

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCCLVII.

In our last paper we have considered seven out of the forty-five propositions condemned by the Council of Constance as set forth by John Wycliffe, and apparently taken from his works, and have found that they are such as every Protestant church in the world would declare hardly consistent with the exercise of the ministry, or even with private membership. Indeed, several of them, we have seen, would mark their author not only as a heretic, but as an heresiarch.

We will consider two more of Wycliffe. (8) "Augustine, Benedict and Bernard are damned, unless they repented of having had possessions, and of having instituted and entered into religious orders, and so, from the Pope to the last and least religious, all are heretics."

Now strict history hardly allows that St. Augustine was the founder of an order, properly so called. Yet as he favored and introduced the canonical manner of living among his diocesan clergy, and encouraged sister monastic foundations, as he is known to have been in full accord with the eremitic and with the cenobitic manner of life, he sufficiently comes within the range of Wycliffe's condemnation.

Now what are Protestants to say to such a judgment upon Augustine? Bitter as was the original schism between Lutherans and Calvinists, they were in profound agreement concerning the Bishop of Hippo. They claimed him for their common patron and author only inferior, and not so very greatly inferior, to St. Paul himself. Even the Arminian school, when it came up, although St. Augustine to have gone too far in his predestinarianism (and of course the Catholic Church herself does not call him infallible and inspired) yet has always owned him for the greatest Western doctor of the Church, and for one of the greatest of all Christian writers and thinkers. How then can he call Wycliffe's declaration that he is probably damned, anything but an atrocious defamation of one of the greatest names in the history of Christianity?

As to Benedict, we can not suppose that Wycliffe was ignorant of the incalculable benefits rendered by his order, in the conversion and civilization of the nations, in the promotion of learning, religious and general, in the illustriousness of holy living, set forth by multitudes of its members, Popes, Bishops, abbots and abbesses, monks and nuns. Then what can we say of such a bitter sentence pronounced on such a man as Benedict of Nursia, and on the great order founded by him, and the illustrious Reformations derived from this, except that it confirms the judgment pronounced upon Wycliffe himself by Bishop Stubbs, that, Reformer or not, he appears to be without sympathy and charity? In other words whatever else he may be, he is not a Christian. How then is a Christian council to be condemned for condemning him?

After Wycliffe has behaved himself so abominably towards the memory of Augustine and Benedict, his hatredness towards St. Bernard is a matter of course.

Let us suppose now that Wycliffe had been sent again on earth in the flesh, but keeping all his old odiousness of temper towards every Christian name ever concerned with monasticism, whether as founder, reformer, promoter, follower, or simple admirer, in other words, towards almost every name of the Church for a thousand years. How would he find himself placed, if I do not say among Catholics, but among Protestants?

He would find Protestant scholarship, of every grade and shade, orthodox and heterodox, High Church, Low Church, Calvinistic, Arminian, Lutheran, Baptist, and Pledbaptist, settled in one consent against him, agreeing in reverent admiration of hundreds of men and women, on whose names he spits out the venom of a cold disdain. He could not be admitted into agreement even with that school of Christian thought supposed to be nearest his own except on such conditions as those expressed by St. Remigius to Clovis at his baptism: "Bow thy head, O Scambrian; adore that which thou hast burned, and burn that which thou hast adored."

Then if we are placed between Wycliffe's condemnations of the holy men and women of a thousand years, and the conciliar condemnation of Wycliffe himself, how can there be any doubt as to the side which we are bound to take as Christian men?

Wycliffe's cold virulence toward St. Bernard is doubly hateful, for two reasons. First the nearness of time. Bernard was only two hundred years earlier than he. Then the splendor of holiness in the great Abbot's life, which, after seven hundred years, still inspires and warms the pages of that Protestant of Protestants, Augustus Neander, and also of our own Puritan countryman, Richard S. Storrs. Wycliffe, however, to judge from all I have ever seen of his appears to have been perfectly insensible to saintliness, in every form. He had, undoubtedly, a strong sense of the duty of princes and prelates to govern justly, and for the general good; and the energy of his declarations to this effect, extravagant and utterly untenable as they are in form, has doubtless helped to deepen the sense of this duty in Western Christendom. But let there be a light veil of monasticism over a far deeper sense of human brotherhood than appears in him, as above all in Francis of Assisi, and Wycliffe meets it with a cold stare of non recognition, and then with a burst of blasphemous anathema.

However, for good or evil, Wycliffe's tenet, that "Dominion is founded in Grace," and that mortal sin in rulers extinguishes their authority, took no root in the Reformation. Mr. Richard Heath, indeed, finds it again in Anabaptism, but the Anabaptists were as abhorrent to the Reformers as to the

Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anglicans (although Dr. Griff assures me, in a much lesser measure than Catholics) agreed in drowning them, beheading them, or burning them. Even Elizabeth, who in general left speculative opinions very much to themselves, insisted, against the remonstrances of her friend Foxe the martyrologist, on burning several. They were not finally admitted within the circle of Protestantism until they had divested themselves of everything that could well be called specifically Lollardism.

The modern Baptists, certainly, are no more zealous for justice or brotherhood than Catholics or Episcopalians. The American Baptists seem to be becoming enslaved, rapidly and willingly, with the pious demonstrations of gratitude, to a notorious high-priest of Mammon, who being now pretty well assured of them, is stretching out his tentacles to encompass another denomination.

I do not see, therefore, that we are any more concerned to take the part of John Wycliffe against Constance and Rome than of the Albigenes against Innocent the third, or of the Manicheans against St. Augustine or St. Leo, or of the Gnostics against St. Irenaeus or Justin Martyr. I dare say we may learn much from Wycliffe, and so we may from the Manicheans and Gnostics, but this does not make these our fellow Christians. As Orestes A. Brownson rightly says, it is the truth in all heresies that sustains them, and the error that ultimately breaks them up. Wycliffe doubtless has left suggestions worth heeding, but Wycliffism soon broke up, because as Bishop Stubbs suggests, it does not appear to have been in any proper sense a school of Christian thought. Socialism has important elements of truth, but Socialism is not Christian.

"All religious orders, without exception have been brought in by the devil." This sums up the iniquity of all Wycliffe's previous denunciations, against Augustine, Benedict, Stephen Harding, Bernard, Peter the Venerable, Dominic, Francis and by anticipation, all those later foundations whose "rich fruits" are wretchedly extolled by the Protestant Ranke.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK, Andover, Mass.

MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART.

In the seventeenth century there lived in a convent of the Visitation at Paray-le Monial in France, an humble religious named Margaret Mary.

Although young in years, she received from heaven the most signal favors, the choicest benedictions, and I need hardly say that she corresponded to these favors by a most constant fidelity. One day, as she was adoring our blessed Lord in the quiet and peaceful chapel, the good Master appeared to her, and revealed all the treasures of love with which His Sacred Heart is inflamed for men. Not only once, but even a second and a third time, was this favor given her. These apparitions occurred in the year 1675.

Our Blessed Saviour showed her His Sacred Heart, surmounted by a cross, surrounded by a crown of thorns, and enveloped in flames, which seemed to her capable of consuming the world. He asked of her to have a feast established in honor of His Sacred Heart. He told her to behold the Heart of Jesus, which loved men so well, and enumerated the many blessings which should follow and flow upon whosoever should honor his Sacred Heart.

During twenty years Margaret Mary was in frequent communication with our blessed Lord, and during those years God permitted that she should be exposed to the severest trials and contradictions. In the year 1720 the plague ravaged the city of Marseilles. It was this circumstance that God employed to regularly establish the devotion to the Sacred Heart. To day this devotion is universal. It is known and practiced in every land where the true Church of God is found, while more than 20,000,000 souls have enrolled their minds in leagues, societies, and sodalities which have the Sacred Heart as the special object of their devotion. By a rescript of the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Pius IX., addressed to the whole Catholic world, a special feast celebrates the honor and the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June is the month of the Sacred Heart.—Rev. T. F. Ward.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

OF THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE, AND OF THE EFFICACY OF DIVINE GRACE. For she having fallen through the first man, Adam, and having been corrupted by the penalty of this stain has descended upon all mankind; so that nature herself, which by Thee was created good and right, is now put for the vice and infirmity of corrupt nature; because the motion thereof, left to itself, draws to evil and to things below.

For the little strength which remains is but like a spark hidden in the ashes. This is our natural reason, which is surrounded with a great mist, having yet the judgment of good and evil and the distance of truth and falsehood, through it is unable to fulfil all that it approves, neither does it now enjoy the full light of truth, nor the former integrity of its affections.

Hence it is, O my God, that according to the inward man I am delighted to be good, just and holy, and reproofing all evil and sin as what ought to be shunned.

Learn of Him. Silent, mysterious, the teacher is the Holy Ghost: He gives to His pupils a noble simplicity, a directness, that surpasses mere intellect and natural talents. This teaching has produced a new creation, the apostles, the virgins; and it inspired an infallible Church within whom the Holy Ghost dwells, to correct our errors and to keep the truth in this world.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Second Sunday after Pentecost. THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

The month of June has, as you know, my brethren, been set apart by general consent for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as that of May has in the same way been devoted to our Blessed Lady; and on next Friday, the day following the octave of Corpus Christi, the Church solemnly celebrates the Feast of the Sacred Heart. This feast, formerly observed only in some places, has for about thirty years been kept everywhere.

As the devotion to the Sacred Heart has of late spread so widely in the Church, and is so plainly pleasing to God and most salutary to us, it is well that we should understand it clearly, that we may enter into it more fully. In this first place, then, we will ask, what is the nature of the worship which we render to the Sacred Heart of Jesus? And, secondly, why is it especially selected as the object of our devotion? What then, is the nature of our worship of the Sacred Heart? It is, of course, the same as that which we pay to our Lord Himself—that is, the worship which is due to Him as God, the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. His human nature, united to the divine nature in one Person, is truly worthy of divine worship and honor.

God, having become man, His human heart is the heart of God, and must be adored as such. Let us, then, remember this: the devotion to the Sacred Heart is one that is given to God Himself, just as that is which we have for the Blessed Sacrament in which He resides on our altars.

But why do we select the Heart of our Lord, or rather why has He Himself selected it, as a special object of our adoration? I say, why has He Himself selected it? for this devotion to the Sacred Heart in modern times is due specially to a revelation made by our Lord to the Blessed Margaret Mary, a nun of the Visitation, two centuries ago.

In answer to this question we may say that our Lord's Heart is the fountain of our salvation, and was pierced by the lance, like His hands and feet by the nails, on the Cross; and it is in this way specially pointed out as the object of our gratitude and love. But even a more urgent reason is that the heart is a natural symbol of love, agreed on by a universal consent at all times and in all parts of the world, and therefore that the Heart of Jesus most perfectly represents His love for us. In adoring the Sacred Heart, then, we adore in a particular manner the love of Christ for sinners; and it is for this reason that He has given us this devotion, knowing that it is only by the thought of the love of His Heart for us that our hearts can be turned to the love of Him.

Yes, my brethren, God wishes our love; it was to obtain it that He became one of us and died for us on the Cross; and it is to win it now that He asks us to remember and to adore His Sacred Heart. "Let us therefore," says St. John, "love God, because God first hath loved us." This is the spirit of this devotion; that we should not try to save our souls merely for the fear of hell, but that, seeing how much God has loved us, we should love Him in return. And also that seeing how much He has loved our brethren, the same fire of divine charity may be kindled in our hearts, and thus each one of us may do our share to carry on and to complete the work for which He shed His Precious Blood: the bringing of the world to the knowledge and love of Him.

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART.

FATHER RYAN. Two lights on a lowly altar: Two snowy cloths for a feast: The morning comes from the east, With a gleam for the folds of the vestments, And a grace for the face of the priest.

The sound of a low, sweet whisper Beneath a white cloth on the altar— And trembles around a chalice. And the priest bows down his head, Of a cup—'or a sign of red.

As red as the red of roses, As white as the white of snows: But the red is a red of a sacrifice, And the white is the white of a sunlight Within which a God's flesh glows.

Ah! words of the olden Thursday! Ye come from the far away! Ye bring us the Friday's victim In His own love's olden way. In the hand of the priest at the altar The Heart finds a home each day.

The sight of a Host uplifted: The silver sound of the chalice: The gleam of a golden chalice. He glad, sad heart; it will; He glad, sad heart; it will; With thee, all days to dwell.

From his hand to his lips that tremble, From his lips to his heart a thrill, God the little Host on its love path, Still doing the Father's will. And over the rim of the chalice, The blood flows forth to fill.

The heart of the man anointed With the waves of the wondrous grace: A silence falls on the altar— An awe on each bowed face— Of the heart that bleats "Alvay! Still bleats in the holy place.

The priest comes down from the rafters, Where brows are bowed in prayer: To the tender clasp of his fingers, A Host lies pure and fair. And the hearts of Christ and the Christian Meet there—and only there!

Oh! love that is deep and deathless! Oh! faith that is strong and grand! Oh! love that is strong and grand! Over the wastes of a weary land! Christ's heart finds an earthly heaven In the palm of the priest's pure hand.

Often, without knowing any particular cause, we feel special influences, such as the nearness of God and the holy angels.

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SIN OF GLUTTONY.

The increasing appetites of the day for inordinate indulgence in eating and drinking make discussion of the sin of gluttony always opportune. In fact, it by no means receives the attention it deserves judged by its wide prevalence, and by the confused notions of its victims. Many, who avoid that form of it seen in the excess of drink, too frequently fancy themselves guiltless of the sin, although slaves of the table.

The sin of gluttony is defined as an inordinate desire of eating and drinking. And were the truth known, perhaps, far more sin by the first than by the second. The great indifference that exists in regard to the excess would incline one to the opinion that it is never made a matter of confession.

Both food and drink are necessary. God gave them to man that he might use them. But He gave them to appease nature and to preserve health. Hence indulgence in either beyond reasonable and necessary bounds is gluttony. Coveting food, therefore, with no other purpose than pandering to the palate is sinful. This, too, whether it be in quantity or quality. For it is no less gluttony if the inordinate desire be for the dainties of the earth. In a word, all inordinate indulgence in food and drink, contrary to the use for which God gave them, is gluttony.

It might here be added that chief among the uses, food and drink should be taken to satisfy nature, to preserve health and to prolong life. Over-indulgence in either, however, defeats this purpose. It militates against nature, produces disease and destroys life.

Such being the consequences of this sin, what is the remedy? Temperance in the use of both. But to attain this happy use of God's gifts we should school ourselves to fasting and mortification. To this end the present holy season of Lent is set apart. Those who have observed its requirements have learned the lesson.—Church Progress.

One tear of the heart over the Passion of Our Blessed Lord! How much fire of purgatory has it the power to quench.—Faber.

The spiritual value of Catholicism is a point far from sufficiently dwelt upon in our books; a hundred thoughts and a thousand words are devoted to other topics, while to this is grudgingly given one.—Father McSorley, C.S.P.

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One is apt to condemn the non-Catholic for his apparent inertia when the truth is presented to him in a most convincing way. It seems as though he cannot be otherwise than in bad faith. Listen to what St. Augustine says: "Those who do not know how difficult it is to find the truth may be severe with you. I who know from experience what the difficulty is, can have nothing but pity and charity for you."—The Missionary.

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CHATS WITH YOUNG

The well-known Jesuit Father's remarks in Faneuil Hall recently in regard to the Christian Principle Authority for Civil Society are the basis of true patriotism, loyalty, are so instructive to young men about to be educated with the right to vote we have much pleasure in voicing the Columbia an authentic of them for the benefit of this department. Father G. as follows:

This civil society is a man is a fact admitted by thinkers. Take any part of where human beings are gathered, and there, no matter the race may be in civil shall find some form of social elementary form of government is, everywhere, when men a tendency to unite to form irresistible impulses to form union for the benefit of numbers. Finding this deeply rooted in our nature nothing can stay its outbreak not fairly conclude that it rests in its fundamental something more than human something divine? Is it to assert that back of social Author of the race, who implanted this yearning for order in the general mind, and our noblest traits? Now society cannot exist some force to weld the elements into a harmonious whole. In force we call authority is to unite the various social structure into whole, to direct them toward good, and to compel necessary, to desire which menaces the general Now, if society is of divine and if society cannot exist authority, it follows by logic that we must recognize sanction upon all lawfully authority. Hence, the patriot, must always be a deep and sincere respect authority. He who lacks scientific regard for the power of society does not shadow of genuine patriotism. For real patriotism consists in the mere waving of colored bunting, it does these ear-splitting noise our Fourth of July celebration does not consist in a Niagara of rapid rhetoric; it is real and not outward motive, in the being true to our country furthering her interests, ing out the plan of our empire and requires a lead them to their appointed earth. It is upon this patriotism must rest, it worthy of the name; a realize that the service is not a matter of materialism or of family advancement of bounden duty, holding in strict consequence the reverence for authority we speak must not be an expression; it must be an and heart, so that our inward principle upon deeds which will best insure progress of the nation and civic probity and of morality.

Now authority speaks of any realm through acts. Hence respect scrupulous observance of must be the badge of the patriot. I am not referring to abnormal conditions of despotism may flourish statutes inimical to the or to the laws of God healthy condition of the proper regard for the states of the natural law. Has this scrupulous law and authority authority felt among us? Have those who have with under foot regulations the best interests of all known instances in which flagrantly violated breakers openly boasted doing? Is this patriotism genuine citizenship? would be the day, dread outlook should such and any toleration at the of any support from patriots. If you saw a man foundations of our country you not brand him as you noticed a man so broad seas a mammoth with precious lives below the water line condemn him as a criminal perceived a man applying a colossal hall crowded women and children, stamp his deed as that. Yet not less guilty, as our most vigorous of our men who make light of commonwealth and who the wise enactments of. They may strive to pass by claiming that they displayed in a trivial gentlemen, there is when there is a question principle. What would patriots who laid the foundations of our country and in loyalty, say witnessed the scene men will not soon for "To survey with spirit of lawlessness and to evil conduct to sanction even by act is to co-operate with heart the destroyers wealth, and standards. No land can stand for authority if it found a firm foothold. Gentlemen, let I guard well the spirit let me urge you to thoughts with the m

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