

SELECTED.

MUSENBETH'S DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Continued.

Mr White's absurd caricature of Catholic practices.—true meaning of *superstition*—His Misrepresentation of the nature of repentance, and of fasting—his insidious attack upon the Roman breviary.—its real tendency the opposite to that charged upon it by Mr. White.—his false account of our doctrine respecting good works.—our doctrine truly stated.—presumption of Luther.—doctrine of celibacy and religious vows.—Conclusion.

MR. WHITE having advanced, in the conclusion of his third Dialogue, that every Catholic "must become a weak, superstitious being," if not a violent and bigotted persecutor—proceeds in the beginning of the fourth to attempt some proof of his assertion. For this purpose he collects together a number of pious practices of Catholics, and some which probably no Catholic ever thought of; and mixes them up in one monstrous caricature of a "Romanist retiring to bed at night." He falsely asserts that the Catholic Church encourages a *superstitious* state of mind similar to that which makes people afraid of witches, charms, omens, and such things; and we must say, that if Mr. White's account of Catholic practices were anything like truth, there would be some ground for the assertion. But what are the practices he describes, and what does he wish his reader to infer? We cannot afford space for a copy of his picture, though it would be highly amusing to a Catholic to see how Mr. White has ridiculously worked it up. These, however, are the leading features: the Romanist lights up two candles near his crucifix, beats his breast till it rings again—takes a skull out of a cupboard and kisses it! gives himself a discipline, mutters several prayers, turning to every picture in his room, sprinkles the bed and room with holy water to keep the devil off, and to wash away his own venial sins, which, according to Mr. White, holy water has the power of clearing away: then he has an *Agnus Dei* made in a mould, says Mr. White, "not unlike a large butter-pat;" what he does with this, Mr. White omits to tell us, but he says that every kiss impressed upon it strikes off the amount of fifty or an hundred days from the debt he has to pay in purgatory. Then he feels for his rosary and scapular about his neck, says a prayer to his good angel, and makes the sign of the cross the last thing. These are some of the strokes in Mr. White's laboured caricature; upon which we shall briefly remark: 1st.—That many of the practices may be done with a proper intention, and assist a person to retire to rest in a Christian manner; particularly begging the prayers and protection of our guardian angel, and the holy sign of the cross, which has been in use from the very days of the Apostles. 2d.—That the use of holy water is very ancient in the Church, as a means of drawing down a blessing of God, which we hope to obtain through the prayers which the Church has appointed to be used in blessing it; but that we do not believe, as Mr. White falsely asserts, that holy water has any power in itself, or spiritual virtue to wash away even venial sins. 3d.—That no pious Catholic considers that any outward ceremonies or practices can avail him, without true repentance for his sins, without faith, hope, charity, and careful keeping of all the commandments; so that he will not neglect prayer, self examination, meditation and spiritual reading, which Mr. White takes care not to mention; and that if to these he joins outward mortifications or ceremonies, they are only adopted as helps to interior devotion, or expressions of it. 4th.—That kissing an *Agnus Dei* will not free us from purgatory; and that *kissing a skull* is a new way of cherishing the remembrance of death, which we never heard of before.

And from the above ridiculous caricature of re-

ligious practices, scarce one of which is held by any Catholic as essential to religion; and all of which we feel confident are not practised by any one Catholic in the world, Mr. White attempts to infer, that we "must become weak, superstitious beings!" *Superstition*, properly defined, is "an excessive and superfluous worship, by which either sovereign honour is given to the creature, or in an undue manner to the Creator." Our adversaries have the word *superstition* so continually in their mouths against our religious practices, without knowing what they really mean by the term, that it is necessary to lay down its meaning accurately, and then we are not afraid for our practices to be tried by it. None of our authorized religious ceremonies or practices render *sovereign honour to the creature*; we pay to relics, images, &c. no more than a relative honour, as memorials of Christ and his saints; nor by any of them do we *adore the Creator in an undue manner*, that is, in a manner which he has not appointed, either himself, or by those who have authority from him, and which consequently is not pleasing to him. We are ready to shew that our religious practices are grounded upon Scripture, and the universal practice of antiquity, and approved by the Church of God, which has authority to guide us, and if other practices are in use not so grounded and approved, or if those that are approved are not performed in the proper manner by any individuals, the Church is not answerable for them. She does all in her power to confine these practices within proper and salutary limits. Many decrees of councils might be quoted, to prove how desirous the pastors of the Church have been to prevent superstitions: we shall confine ourselves to a decree of the Council of Mecklin in 1670, and select it because its language is remarkably applicable to Mr. White's picture of the Romanists. "Let not the faithful rashly give credit to certain books circulated or even printed with privilege, which from light and superstitious causes, and uncertain revelations, promise immoderate and unjustly exorbitant indulgences; particularly if they promise deliverance from certain effects, that is, from dangers of swords, torments, horses, plague, or certain deliverance from purgatory."

It was to be expected after this, that Mr. White would misrepresent our virtue of *pennance*. He has the boldness to assert, that though Catholics believe the atonement of Christ sufficient to save them from hell, they do not believe it enough to save them from a temporal punishment of sin. Thus he calumniously insinuates, that Catholics do not believe in the all-sufficiency of the atonement of Christ; but hope to atone themselves for what deserved temporal punishment, by voluntary sufferings of their own, independent of the satisfaction of Christ. If this were Catholic doctrine, Mr. White might well write a "Preservative" from it. But we are of opinion, that the man who could thus knowingly misrepresent the creed in which he was educated, and of which he was an appointed preacher, would find equal room to condemn the great Apostle himself, for he says of himself, that he "fills up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in his flesh," &c. (Coloss. i, 24.) We should be glad to hear Mr. White's explanation of that passage: but meantime we can assure his readers, what Mr. White knew when he wrote perfectly well,—that the doctrine of the Catholic Church is very far from being thus injurious to the merits of Christ. What we call *satisfaction*, is nothing else than an application of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus to our souls. We believe that the atonement of Christ was full and infinite in value; that he offered a superabundant satisfaction for our sins, more than sufficient to atone for all that they deserved, both temporal and eternal. But he can apply this satisfaction to us as he pleases; either by abolishing our sins entirely, and all punishments

due to them;—or, by removing the eternal punishment, and still leaving us to endure some temporal sufferings. The first method, we believe him to use in Baptism, but the second frequently in regard of the sins we commit after Baptism. He requires some temporal punishment to hold us to the line of duty, and it is to fulfil this obligation, that we undergo certain painful works which we call *satisfaction*. These reserved punishments do not proceed from any deficiency in our Saviour's payment, but from a certain order which he himself has established for the application of his atonement to our souls. Our salvation is all the work of his mercy and grace, first and last: what we do by his grace, is not less his, than what he does himself by his own absolute will; and we only hope, through his merits, for our works to prove satisfactory.

To be Continued.

Original

DIVINE CHARITY.

Vain, but for thee, O charity, had been Creation's wonders all: nor ought had pleased In all this universe immense display'd; With suns and moons so bright, and twinkling stars, And gaily glittering globes, strew'd profuse O'er the azure arch, illicitly spread: Not all this fabric vast, external rear'd,— With all th' enchanting scenes its sphere enfold, Could cheer the drooping mind; or ought impart To move our smiles, or wake the heart to joy. Ev'n reason's ray, that chief delighting shines, Would pain, but through thy milder medium seen, The aching sight, and scorch the frenzied brain— Thus fierce it flames, and scorching on the sight Of those unblest, whom wilful guilt has plac'd Beyond the bounds extreme, and limits fix'd Of thine and mercy's realms; where patient hope, With heav'n ward looks expectant, still sojourns.— But O, how goodly all, and glad some smiles The scene within thy sacred influence spread! What visions there of ever varying bliss; And objects all around endearing crowd! Though chief in heav'n thy glory shines reveal'd To those all beautiful, basking in the blaze Of deity disclor'd: who on their sight The glowing wonders of his bosom bares.— Till all, in bright array, like mirrors pure His light essential back reflecting send.

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