

Sacred Heart Review. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CCCCXXI.

We have seen that the Republican correspondent is greatly scandalized by the supposition that Christendom has been given into the guardianship of Damascus and Hildebrand, and of the culpable innocents.

That Hegelians and Unitarians, no less than the orthodox, view the cause for which a Damascus contended as that on which the very existence of Christianity hung, would probably signify even less to this gentleman.

Such a position is the less unlikely in a non-Christian, inasmuch as the famous Lutheran divine Flacius Illyricus could hardly make up his mind whether he the more revered St. Peter as an Apostle or abhorred him as a Pope.

As to Hildebrand, it seems hardly reasonable to ask our friend to give up his detestation of him, for, as he might reason, what is anti-papal controversy worth, if we are not to treat Gregory the Seventh and Innocent the Third as incarnations of Beelzebub?

In our review of the Sacrament of Baptism we saw that it was instituted by Our Lord to take away original and all other sin.

As I have said already, this sentence is really the most offensive in the whole long letter. The form of it is such as could never be used by a Christian.

As to the Apostles, Strauss has no difficulty with them. Their preaching of the Resurrection, he insists, is simply "ein weltweites Betrug," "a world-wide imposture."

This is logical. Either the human soul and body of Jesus Christ are so absolutely and centrally yielded to God, so completely possessed by the indwelling Word, that He sets forth to us perfectly the character of God, that His words, are the very words of God, and His death is the Resurrection of Mankind to the Father, or, as Strauss says, "the highest conceivable blasphemy."

We may view this letter then as being not a Christian letter, addressed to Christians, but an unbelieving letter addressed to unbelievers, writer and

intended readers, however, being viewed as socially and historically standing within the Protestant pale, and retaining so much of union with Christianity as is involved in an implacable hatred towards its ancient form.

As to the phrase "simple faith" of Our Lord, that phrase naturally means a faith simple because shallow. Otherwise it would seem that its simplicity is the transparency of inexhaustible depth, that the Saviour's faith is a germinal faith, the seed of endless and infinite varieties of development.

If this is so, then why should not a great Pope, or a great Schoolman, or a great Father, or a great Poet, be thought in a manner worthy, though yet unworthy, to reflect still farther the Faith of Christ, never, of course, in its perfection or central fullness, but in some appointed measure and form?

This writer is equally offended that the Popes are supposed worthy to represent "the humane works" of the Saviour. Now Isaac Taylor, an intense hater of Rome, allows that much of her saving strength has been found in her cherishing of "the benevolent affections."

Andover, Mass.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

In our review of the Sacrament of Baptism we saw that it was instituted by Our Lord to take away original and all other sin. We saw also that it can be administered but once. We know, however, that the flesh is weak and that even the just man falls many times a day.

In the order of nature the body is subject to sickness. For this we have remedies to restore it to its healthy condition. Sin is a disease in the soul, and to cure it we have the Sacrament of Penance.

As in Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, we find that penance also has the essentials of a sacrament, namely, the matter and form. The former consists in the sins of the penitent accompanied with confession, contrition and satisfaction.

We may readily conclude, therefore, from these words that its effect is to free us from sin; to reconcile us to God; to restore and to multiply grace in our soul. It also follows that it can only be administered by a regularly ordained and duly authorized priest, and that we should avail ourselves of its benefits not only as often as we are guilty of mortal sin, but also at frequent intervals, if we would have an increase of grace and advance to greater spiritual perfection.—Church Progress.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

HOW A DESOLATE PERSON OUGHT TO OFFER HIMSELF INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

O Lord God, O holy Father, be Thou now and forever blessed; for, as Thou wilt, so it has happened; and what Thou dost is always good.

Let Thy servant rejoice in Thee, not in himself nor in any other creature, but in Thyself alone, Thy hope and my crown, Thy joy and my gladness and my honor, O Lord.

What hath Thy servant but what he hath received from Thee, and this without any merit on his side? All things are Thine which Thou hast given, and which Thou has made.

I am poor, and in labors from my youth (Ps. lxxxvii. 16); and my soul is grieved even unto tears sometimes, and I sometimes am disturbed within herself, by reason of the passions which encompass her.

THE PRIESTLY STOLE.

The stole is the consecrated emblem of sacerdotal power. As he places it around his neck, the priest repeats this prayer: "Return me, O Lord, the stole of immortality which I lost through the provocation of our first parents, and, although I approach unworthily the Holy Mystery, may I nevertheless deserve to attain to everlasting joy and felicity."

to consecrate or absolve, places it over the left shoulder and crosses the extremities under the right arm. The priest, whose power is limited and dependent crosses the stole on his breast. The Bishop, who has received the fullness of the priesthood, lets the two sides hang down. The Pope, alone, has the right to wear the stole always and everywhere, because he alone is the vice-regent of Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who said of himself: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth."

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Third Sunday of Advent.

PAUL'S PENANCE.

Bring forth therefore forth worthy of penance.—Matt. iii. 8.

St. John Baptist in these words, my dear brethren, teaches us, as he taught those who came to him, that penance, if it be true and genuine, must bring forth its proper fruit. Every repentance, if it be sincere, every confession, if it be really good, must be followed by a good life.

And, moreover, the tree which brings forth the good fruit should continue to bear it; it should not only for a few days or weeks give this proof that it is what it should be, but that it have him who planted it come to seek fruit on it and find none.

What is the reason of all this failure of what began so well? Of course it is the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance was not tended afterwards. Its life was not supplied to it, as it should have been, by the frequent renewal of confession and reception of Holy Communion.

It is a great undertaking which one commits oneself to in coming to reconcile himself with God after a mortal sin. The basis is not merely to examine his conscience, to tell his sins plainly and without concealment, and to feel heartily sorry for them; that is a great part of it, but by no means all.

The sisters heard the talk and noticed the way in which they were watched. One of them was so much affected that she discussed it with a friend and said she couldn't bear to have the neighbors talking about her as they were doing.

Now what could be more pitiable than the plight of those two women of their lives wrecked by some contemptible, spiteful neighbor, who very likely began all the trouble by a word or two in a moment of pique, who would be appalled to feel that such grave consequences could flow from such a small beginning, but who is really responsible for the whole sad story.

The result is not always so plainly to be traced to the cause in the New York case which we cite above, but in every city, in every town, in every hamlet in the country, there has been enacted some similar pitiful drama. Broken hearts, ruined lives—these are the results of those idle words, for which says Christ, "we must render an account on the day of Judgment."

Every life lived and every work done has somewhere its sufficient explanation. God has never yet permitted an accident in His world. Every deed has its pedigree. So much producing energy in the cause means so much energy in the effect. There is no such thing as luck. Every life has its pedigree.—Rev. R. A. McFadden.

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"IDLE WORDS" AND THEIR RESULT.

A brief item in a New York paper the other day revealed one of those squalid little neighborhood affairs which are often tragic in their consequences but which are nevertheless such ordinary occurrences as not to excite much comment.

It is amazing how gossip, harmless perhaps at first, spreads and spreads, gathering evil significance as it goes. No wonder our Lord lay such stress upon the accountability of people for their "idle words."

The two sisters lived alone, and soon scandalous tongues began to mention that fact as though it were significant. Neighbors, who seemed to have plenty of time to watch others in the vicinity and discuss their affairs, kept constant watch on the candy store.

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