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"The Confessional."

Its Benefits to the Individual, The Family, and Society.

The Rev. Father Stephen, C. P., preached the last of a course of sermons at St Joseph's Retreat, Highgate, London (Eng.) on "The Catholic Confessional," to a large congregation, among whom were a number of non-Catholics, who listened to the rev. gentleman's discourse with great attention. In the course of an eloquent sermon the rev. preacher said that in the lectures which he should conclude that evening he had tried to keep before them the two primary and essential effects of the sacrament of Penance—namely, the remission of sin and the infusion of the grace of God into the soul. Added to these there was the presence of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity, the practice of which, springing from the grace of God, rendered them and their actions worthy of an eternal recompense of glory. These were the invisible effects which ever flowed into the soul from sacramental confession, while they themselves, in their turn, became the sources of innumerable blessings to man which were naked and open to human eyes. These were peace to the individual soul, happiness to the family, and

Preservation of the Fundamental Principles of Society.

These were the external and visible effects which they claimed for the Catholic confessional over and above those primary ones which came direct from God to the soul, so that it went without saying, and he who ran might read, that the confession of the Catholic Church was widespread in its influences and beneficial in its results. First, it brought peace to the individual soul. There were many things which the heart of man covered, there were many things in life that a man desired, but there was one thing which, in the more solemn moments of his life, and when alone with the murmurings of his own soul, he would far prefer to all the riches, honours, or fame of the world, and that was the jewel of peace—the peace of a good conscience, the peace that could make him feel as happy as a man could feel in this life, a peace that whispered in his sadder moments of life that all was well between him and God. This was the peace that the world could not give, because it surpassed the world's understanding; this the peace which could never be the portion of the sinner or the ungodly. For peace was the result of order and harmony; unhappiness the outcome of disorder. All things in this world had been created by Almighty God in "order, weight, and measure;" all things on this earth had a relation and order one to another which had been established by the Creator, and when this order was preserved in the soul, in the family, or in the society, happiness and peace was the result, but when this order was infringed upon or broken, pain, anxiety, and remorse always ensued. Even in sensible and material things they had an example of this, for the pain in the body, or in any member of the body, was simply nothing less than the departure from the harmony which had been established by Almighty God between part and part. A nerve became exposed, and the result was a violent, agonizing, throbbing pain; so was it with the soul. The soul had a higher and closer relation to Almighty God than any mere material or sensible thing, and when the order was

Broken by the Non-observance of God's Commandments,

then remorse, uneasiness, and unhappiness of conscience were the result. This even was borne out by the words of Scripture, "They who are doers of the law become justified," and justification brings with it peace. "Much peace have they who love the law," and "There is no peace for the wicked because they transgress the commandments of God." So that the observance of God's law brought peace to the soul, and the breaking of that law unhappiness and remorse. From this it followed that if a man was to have peace in his soul he must again return to the path of observance in order that the relations between the soul and God might be re-established, and in order to do this there must be some potent factor

ruling the individual, and this was the Catholic confessional. For when a man broke the commandments of God and he went to confession, what did confession do for that man? It told him that he had broken the commandments of God, it told him that this was the source of his uneasiness and trouble, but it took away the sin from his soul which was the cause of the remorse. The priest in the confessional told him to again enter on the path of the observance of God's commandments, the priest raised his hand for absolution and forgiveness, and that raising of the hand became the signal for peace to enter that man's soul, and his soul, once filled with unhappiness and remorse, was filled with happiness, freed with the freedom where-with Christ had made him free. It might seem strange to say that the peace which came to a man from making his confession was intensified by the fact that he told his sins in sorrow. Sorrow that came straight from the heart, sorrow that was the result of realizing what an injury was done to God, added an intensity to peace which no words could tell. To confess one's sins necessarily brought peace because it was the unloading of a heart crushed with a weight it was never meant to bear, but the confession of sins with sorrow was the uplifting of the heart's hopes and the brightening of the soul's prospects to everlasting happiness. And while that peace remained in the soul, while it pervaded the soul and all its faculties, it became, as it were, a barrier to future relapses. As long as peace remained in the soul to the exclusion of sin, passions, and everything which they suggested lay conquered at its feet. After confession a man might be tempted, but the shame of having to confess yet another fall stimulated him to fight against it, and peace held sway in the soul. A concomitant of that peace was the consciousness of having greater power with Heaven. Sin was the only thing which made a man unfavourable in the sight of Heaven—the only obstacle to his receiving the graces and benefits of Almighty God, and when a man came to confession his sins were taken away, the grace of God was infused into his soul, and by that grace he became justified, and they knew that the prayer of the just man availeth much before Heaven. But not only did the confessional bring peace to the individual soul, but it brought happiness to the family. By the sacrament of Matrimony a certain order and relation was established between the several members of a family so that the husband should love the wife, that the wife should be faithful to the husband, and that the children should give due obedience and respect to their parents. And as in the case of the individual soul, when the order established between itself and Almighty God was broken, there was remorse and unhappiness, so also in the family when this order was broken, when the husband loved not the wife, when the wife was unfaithful to the husband, when the spiritual and temporal interests of the children were neglected, when the children themselves gave not the due obedience and respect, then the result was disorder and disunion. When this order was infringed upon then

the Husband and Wife Did Not Live as One,

but as two, and the children's interests were not looked to, and the children, seeing this, did not pay the obedience and honour due, the very idea which Christ had in instituting this sacrament of Matrimony was destroyed, the relations were broken, and the fundamental principles of family happiness and home life were shattered and gone. And how did the confessional remedy this state of affairs? Well, the husband went to confession, and he told the priest that he and his wife did not agree, and immediately the priest seeks the cause in order to suggest the remedy. He confessed that he was addicted to drink, kept bad company, or was the subject of a bad temper. The priest will tell him that that was the cause of his own unhappiness; he tells him that he is breaking the order established by Almighty God, and he insists upon a solemn promise for the immediate removal of that sin which was causing such unhappiness in the home circle. The man goes away, and, if he follows the directions given

by him the priest, then happiness and reunion are the result of that confession. Or it might be the wife who goes to confession, and says that owing to her husband's faults and failings, she has disregarded her own obligations—that, driven to desperation by his habitual intemperance, she has been unfaithful to him, has been harsh, violent, and ill-tempered with him, and thus fanned the flame of disunion and unhappiness. The priest tells that woman that example was better than precept, and that a kind word often went long way with the most obdurate. She left the confessional-box, and if she carried out the instructions that had been given her then happiness followed. Or it might be that the child, because of the severity of the father, or the over-indulgence of the mother, has resolved to stop the one, and follow the bent of those inclinations which had been unconsciously nursed by the mother. But the grace of God inspired him to go to confession and make his peace with God.

He Kneels at the Feet of the Priest.

It might be in some far-off land, and he tells the priest, like the prodigal of old, that he has gone far from his father's house, that he had sinned against Heaven, that he had got into bad company, that he had brought sorrow to the paternal home, that he had brought the grey hairs before their time, and had caused the deep furrows on the brows yet young. He kneels before the priest, who listens to the story with a sad and anxious heart; he tells the child to return and beg his father's forgiveness and live for evermore as an obedient and dutiful son. So that the confessional was the means of restoring happiness to the family because it insisted upon the obligations and relations which God had established being preserved. And as there were relations of the soul to God and between each member of the family, so likewise society was built upon relations. God had established the rights and obligations and relations of each man in society. To constitute a good society they must have some potent factor ruling the individual with a duly-authorized power to insist upon those obligations. All human laws and penalties tended to this end, but never secured it as efficiently and well as the Catholic confessional. There was that one law of God and equity, "Thou shalt not steal," and see how the Catholic confessional was the only true guardian of that law, how it enforced with more power than anything else that one man should not steal what belonged to another. A man went to confession and told that he had stolen what belonged to another. The priest found out the amount or value of the property stolen, and he told that man that he must restore what he had stolen, and unless he did so there was no forgiveness from Almighty God. If the same man were brought before a human tribunal he had to stand and bear the penalty of the law, and the man who had been robbed oftentimes did not receive a pennyworth of restitution. Or, supposing that the law did not catch the thief at all, and the thief was a Catholic and went to confession, and confessed he had stolen, the priest told him that although he escaped the laws of the land, he had not escaped the laws of God, and that he must restore the amount to the man he robbed. They would see therefore that

the Confessional Went Farther Than Any Human Law Could Go,

and it regarded justice as not fulfilled if there were not restitution. And this no doubt accounted in a great measure for the growing practice of non-Catholic masters and mistresses having none but Catholics in their homes as servants, because they knew that if they were but regular in their attendance at their duties they must be honest; so that the labourer did not steal and the servant did not pilfer. There was the case of the man who went to confession and accused himself of having said what was not true of his neighbour. He told this to the man's employer and as a consequence the man was dismissed. What did the confessional do in that case? It made that man go back to the employer, and tell him (the employer) that what he told him before was unjust and untrue, that the man was an honest man, or, in other words, he must swallow his own lie, but, more, he must make up to the man what he lost, and so if that

man was earning 30s. a week and he had been a month out of employment the vilifier of his character would have to restore the sum of £6. It was the confessional that most effectively influenced the Purity and Morality of a Nation.

Purity and morality in the mind of a Catholic did not exist merely in external decorum, but existed in the soul. The Catholic confessional brought the man face to face with the all holy God, and told him that there are relations he cannot tamper with. The Catholic confessional trained the inward heart to purity and morality, and caused to spring as an effect from its cause that external beauty of purity with regard to himself and others so that the Catholic confessional was the bringer of peace to the individual soul, was the bringer of happiness to the family, and the preserver of those principles which were necessary for the well-being of society, because it insisted on the rights, duties, and obligations of each being preserved and fulfilled. In conclusion, he (the rev. preacher) asked them to say a fervent prayer that the grace of God might enlighten those outside the pale of the Catholic Church that they might see the beauty of her teaching, that they might see that a power to forgive sins had been granted by Christ to the Apostles, and the exercise of that power necessarily implied self-accusation. Whilst they prayed for others let them renew their faith in that sacrament of God's infinite mercy and, realizing the greatness of that gift conferred often, avail themselves of the blessings innumerable which the Sacred Heart of Jesus was only too willing to pour out to the souls of men by the Catholic confessional.—Universe.

Collapse of Vilatte.

The "Old Catholic" Archbishop Left Flockless and Churchless—His Cathedral at Green Bay Sold.

From Green Bay comes the news, long expected, that "Archbishop" Vilatte—"Primate of the Old Catholic Church in America," has been left flockless, churchless and landless. The mighty shepherd has been deprived of his sheepfold and his little flock have sought more congenial pastures.

Vilatte has lost his footing completely. His Old Catholic cathedral in Green Bay, the primatial see of Old Catholicism in America, covered with liens and mortgages, has been sold. On last Friday, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, it was bought by the Polish Catholics for \$1,025. The building was blessed by Bishop Messmer, assisted by the Catholic clergy, on Washington's birthday, after which it was turned over to Father Malkowski, who will assume charge of the congregation. Extensive improvements are to be made in the church.

Not only has Vilatte been deprived of his cathedral but his other church at Duval, Kewaunee county, where he first opened up, has been lost to him. The few deluded Polish and Belgian followers, who have been supporting the Old Catholic movement, have deserted him, he couldn't agree with Kozlowski, the alleged Independent Polish Catholic bishop in Chicago, and his whole movement has collapsed.

Vilatte is a French-Canadian, who before coming to this country, underwent several religious transformations in Canada. He was next heard from at St. Viateur's college, near Chicago, as a "brother." He quit the Catholic church there, and falling in with the notorious ex-priest Chiniquy, became a Presbyterian minister, and preached for a while in Green Bay. Then he became a convert to Episcopalianism and was given minor orders, he went to Switzerland and was ordained by Herzog, an Old Catholic bishop.

Returning to this country, Vilatte disagreed with bishop Grafton, Bishop Brown's successor. We next hear of him endeavoring to enter the Catholic church, but his intentions were evidently not sincere. We next hear of him negotiating with a Greek schismatic in San Francisco.

The scene now shifts and Vilatte appears in Europe to join Dollingerism, but he was too late as Dollinger had just been laid in his grave. Pere Hyacinthe and the Gallican Church were next tried without success, and then he went to

Asia where he claims to have been ordained Bishop by the Metropolitan of Malabar, whose religion is a mixture of Nestorianism and Buddhism, and who is shunned by Catholic, Greek and Anglican clergymen. Whilst in Asia he joined an independent Catholic movement, similar to the Cleveland one, and published a catechism bristling with seventy heresies according to the Catholic Archbishop of Colombo. From India to Antioch is but a short step, and there he was again consecrated an Archbishop by the schismatic Metropolitan of Antioch.

Loaded down with these episcopal honours Vilatte returned to America as an "Old Catholic Archbishop." Since he has been in America it has leaked out that the Malabar patriarch did not ordain him because the price offered was not sufficient.

Of late Vilatte has made his headquarters at Duval, and more recently Green Bay, where he built a church.

Wished to Die in the Faith of His Fathers.

One of the foremost surgeons of Paris, and for that matter the world, Dr. Pean, has just died after having lived a Catholic. The Liverpool Catholic Times says: Dr. Pean gives us the example of the most remarkable surgeon of his time, or rather of any time, proclaiming his Catholic convictions on his deathbed. Canon Chormont, the priest who assisted him in his last moments, mentioned this at the great surgeon's open grave the other day. Besides being a Christian and a Catholic, Dr. Pean was a man of large heart and open-hand charity. While receiving fabulous sums from the rich he would operate on poor women for nothing, often bestowing on a patient of this kind the care of the tenderest nurse, and leaving her a bank note besides. He performed an act of charity of this sort on the morning of the first communion of his youngest daughter, saying to the Superior of the Augustinian nuns of the Rue de la Sante, where the operation took place: "It will bring a blessing on my child." Six doctors, who were passing the night with him, were witness of his last profession of his faith. One of them said: "Our master shows himself a great man to the last." Seeing his end draw near, Dr. Pean said: "Fetch me a priest; I wish to die in the faith of my fathers." After having received the last Sacraments and bid farewell to his family, he joined in the prayers for the dying that were being said around his bed. His last words were: "When one has done one's duty through life, one dies with the conviction of meeting one's own in another world."

English Catholics at the Restoration of the Hierarchy.

In a review of Mr. Wilfrid Ward's "Life of Cardinal Wiseman" the "Standard" lays great stress on the fact that at the time of the reestablishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in 1847 in this country there were two parties among English Catholics—those who were in favour of it, called "the Ultramontane party," and those who disapproved of it, designated by the "Standard" as a class "who represented the cause of liberty and objected to having a foreign yoke more firmly rivetted on their shoulders." The writer proceeds to draw a comparison between these two parties and the two parties then existing in the Anglican Church: "The old Roman Catholics had gone on in their own way for nearly two centuries; they had got used to it, and did not want to be disturbed in it, and this was very much the frame of mind of the great body of the Anglican clergy when the Tractarian movement first began." Now the truth is it was not fear of a foreign yoke that made some English Catholics view the re-establishment of the Hierarchy with trepidation; it was fear of their Protestant neighbours, fear of an outbreak of persecution, perhaps of the stake. They had suffered so much in the past that they were naturally timid about doing anything that might rouse the sleeping dog of Protestantism against them. The writer of the article allows "that on practical grounds and with a view to the future the Ultramontanes were right," a sensible admission which every Catholic will, of course, endorse.—Catholic Times.