

THE CATHOLIC.

QUOD SEMPER, QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD AB OMNIBUS CREDITUM EST.—WHAT ALWAYS, AND EVERY WHERE, AND BY ALL IS BELIEVED.

VOLUME II.

HAMILTON, [GORE DISTRICT] MARCH 16, 1842.

NUMBER 27.

THE CATHOLIC

Is Printed and Published every Wednesday morning, at

No. 21, JOHN STREET.



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Original.

THE RHYTHMUS OF SAINT THOMAS OF AQUINA.

Adoro te devoto.

Devoutly I adore thee, hidden Deity!
Beneath these forms who veil'st thine awful majesty;
To thee my heart must ever wholly subject be,
Because I'm wholly lost, when I contemplate thee.

The sight, the touch, the taste, in thee are all deceived;
But safely still the sense of hearing is believ'd:
What God's eternal Son has said 's believ'd by me;
Nought, than the word of truth itself, more true can be.

Hid on the cross alone was thy divinity—
Here also lies conceal'd thy bless'd humanity;—
Yet owning and confessing both most steadily,
I beg what once the thief repentant begg'd of thee.

Thy wounds no more I now behold, as Thomas did;
Yet own thee still my God, who hast my ransom paid;
Still make me with a livelier faith believe in thee!
Confirm my hope! influence me with thy charity!

Memorial wondrous of the death of my dear Lord!
O living bread, to man who can't true life afford!
Grant that my soul on thee, her mystic food, may live,
And ever with true relish all thy sweets perceive!

True parent Pelican, who bleed'st, to nurse thy brood!
Cleanse me unclean, O Jesus, with thy sacred blood!
One precious drop of which the guilty world can save,
And from its whole collected mass of sin can lave!

Just e! whom now beneath these veils conceal'd I spy!
O grant me that, for which alone so much I sigh:
All veils remov'd, thee face to face that I may see,
And in thy glorious presence ever happy be!

THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION DEMONSTRATED DIVINE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Leviticus.

CHAPTER xiii.—By the law of the leprosy detailed in this chapter, all laboring under this loathsome and infectious disease, were referred for inspection and cure, not to the physician, but to the priests. Now, all the holy fathers and learned interpreters of the Scripture in the Catholic Church, consider this legal institution as an emblem of the sacrament of penance; and the leprosy of the body as an emblem of the leprosy of the soul, which is sin; and that, as our Saviour came not, as he himself testifies, to abolish, but to fulfil the law, so the spiritual leprosy must be submitted to the inspection and prescriptions of his priesthood in the sacred tribunal of

penance. Hence, the lepers, whom he himself cured, were by him commanded to go and shew themselves to the priests; evidently for no other reason but to shew that he did not abrogate the law of the leprosy; but on contrary, sanctioned and fulfilled it. For in his spiritual dispensation, as he most solemnly declared, all the legal types and figures were to find their full accomplishment. Amen, said he, I say unto you, till heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or tittle of the law shall not pass by, till all be fulfilled—Matt. v, 18.—There are two instances mentioned in the gospel of the Saviour's healing the leprosy; first, when a leper came and adored him; saying, Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.

It is evident that this applicant had the true faith, in Jesus Christ, whom he adored, and whose power he so recognized. Therefore did he obtain an immediate cure; for "Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying, I will: be thou made clean; and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man, but go, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony to them.—Matt. viii, 2, &c. Secondly, when he was met by ten lepers, "who, standing afar off, lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! whom, when he saw, he said to them: go shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed.—xvii, 12, &c. Now, as every circumstance recorded in scripture, particularly whatever regards the Saviour, was designed for our instruction—for *whatever is written, says Saint Paul, was written for our instruction*—Rom. xv, 4,—the holy fathers and spiritual writers observe in the case of the first applicant for a cure, a figure of mankind in the abstract, freed once in baptism from the leprosy of sin. Also a figure of those who draw near to the Saviour by a lively faith and a true contrition, and who are therefore immediately cleansed, even before shewing themselves to the priest in the confessional, but with the obligation still remaining of doing so with as little delay as possible.

In the second case, they consider the ten lepers as representing the ten possible cases of spiritual leprosy, which is contracted by a breach of any of the ten commandments; all which cases are referred by our Saviour to the inspection of the priest; though to those who obey the Saviour's mandate, it often happens that on their way to shew themselves to his ministers, their leprosy is cleansed.

CHAPTER xiv.—The rites and ceremonies ordained to be observed in the cleansing of the leper, are replete with mystical meaning and allusion; the most striking part of which we shall endeavor to point out in the generally received sense.

VERSE 5.—The purification of the leper is to take place out of the camp. The lepers were not allowed to reside in the camp, nor to associate with those who were not clean—Numb. 5. They were deprived of all participation in the sacred rites, and never suffered to approach the holy place. Witness even the Jewish monarch, who, when struck with the leprosy, was cast out of the temple, and shut up for life from the public, and, dying in that disease, was buried apart from the other kings of Juda.—2 paral. 26, 21. So they, who contract the leprosy of sin, of whatever rank or quality they be, are deprived before God in as far as regards themselves,

of all the spiritual rights of the saints or the spiritually clean; not now, however, (as in the old and figurative law) temporal rights, and before man, who is no more their judge: such, however, was the disorganizing doctrine of a Wickliffe and a Huss, which left all authority in church and state at the capricious disposal of the blind, fanatical, prejudging multitude; making man instead of God, and the very worst and incompetent men, the supreme and decisive judges of the internal worth, or worthlessness of their lawful superiors; declaring even invalid the sacred ministry of all, whom they might suspect to be in sin; though the sin of the individual, and its dire consequences, rest but on the head of the guilty individual, and cannot stop up the Saviour's appointed channels of grace, and thus render vain his redeeming dispensation.

We must here observe that, before the solemn and conclusive rite of purification takes place, the leprosy of the patients must have been previously inspected, prescribed for, and declared to have in fine assumed a healthy appearance. Even so must the spiritual leprosy be examined, prescribed for, and found subsided in all its symptoms, before the solemn rite of purification takes place; that is, before the sentence of absolution is pronounced. The sinner must give unequivocal signs of true repentance before the priest can venture to pronounce him truly absolved from his sins; to introduce him as clean into the camp, and restore him to the society of the just, and the benefits of religion.

VERSE 4.—In the figurative rite of purification, the leper was to "offer for himself two living sparrows, which it was lawful to eat; and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. One of the sparrows was to be immolated in an earthen vessel, over living waters: and the other living one was to be dipped, with the cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop, in the blood of the sparrow, that was immolated, with which he, who was to be cleansed, was to be sprinkled seven times, that he may be rightly purified; and he shall let go the living sparrow that he may fly into the field," &c.

The least things are often chosen, as emblems of him who became, for our sake, as a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.—xxii, 7.

Thus is he, our guilt-purifying and propitiating victim, represented here in his two-fold nature, of God and man, by the two sparrows; one of which is immolated in an earthen vessel, over living waters; that is, his humanity, slain in its earthly tabernacle, the body, the blood of which is turned, like that which issued from his wounded side, into a living, purifying and refreshing stream: the other sparrow is "dipped, with cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop, in the blood of the one that was immolated; and then let fly away alive into the field:" this designates his divinity, which cannot die; but yet which takes upon itself the expiatory blood of the other, which was shed upon the cedar wood, a wood, which is incorruptible, representing the cross; that tree of everlasting memorial, and imperishable benefit to our redeemed race. The scarlet designates by its color, the bloody nature of the expiation; and the hyssop, by its anti-leprous virtue, when used medicinally, its purifying effect. This herb was therefore used in all religious sprinklings, to which, in these words, David alludes: *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed.*—Ps. i, 8. In this purificatory oblation, an allusion is made to the unity of person and diversity of nature in the victim. For that which was immolated, and that