

Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven: and I say to thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I shall give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.



Is the Church likened unto a house? It is placed on the foundation of a rock, which is Peter. Will you represent it under the figure of a family? You behold our Redeemer paying the tribute as his master, and after him comes Peter as his representative. Is the Church a bark? Peter is its pilot; and it is our Redeemer who instructs him. Is the doctrine by which we are drawn from the gulph of Sin represented by a fisher's net? It is Peter who casts it; Peter who draws it, the other disciples lend their aid, but it is Peter that presents the fishes to our Redeemer. Is the Church represented by an embassy? Saint Peter is its head. Do you prefer the figure of a King? Saint Peter carries its keys. In fine, will you have it shadowed under the symbol of flock and fold? Saint Peter is the Shepherd, and Universal Pastor under Jesus Christ. S. Francis of Sales. Controv. Disc. 12.

CALENDAR.

- FEBRUARY 6—Sunday—V after the Epiphany
7—Monday—St Romuald Abbot
8—Tuesday—St John of Matha Conf Dub.
9—Wednesday—St Zozimus P. and Conf Dub.
10—Thursday—St Scholista V Dub
11—Friday—St Antherus P M. Dub.
12—Saturday—St Theodosius P M. Dub Sup.

A JUST JUDGMENT ON THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINES.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge a just judgment. St John, vii 24.

These words by which Christ asserted his character, and vindicated his conduct before the Jews, when the Scribes and Pharisees charged him with the high crime of having miraculously cured a sick man on the Sabbath day, the Catholic community may assume in all propriety, to exculpate itself from odious imputations, to exonerate its members from various slanders and prejudices weighing on them, and to invite all attentive observers, and the Protestant public particularly, to a sound and impartial examination. There was in the act of the eternal wisdom just alluded to, an appearance of evil, a seeming disobedience to the law of God; for that law forbade to work on the Sabbath day, and the Lord had often denounced his anger against the polluted profaners of his holy day. But after a more serious examination, that appearance of evil is found to be, in reality, a most excellent accomplishment of the law, a most sublime exhibition of divine mercy and beneficence, a display of divine power, loudly inviting men to praise the Almighty, so that instead of a violation of the Sabbath, we find in that act, the most excellent and sublime way of sanctifying the Lord's day by merev, religion and charity. So also will our separated brethren, in a serious, patient, impartial and disinterested examination, find that what has been held out to them as idolatry, superstition, fanaticism, folly, slavery, impiety in their Catholic Brethren, turns out to be but a concentration of all that is best calculated to honour God, and to exalt the religion of Christ, to extol his mercy over men, to spread life and light over mankind, to set the heart of man at peace with God, with all men and with itself. The points of the Catholic doctrine upon which the above assertion may be justified, are too numerous to come all under the censor remarks of a sheet, but analogy will bear out the general conclusion, by elucidating those points which, in the minds of many, form the blackest spots of popish tenets; by presenting a fair view of what some would call the heads of the hydra; in a word by exhibiting, not what vulgar prejudiced, defamatory libels, and sectarian declamations, make the Catholic Doctrine to be, but what the Catholics themselves state to be their tenets, their principles, their feelings and their practices.

Let us begin with the view that Catholics take of the last supper. Many a one, no doubt has sighed at the blindness of the poor papists, who believe the body and blood of Christ to be present under the Eucharistic symbols, and he has given vent to a holy indignation against their idolatry that makes them pay divine honors to bread, and against their stupidity and folly to believe, there is any thing more than bread, in what our senses tell us to be bread. The more moderate have laughed at the idea of transubstantiation, and discard it as little fit for the present enlightened age. Here is then what our belief has been held out to be by our opponents, or here

is the appearance of evil in our principle let us now come to the just judgment. The Catholic believes that by divine institution, the words pronounced by Christ, this is my body, are verified, whenever the successors of the Apostles repeat these words, as they have been commanded to do: they do not think it reasonable to say that these words, "this is my body," mean "this is not my body." They then believe the body and the whole person of Jesus Christ, to be really present under the appearance of bread and wine, just as a man would be truly and really present in a cloud of smoke or incense that would surround him.—The appearance of bread is a sort of veil under which the Son of God tempers the splendor of his majesty, that we may trust his word more than our senses, and have the merit which the incredulous apostle rejected at first: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." John xx. 29. Far from adoring bread, an idea too absurd to be harbored by any human being, the Catholic believes there is no bread in the Eucharist, and that Christ who made himself invisible to the disciples of Emmaus after having eaten with them, makes himself invisible in the Sacrament, though really present under the veil of bread which has ceased to exist, and whose appearance only, remains to make an impression on the senses. The Catholic is strengthened, confirmed and made unshaken in this belief, by the firm conviction, that nothing is hard or impossible to God, and to see in this great mystery of the Eucharist, the full verification of those words, that "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son." John, iii. 16. This revelation of God prepares him to be surprised at no pledge of love, no matter how extraordinary, from him who so loved men, as to become similar to them, and die in cruel torments for the love of them. The Catholic would consider it a mockery to have received at the last supper where Christ gave his apostles the endearing name of friends, nothing more than a piece of bread, to be a sign of his body: the Catholic knows much more impressive and effectual signs of the body of Christ than a piece of bread; he receives bread daily in large quantity, not as a sign of Christ's mercy, but as a real effect of that paternal providence that supports our life, and governs the world. We see then no sign in the Holy Eucharist, and to those who with the Jews would say "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" we answer with St. Peter: "Lord thou hast the words of eternal life." John v.

Confession too, is one of the heaviest charges brought forward against the Catholic community. Many perhaps have been used from their infancy, to go upon confession, as the invention of crafty priests to enslave the consciences of men, as a torture of souls, depriving men of the liberty of the Gospel, as the powerful engine by which a mass of men exercises an undue influence over another class, as a foolish and superstitious practice by which the superstitious and priest ridden believer is made to buy with money the forgiveness of his sins. Here is the judgement which many pass on confession judging according to the appearance, that is, judging from what they have heard in idle conversation from persons not better informed than themselves, judging from malicious imputations spread by envy, and circulated by the spirit of calumny, judging from obscure and unauthentic libels, in which a man lies with security because he remains unknown. But when from this judgement in appearance he passes to the just judgement, he is surprised to learn that not only priests receive no money for hearing confes-

sions, but that they sacrifice their time, their comfort, their health in order to assist their fellow men in this most laborious function of their ministry, that the only kind of influence they exercise over men who open to them the secrets of their consciences, is to admonish the sinner and instruct the ignorant, to console the tempted and the afflicted, to strengthen the weak, to cause enemies to come to a reconciliation, and unjust retainers of the property of others to restore ill-gotten goods, to cause men to desist from their evil undertakings, and to prepare them by their exhortations, pious admonitions and fatherly reproaches to quit their evil habits, and effect their reconciliation with God. If they claim the power of forgiving sins to those who are truly repentant and converted, it is not a privilege which they claim as due to their superior natural talent, excellence or learning, it is one which they must humbly acknowledge in themselves from the appointment of Christ, who said "whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained." John xx 23 Christ having chosen that sins should be forgiven in the form of a judicial process, in which the sinner is his own accuser, and the priest sits as a judge appointed by divine authority, thus to do away with the fanaticism, folly and presumption of those who after having worked their imagination with the idea of pardon, feel the forgiveness of their sins. Whether confession be a torture of souls, is to be enquired and ascertained from those who frequent this institution of Christ, not from those who testify what they never experienced, and if they thus inquire from a proper source they will learn that confession, far from being a torture, is a most salutary balm on a troubled conscience, a source of humble confidence, and the most effectual, nay, the sole cure of remorse, for if an afflicted man experiences relief from unburdening himself to a faithful friend, what consolation must it not be to open one's wound to a disinterested and charitable physician, who will relieve and comfort in the name of heaven? In fine, if one can scarcely in his life help yielding to the influence of some one or other by whom he is surrounded; which is the best alternative, either to be directed by a confessor who makes it the business of his life to be useful to his fellow men, and who in the advice he will give you, will seek only the interest of your soul, the glory of God and the honor of religion, because he has nothing else to provide for, having no children no wife, and no family; or to be governed by perfidious friends, by low companions, by designing impostors, by ambitious demagogues? Many of those who would not submit to be priest-ridden, namely submit to carry on their back some of the above tidors.

Another most common and universally circulated charge against the Catholic Church, is a pretended disrespect for Scripture, and a prohibition imposed on Catholics to read the word of God.—Those who judge from appearances, have long been accustomed to admit as a settled point, that the Catholic Church treats with indifference and contempt the sacred volumes, and withdraws from her followers the knowledge of the saving truths contained in the inspired writings of the prophets, evangelists and apostles. How does the case stand however not in appearance, but in reality? The reality is, that the Catholic Church has always venerated and honored the Sacred Scriptures, as a most sacred deposit entrusted to her, a fact so plain, that all Protestants have taken and received from her the Scriptures which they accuse her to slight and disregard: in the first ages of Christianity, she condemned as apostates, and guilty of a horrible profanation those

that delivered the Scriptures to the Pagans, who condemned the Sacred Volume to the flames, she reads the Scripture, and scarcely anything but Scripture is her liturgy, and all her priests and monks are by a positive law bound to spend a considerable portion of their time every day, in reading the Scripture in the most excellent way, which is that of prayer. The number of Catholic commentators of Scripture is immense, and a proof that the zeal for reading Scripture is far from abating in Catholic countries, is that the editions of several very extensive commentaries, including huge volumes folio, being exhausted, now ones have been recently published at great expense and labor. The best proof of the great respect the Catholic Church pays to Scripture, particularly to the most excellent part of it, the four gospels, will be acquired by attending a high Mass on those days and places, where the solemnity of the occasion, and the number of clergymen permit the sacred worship to be performed in all its majesty and pomp. The deacon, who is ordained almost exclusively to sing the gospels will be seen to place the Sacred Volume upon the altar with great respect, and bow down his knees before it, beseeching God to purify his lips, as he did those of the prophet, "with a libanum, that he may announce it worthily: then taking the book from the altar, he carries it raised before his eyes, presenting it to the veneration of the faithful; and, as soon as this is done, all present in church rise to show their veneration for the Sacred Volume, and remain in that attitude of respect all the time the gospel is sung; and the deacon, for a further testimony of the profound veneration in which this volume is held, gives it incense three times, and bows towards it whenever the name of Jesus is pronounced, exhibiting that respect to the living Word of him, whose name he reads aloud. Assuredly nothing can convince one better of the extraordinary respect paid to Scripture, than this uncommon way of acting in the solemn offices of the Church. In fine, I will add that many Catholic clergymen, with a view of expressing their profound respect for the New Testament, impose on themselves the rule to read a portion of it every day on their knees and with their head uncovered. As to the charge of a prohibition for the Catholic to read the Scripture, how far is the reality from the false appearance which many have credulously admitted! The Church, it is true, has always warned men that religion consists not in the sole reading of Scripture, "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii. 13); that many read Scripture without the necessary dispositions of humility, docility and desire of the glory of God, and often read to their own destruction, as those same Scriptures tell us (2 Peter iii 16) that the word of God is an abyss in which the ignorant and presumptuous may easily be lost; and indeed any candid reader will readily admit the legitimacy of these warnings. But she has never made a general prohibition of reading Scripture this is a foul calumny. She has never prohibited the reading of Scripture in their original texts, but she has in some times and places, not indeed absolutely prohibited men to read versions of Scripture in the vulgar tongue, but to read such versions without the permission of their pastors, in order that the latter might judge that the version is not corrupted, and that the reader is not led by pride and fanaticism. But this prohibition is not a general law, and for peculiar times, for instance those of the rise of Protestantism, where every chambermaid, mechanic, apprentice and school-boy would think himself called to expound the Scripture, reason and point