

# The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

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## ORIGINAL.

### HYMN TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse: and a flower shall rise up out of this root; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him."—Isaiah, Ch. 11. v. 1, 2.

Sweet flow'rs, the fairest ever blown  
In Sharon's lovely vale:  
Whose balmy fragrance, wide around  
Perfumes the wafting gale!

By sacred Sion's sainted bands  
In strain prophetic sung;  
At length from Jesse's regal root  
All pure and spotless sprung!

The Heav'ns to nurse thy growing stem,  
Distill'd their brightest dew:  
And, hovering o'er thine hallowed top,  
The ethereal spirit flew.

Not Eden, in her blooming haunts,  
With all her flow'rs so fair,  
Could boast a flow'r so choice as thine,  
For worth and beauty rare.

'Twas she, the stem from Jesse's root,  
God's Virgin sprung;  
And he the flow'r, Jez. Sou Divine,  
By all the Prophet's sung.

On him in Jordan's stream baptiz'd,  
Descends the mystic dove:  
And loud his Son below'd the Sira  
Proclaims him from above.

## SELECTED.

From the London Catholic Miscellany.

### DIFFICULTIES OF PROTESTANTISM.

PROTESTANTISM necessarily labours under the disadvantage of all systems founded on negatives: it is instable, because, being only a reformed creed, men will entertain adverse opinions respecting the extent of the original reformation, and suggest further improvements; and it must always continue sectarian, because its very existence depends on the permanency of that religion from which it separated. To appreciate its doctrines properly, you must familiarize yourself with the tenets of the church which it impugns; and, were it possible for these to become, as it were, extinct, Protestants must, at once, dissolve, or, at least, separate into sectarian particles, without any bond of unity, or possibility of perpetuating their doctrines.

Dr. Burgess was quite correct in stating that Protestantism was an abjuration of Popery; there is nothing original about it; its origin was negative, and can be traced to men who called themselves Catholic reformers. The name which, in fondness, they gave themselves, sufficiently testifies the nature of their opinions, and their belief in the Apostolic descent of the church, which they wished to improve. Circumstances produced in them a more

daring mind, and the new doctrines which they promulgated in a spirit of envy and detraction, have been ever since supported, by a mental delusion, which has its foundation in popular ignorance. As long as Catholicism could be misrepresented with impunity, Protestantism did not want adherents: men were impelled into its folds by fear, and the Pope was the raw-head-and-bloody-bones which was being perpetually conjured up to fright the people into spiritual propriety. It is not in the nature of things that children of dissent could maintain their ground if people were placed in a condition which would admit them to examine, dispassionately, the claims of the mother church and the separatists. Christianity is not a thing that admits of improvement: being a revelation it was originally perfect; and having been enforced by the life, miracles, and death of the Redeemer, it is nothing less than gross impiety to suppose, for an instant, that He would establish a church which might, even by possibility, need reform—not in discipline—but in doctrinal matters. This is an argument which suggests itself, at once, to every capacity; which cannot be resisted, when fairly stated; and which must for ever operate against the stability of Protestantism. Dr. Fletcher remarks:

"There are various causes, however,—although I shall not enumerate them,—why the Protestant refuses to investigate the claims, and discuss the character of the Catholic Religion. One of these, for I will just cite one or two of them,—is the ignorance,—the strange, the false, the preposterous notions, which he entertains of our sacred institution. For, although there be, perhaps, no subject that is more familiar to him than that of 'Popery,'—none upon which he divells more delightfully, and dissertates more fluently,—(it is the constant topic of his conversations, and the favourite theme of his invectives,)—yet it is true that there is no one subject upon which his ignorance is more pitiful, and his notions more erroneous. The circumstance, is, unhappily but too natural. For, not only is the whole education of the Protestant—(I speak with some exceptions,)—from the very lap of the nurse to the completion of his studies in the schools, a system of misrepresentation of our religion, but every thing, almost, in society contributes to burn still deeper upon his mind the false and pernicious impressions,—conversations, the laws, the pulpit, and above all—still worse than the sword of persecution,—the pen and the press. And, then, to correct, or counteract, all this injustice, he never,—or, at least, hardly ever,—gives himself the trouble to consult any proper medium for correct instruction,

neither any Catholic writer, nor any well instructed Catholic. He neither suspects,—as he would do in any other case of violent accusation,—that the imputations may be false; or that the charges may be exaggerated. Imposed upon by the defectiveness of his early education;—deceived by a set of preachers, who are, themselves, the dupes of ignorance and prejudice; cheated by works which are the effusions of hostility, bigotry, and interest; he lives on, calmly and imprudently, contented and secure—violating, alike, both his own principles, which bid him discuss before he believes, and the rules of justice, which command him to listen to the accused, ere he ventures to condemn. I do not say, that having done this—having studied our religion carefully—he will, therefore, be induced to embrace it. He may not do this: for faith is the effect of grace. But, at all events, his knowledge will produce this effect: he will no more condemn or insult our religion; and although his sin may be greater, still it will be a less stupid sin than it is at present. For then, like the angel of pride, he will choose between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, with a knowledge of the cause.

"However, such, unhappily, is the cause: there are no disorders which it is so difficult to cure as the disorders of the understanding. The passions of the heart may be soothed and rendered calm. Conflicting interests may be reconciled, and enmities done away. All this is the work of time; and time, by degrees, effects it. But against the disorders of error time has, in general, hardly any effect whatever: because, still fostered by prejudices, and animated by the passions which it engenders, error constantly goes on increasing, and never waxes old. Hence, therefore, it is—from the fruits of ignorance, generated chiefly by misrepresentation; and from the disorders of the understanding, produced by misconception—that the Protestant refuses, with so much obstinacy, to investigate the character of his parent church."

The truth is, that Protestantism, being a reformed religion, is, from the admission implied in the term, necessarily imperfect, and those who think that it needs further reform have a right, on the fundamental principle of Protestantism, to adopt innovations as speedily and as abundantly as they conscientiously may think fit; hence the crowds of sects which distract every Protestant country. A plurality of sects begets, first, indifference; and, subsequently, infidelity. When one affirms and another denies, both cannot be right; and when religion degenerates into fanaticism, and the vulgar undertake to interpret the word of God, superficial