow them; he will prepare for Holy Communion in such a manner that the words which the priest speaks when giving Holy Communion may indeed be for him the words of truth viz: May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul for life everlasting. Amen.

DIVORCE—MILTON vs. THE HOLY SEE.

WILLIAM F. P. STOCKLEY, IN THE AVE MARIA

The Independent recently doubted whether the author of "Comus" could ever have said those things about marriage and divorce which he did say, and of which Mr. Gladstone declared that they were words about Christian Englishwomen of which a Turk would be ashamed. But Milton was not at all ashamed of what he knew was his anti-Popery. The traditional Christian law, he knew, and said, was the Pope's law. In his "Exposition of Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage" he reminds his readers forcibly, each time they turn to him, of how it was the "Pope's canon laws" which checked divorce, as well as other expressions of human frailty desired and sanctioned by the world in low places and in high; which things now again are getting the new old "world's" fashionable acknowledgment.

Gradually the Popes were able to enforce Christianity in its fullness; and for this Milton much blames the Popes. Milton and his audience of course assumed already that all things done by a Pope were bad things. But, to be sure, that old assumption is neither here nor there for us to-day. Whatever conclusions we draw, however, it is well to see the right shoulders burdened.

Strange, even Milton would say, that a Pope should go to so much trouble to take up and support burdens that some lightly judging persons would persuade themselves he is always willing to lay down. As Archbishop Ireland not long since said: "The report that Pope Leo has granted a full or an *a vinculo* divorce on the ground of infidelity on the part of the woman is clearly a misinterpretation of the facts in the case. It is certain no divorce has been granted on the ground of infidelity. The positive, inflexible teaching of the Catholic Church is that a valid marriage contract, duly consummated, can not be annulled or made void by any authority in State or Church, death alone terminating its obligations. Where the marriage was from the beginning null and invalid through some natural or canonical impediment, or never duly consummated, declarations of nullity or dispensations may be, and often are, obtained from ecclesiastial courts. Nothing beyond this ever occurred or ever can occur in the Catholic Church."

Milton heads one section thus: "*The Pope's canon law, encroaching upon civil magistracy abolished all divorce, even for adultery What the reformed divines have recovered.*" And he continues: "The blindest and corruptest times of popedom displaced laws (of "civil magistracy," indeed) permitting divorce. . . . The restraint of divorce was one of the first fair-seeming pleas' (what a philosophy of history concerning motives in men!) "which the Pope had, to step into secular authority, and with his anti Christian (i. e., anti-Pagan) rigor to abolish the permissive law (of divorce)" . . . "This papal and unjust restriction of divorce need not be so dear to us; since the plausible restraining of that was in a manner the first loosening of anti-Christ. Nor do we less remarkably owe the first means of his (anti-Christ's, the Pope's) fall here in England to the continuing of that restraint by Henry VIII, whose divorce he (anti Christ, the Pope) opposed."

Poetic Protestantism echoes this anti-Popery license in Horace Walpole's declaration, that

Love avenged a realm by priests enslav'd:
From Catherine's wrongs a nation's bliss was spread,
And Luther's light from lawless Henry's bed.

And Gray joined his friend in higher praise of Protestant liberty:

When Love could teach a monarch to be wise,
And gospel light first dawned from Boleyn's eyes.

A Pope "decreed this tyrannous decree that matrimony for no cause should be disallowed, though for many causes it might separate." Then Milton adds, on the other hand, that the Church of England allows divorce. "Our divines" (He is writing in pre-"nonconformist days") . . . "It is true, grant divorce for actual and proved adultery and . . . for many tedious and unrepairable years of desertion."

But "divorce and second marriage" should be allowed also "for any capital enmity or plot laid against the other's life, and likewise for evil or fierce usage;" and for "lesser contentions, if they be perpetual,"—as was decided and about to be enacted by "the whole assembled authority of England, both Church and State" (When a Catholic sovereign's reign intervened to restore Christianity) "in those times which are on record for the purest and sincerest that ever shone yet on the reformation of this island, at the time of Edward the Sixth." (When, as even Froude allows, "in general, spoliation became the law of the land;" under what Green calls "the Edwardian crew of spoilers . . . and plunderers, whose rule became simply a rule of terror.") "That worthy prince having utterly abolished the canon law out of his dominions, as his father did before him, appointed by full vote of Parliament . . . . divines and lawyers, of whom Cranmer, the Archbishop, Peter Martyr, etc. . . . were the chiefs, to frame and amend some ecclesiastical laws, that might be instead of what was abrogated."

And Milton brings his authorities—but who authorized *them*?—"Our reformers, . . . renowned men, worthy to be . . . leaders, teach liberty in divorce." He names, among many, these: "Wickliffe that Englishman honored of God to be the first preacher of a general reformation to all Europe, was . . . taught of God . . . to teach among his chiefest recoveries of truth 'that divorce is lawful to the Christian for many other causes equal to adultery.' (So suicide was soon another recovery (pagan) of "truth.") . . . "Next Luther, how great a servant of God!" (whose writings on marriage would put a publisher thereof, in the vernacular, into jail for obscene publications) . . . "allows 'that a man may send away a proud Vashti and marry an Esther in her stead.'"

"Melancthon, the third great luminary of reformation . . . grants divorce for cruel usage and danger of life. . . Shall not the magistrate . . . and much more the charity of a true church . . . free . . . the soul of a good man . . . (from) ingrateful usage . . . perpetual spite and disobedience, hatred; from this disquiet which interrupts his prayers and disturbs the course of his service to God and his country?"

[So said another lord of creation, Henry the Eight, husband of a patient Griselda, when "his conscience had crept too near another lady," and he proposed to "free his soul:" at which, said he, "no man ought to inveigh;" for he had examined the cause in the court of his own conscience, "which was enlightened and directed by the the spirit of God."]

And so much, to quote Milton's own words, for the opponents of "Popes" who "took advantage of monarchs' weak superstition to raise a corpulent law out of the canons and decretals of audacious priests . . . using this very instance of divorce as the first prop of their tyranny." Milton, as an historical philosopher, had a worthy successor in Voltaire, of "prehistoric" fame.

As a text-book Milton might be further edited for the little children of divorced fathers and mothers to day. This numerous class need instruction in their glorious freedom from Popes and parents: the older paganism has not left the newer with any suitable manuals quite up to date,—though, of course, Juvenal might furnish some hints; but he is not as sympathetic as Milton.

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