

to die it was true—but to go with his loving hands tending him, and all their prayers to speed him on his far journey. A knowledge of the circumstances was not allowed to accentuate her grief, for she never knew he was Tom's assailant.

CONFESSIONS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PROTESTANT SECTS WHILE DEORING CONFSSIONAL, ADMIT THAT SOME KIND OF CONFSSION IS NECESSARY

By Wilmoth A. Farmer, former Methodist Minister, received a Catholic in May, 1915, at Savannah, Ga.

In speaking to a Protestant about the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, among the many points at which he is sure to take offense, there is no one so misunderstood and contemptuously spoken of by him as confession. And in order to set forth in clearness and detail all that pertains to confession it would be necessary to treat of the whole subject of penance, of which confession is but a part.

By way of a prefatory remark we also state, that this doctrine of the Holy Catholic Faith, like some others of salutary importance and necessity has been vigorously attacked by all sects not retaining confession in their system of religion. They have treated it like other doctrines which are not palatable to the carnal man, viz., cast it out. As if, forsooth, the ignoring of what God has been pleased to reveal rendered His law null and void! They do not like the idea of the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist and the Mass is "a blasphemous deceit" which has been abolished, so we are informed; again, they do not fancy the doctrine of Purgatory and consequently, "there is no Purgatory," but it is only a money-making superstition of the Roman Church.

That some kind of a confession is necessary in order to obtain forgiveness of sins is generally admitted by all sects which make any pretense of being orthodox from a Protestant standpoint. It is certainly insisted upon before baptism, and after as a means of restoration when one has fallen into sin.

Who does not know that in every Sunday morning and evening prayer service of the Episcopal Church, after the general confession is made by the congregation, the minister gives them absolution? Or let anyone attend the Sunday services of any Dissenting body and he will hear, extempore though the prayer may be, a confession of sin by the minister in behalf of himself and the congregation.

Confession then is a sine qua non of the Christian religion. For, since on the one hand, "without shedding of blood there is no remission," so on the other, there is no forgiveness without confession. He that will not confess his sins shall perish. All of this is too plain to need further discussion. The Church, the old and new Scriptures, tradition, and conscience, all testify only too plainly to the imperative duty of the confession of sin.

But let us now take up the real point at issue. Why is it necessary to confess sin to a priest? Because this doctrine has the authority of the Church, the Scriptures, Tradition, and Fathers. Moreover it is exemplified in all ages from the inception of Christianity until the present day.

For whereas in smaller sinners do penitence during a suitable term, and according to the order of discipline come to confession, and by the imposition of the hands of the bishop and of the clergy receive the right to communion, now, at an unsettled period when the persecution still continues, peace not yet restored to His Church, they are admitted to Communion and their names are offered, and penitence not yet done, confession not yet made, and the hand not yet laid upon them by the bishop and clergy, the Eucharist is given them, though it is written: "Whoever shall eat the bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord."

Lactantius in the fourth century, says: "As every sect of heretics thinks its followers are above all others, Christians, and its own the Catholic Church, it is to be known that that is the true (Catholic Church) wherein is confession and penitence, which wholesomely heals the wounds and sins to which the weakness of the flesh is subject."

In the same century St. Athanasius on Pa. xcix 4: "Enter into His gates with confession. He calls the Church on earth the gates of the Lord, in which (Church) we must make confession, proclaiming our past transgressions, and we must make known the benefits conferred upon us." Also, "As man is illuminated by the grace of the Holy Spirit by the priest that baptizes, so also he who confesses in penitence, receives through the priest, by the grace of Christ, the remission of sins."

St. Ambrose: "We have received the Holy Ghost, who not only forgives our own sins, but also makes us His priests to forgive the sins of others."

Finally, St. Augustine: "Confession I say, heals us; the Apostle John says, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all iniquity.'"

"Trammelled in the bonds of sins so deadly does he decline or delay, or hesitate to fly unto the keys themselves of the Church, by which he may be loosed in heaven—And when he shall have passed upon himself the sentence of a most severe remedy, but still a remedy, let him come to the prelates through whom the keys are ministered to him in the Church; and as one now beginning to be a good son, let him—in the order of the members of the mother being preserved—receive the manner (measure) of his satisfaction from those who are set over the sacraments."

So we find that confession has not at any time been considered a new practice imposed upon the Church by "priestcraft." Like other great dogmas of the Church, if it had not been of divine institution people of every clime, age, and condition of life, would not have submitted to it. Yet until the rise of the Protestant sects in the sixteenth century all Christians went to confession. And moreover, it is a fact of no small significance that the overwhelming majority of Christendom still in this very day go to confession. In this, like in some other fundamental articles of faith of the Church, the "reformers" (?) were not and can never be successful in the attempt to overthrow it.

In the third place, though hard to the natural man, yet confession is truly a response to the deep needs of the human heart. What is a "mourner's bench" or an "after-meeting" but a kind of Protestant confession? Do not tell me that there they weep, pray, and confess their sins to God alone, because we know from personal experience and observation that many of those who seek such a remedy about their souls' salvation do not stop short of a confession to the Protestant minister of many of their sins and difficulties. Let no one deny that the Protestant minister is often made the depository of the sinful burdens of his parishioners. If it be said in reply, that this is indeed true, but not with the purpose of obtaining absolution, I answer, alas! that the Protestant church, having separated herself from her Mother, the Holy Catholic Church, stands before an unbelieving sorrowing, and sinning world, unable, since she has repudiated the institution of confession founded by our Lord Himself, to speak the words of authority and power by which the soul may be released from the bonds of sin.

Let me quote a passage from that illustrious and good man Cardinal Newman who had such a rare gift in portraying Christian truth and such a keen analyst of the emotions of the human heart. On Confession he says: "How many are the souls in distress, anxiety, or loneliness whose one need is to find a being to whom they can pour out their feelings unheard by the world! Tell them out they must; they cannot tell them out to those whom they see every hour. They want to tell them and not to tell them; and they want to tell them out, yet be as if they be not told; they wish to tell them to one who is strong enough to bear them, yet not strong to despise them; they wish to tell them to one who can at once advise and can sympathize with them; they wish to relieve themselves of a load, to gain a solace, to receive the assurance that there is one who thinks of them, and one to whom in thought they can recur, to whom they can betake themselves, if necessary, from time to time, while they are in the world. How many a Protestant's heart would leap at the news of such a

benefit, putting aside all distinct ideas of a sacramental ordinance, or a grant of pardon and the conveyance of grace! If there is a heavenly idea in the Catholic Church, looking at it simply as an idea, surely, next after the Blessed Sacrament, confession is such. And such is it kneeling, the low and contrite voice, the sign of the cross hanging, so to say, over the head bowed low, and the words of peace and blessing. Oh, what a soothing charm is there, which the world can neither give nor take away. Oh! what piercing, heart-subduing tranquility, provoking tears of joy, is poured almost substantially and physically upon the soul, the oil of gladness, as the Scripture calls it, when the penitent at length rises his God reconciled to him, his sins rolled away forever! This is confession as it is in fact!"

Confession, instead of being as many Protestants ignorantly think and assert, an opportunity and inducement to lead men and women into sin, is, on the other hand, a positive deterrent to keep them from sin. The fact that a man who is solicited to sin, knows that if he yields he must declare it to a fellow-being in order to obtain forgiveness, causes him to stop and think many times before acting. To confess one's sins to God alone and in a general way, is a much easier thing than to deliberately kneel down in the confessional and there detail one's sins and shortcomings to a priest. Men and women would never do it if it did not have the incontrovertible authority of Christ and His Church back of it.

Again, if you think, my dear Protestant friend, that a Catholic can by the mere telling of his sins to a priest obtain forgiveness, you are sadly mistaken. Without sincere contrition, purpose of amendment, confession amounts to nothing and the poor penitent does but add sin unto sin—even sacrilege. And as for the (horrible thought!) it is a malicious lie when told by those who know better and an unkind and cruel slander when spoken by those who could know better if they would only take the trouble to investigate.

Since becoming a Catholic the writer has often contrasted the time, when as a Protestant minister he felt that much had been accomplished if he could induce a number of back-slidden Christians and sinners to come forward to the chancel-rail or "mourner's bench" to confess sin and seek pardon of God, with what he now knows to be a fact, viz., that without any great solicitation on the part of the priests of the Church, thousands upon thousands of Catholics go constantly to confession, and also the large number who are being instructed in the Christian faith preparatory for the same holy sacrament. When we read of the strenuous efforts put forth by the Protestant churches in a union "revival," etc., the great rejoicing over a few hundred cards signed, or hands held up, while we rejoice, too, in all the moral impetus and positive good that may be derived from such efforts, yet we cannot but thank God that in the thousands upon thousands of Catholics there is provided a way and means of divine renovation of which thousands are constantly availing themselves. Oh! that Protestants knew (for they do not know), of the wonderful life of Sacramental Grace Christ has provided for mankind in His Church. There is nothing of good attempted in Protestantism but what it may be found in the Catholic Church, and as a beautiful tree planted by God, has been bringing forth its these centuries, blossoms and fruit to perfection, and confession is one of these trees.

O compassionate Lord and Redeemer of mankind, how wonderful are Thy wisdom and goodness! Thy love knows no limit, but Thou hast shed Thy Precious Blood, that man confessing may receive remission of his sins and become a worthy temple of the Holy Ghost. Let Thy Sacred Heart pity, we beseech Thee, all who in their ignorance calumniate Thy Holy Church and her saving doctrines. O Lord, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."—The Catholic Convert.

noted maker of powder and guns, issued a rather dogmatic work on the essentials of true poetry. He was easily paralleled by Mr. Edison, who relied on his undoubted achievements in practical electricity, to lend authority to his sophomoric effusions, denying the immortality of the soul. Psychologists did not take Mr. Edison seriously. With none but the crudest notions of "soul" and "immortality," his conclusions had no interest, save as showing the possible vagaries of a constructive mind. They were in no sense conclusive, except to the unthinking multitude. Mr. Edison had made wires glow and discs talk. He was therefore competent, so their logic ran, to dogmatize in philosophy, Scripture and theology.

It was left for Dr. George W. Crile, of Cleveland, a surgeon of genuine attainment, to relinquish the scalpel on Easter Day, and prove to a Baptist congregation that the soul, if it exists, is not immortal. If correctly reported by the press, Dr. Crile did not state that physical science, as such, had nothing to do with the soul's immortality; a position which is not only intelligible but correct. On the contrary, the learned doctor held that physical science, having explored heaven, had rejected it as a very dull and dreary place; that science had demonstrated that "religion is unsupported by logic and facts;" that "individual resurrection" and "eternal life" are only dreams. Having thus extended the field of science, beyond the dreams even of the discarded Sage of Jena, Dr. Crile received with becoming modesty the thanks and congratulations of the assembled Easter Day Baptists.

No doubt Dr. Crile is a man disposed to cry out against the supposed attempt of religion to "dogmatize on science." He has no scruple, however, in leaving his last to dogmatize on religion. Eminent as a surgeon, Dr. Crile's own words prove that what he knows of the soul and its immortality, of the resurrection of the dead, and of future retribution, forms a notable contribution to the world's store of nonsense. Perhaps, after all, what is significant in the whole episode is not the fact that Dr. Crile chose Easter Day as an appropriate time for a public denial of the truth of Christianity, but that he was invited to do so by a church supposedly Christian. There is little doubt that Dr. Crile needs a truer sense of the limitations of science. There is no doubt whatever that the East End Baptist Church of Cleveland needs the first beginnings of faith in the promises of Jesus Christ.

THE COBBLER'S LAST

There is an ancient saw which bids the cobbler stick to his last. The axiom is founded on common sense. Some of us can do one or two things fairly well, but very few of us can do all things, even passably. An excellent cobbler, even passably. An excellent cobbler, may make a poor philosopher. A plumber of distinguished attainments in his useful and opulent art, may be painfully insufficient as a critic of old tapestry. Creakless shoes and insubordinate pipes are their metier. They will wisely leave art and philosophy to more practised hands.

Here in the United States, however, we accept the theory that eminence in anything, or even notoriety, makes one a doctor of universal learning. Washington Irving long ago pointed out the peculiar felicity which attaches to the jokes of rich men. To day we accept not merely their witticisms, but also their theories in art, literature, education and philanthropy, and that without question. We have infallible popes in everything except religion; priding ourselves on our intelligent freedom, we daily reject the scholastic principle that no authority is worth more than the reason back of it. Some years ago, Mr. Hudson Maxim, a

Who learns and learns, but acts not with the know, is one who plows and plows, but never sows.

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