

while these people pray that they may be healed, *I* pray that they may not become atheists."

Thus spoke my friend, the young priest. Then I said to him :

"Why, then, do you remain in a church which holds such things?"

"Well," he said, rather embarrassed, "we are not bound to believe or to teach that the Virgin has appeared *here*. The bishop of this diocese has made an inquiry which he has found satisfactory, and so the pilgrimage has been permitted; but as long as the Holy See has not pronounced, we may or may not agree with the bishop in this case. It is not a matter of faith."

"And how can I respect a church which is thus double-sided!—a church which gives the enlightened freedom to reject the superstitions which she lays upon the poor people, and manages thus to keep in her fold, in apparent unity, men like Montalembert, Father Gratry, and others—spiritual, true Christian men, who would have scorned to believe in such childish things—and Bernadette Soubirous, the shepherdess to whom the Virgin appeared?"

"Well, the poor people cannot understand the sublime doctrine of the Gospel without some materialization of it!"

"Is that so? Did ever Jesus Christ stoop to forge false miracles to satisfy the common people?"

My friend did not answer, but before I left him I tried to show him the beauty of the Gospel simplicity and artlessness. We parted, both deeply moved; and I dare to hope that a good work was begun in his soul.

In these times of infidelity, the temptation for Evangelical Christians who do not sufficiently know Rome is to accept a kind of compromise with her; to look upon her as one of the forms of true religion; one of the things which, on the whole, make for purity and godliness. This temptation is a most dangerous one. We are fully aware that there are Roman Catholic dignitaries who evince a great love for souls and for God; we do not judge them; we hope they are sincere; we leave them to God and their own consciences. But, as a *system*, popery is the masterpiece of hell. It is a wonderful adaptation of paganism to Christianity; sensual in her worship, loose in her ethics, crafty and grasping in her politics—such is the Church of Rome. Her tendency everywhere has been to degrade and pollute mankind. Like the magician Circe, who changed Ulysses' companions into swine, Rome changes the noble aspirations of the human souls into selfish, base, and corrupted desires. She wrecks the virtue of young men and young women who come to her for protection; desecrates the home, enslaves the mind, darkens the soul. Do not judge Rome on that which she allows you to see of her in Protestant, enlightened countries; go to Portugal, go to Spain, to Italy, to Corsica, wherever she is uncontrolled by a dissenting religion. Yes, Rome is "the harlot which causes the nations to sin, the mother of the abominations of the earth."