

VIII. The Roman Church has staked its whole case on two assertions. The first of them is that St. Peter was given supreme authority and jurisdiction over the other Apostles and the whole Church. And the second is that he transmitted this power to the Bishops of Rome as his heirs and successors. The first assertion can be at once disproved by the New Testament. For our Lord Himself three times over declared to the Apostles that He did not mean to raise one of their number to be ruler over their fellows (St. Matt. xx. 25-27; St. Luke ix. 44-48; xii. 24-26)—all these occasions being later than His words to St. Peter (St. Matt. xvi. 18-19), which Roman Catholics cite to prove St. Peter's supremacy; and no trace can be found in the New Testament of St. Peter claiming or exercising any authority over the other Apostles, or being voluntarily submitted to by them (Gal. ii. 11). And after a time he was divinely restricted to the Jewish mission, while all the Gentile Churches were entrusted to St. Paul (Gal. ii. 7, 8). And as nothing is known with any certainty about St. Peter outside the pages of the New Testament, the 2nd assertion (itself found nowhere till some centuries after St. Peter's time, and passed over in entire silence by all the earlier Christian writers whose works we have) must fail also for lack of proof.

IX. Roman Catholic countries contrast most unfavorably with non-Roman Christian countries in the statistics of crime, in the moral tone of books and society, and in the wide prevalence of bitter and rancorous atheism. Moreover, they are the chosen homes of violent revolution, proving thereby that the Church of Rome in its present condition is not a wholesome and Christianizing agency.

X. The Church of Rome, by teaching the duty that their surest way of salvation is to surrender themselves unreservedly to the priesthood for guidance in all matters of belief and practice, nay, that to think for one's self on faith and morals is actually sinful, fights against the Divine law which holds each of us accountable for our acts. And thus it blurs the distinction between right and wrong, dangerously enfeebles the moral character, and too often destroys the very faculty of conscience in those who submit to its teaching in this respect.

XI. Other Christian bodies which have erred doctrinally or morally have in many cases repented and amended, and in no instance have barred themselves from so doing. But, contrariwise, the Roman Church, by asserting its own infallibility as having lasted from the beginning and unbrokenly, has therefore formally reaffirmed as true, just and holy, everything (however evil) that it has ever taught or done, and has made amendment, humanly speaking, impossible within any measurable time. To retract anything would be for Rome to confess past error, and thereby to acknowledge itself fallible. And thus the case seems a hopeless one, as all attempts at wholesome reform have been stamped out, and no signs of a better mind can be seen.—*The Church Critic*.

ABOUT SOME HYMNS.

It was Coleridge who said that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. An exceedingly optimistic and dangerous canon surely, but nevertheless a rule which has found place in the making of every one of our hymns. It reminds one of an extravagant saying of Charles Kingsley's, "Beauty is God's handwriting,—a wayside sacrament . . . thank Him for it, who is the Fountain of all loveliness." As a matter of fact every one of our Hymn books has scores of hymns con-

taining true rhythm, melody and beauty, but no depth of spiritual feeling, none of the expression of really heart-felt praise, or prayer. It is really wonderful though, how in spite of the plethoric volumes of hymns, with so much of padding and so little of the material public devotion should use, the great mind of the Church sifts out the good and sticks to it. The really great, abiding, singable hymns, no compiler dare leave out of his book if he wishes it to succeed. "During recent years two religious journals, the *Sunday at Home* and a Nonconformist organ, *The British Weekly*, in order to ascertain the relative popularity of well-known hymns, invited their readers to send in lists of their favorites. The result was as follows:—In both cases the three hymns which obtained the largest number of suffrages were identical. They were "Rock of Ages," "Abide with me," and "Jesus, lover of my soul." And could some one tabulate for us the Hymns used the English speaking world over at last Sunday's service, or those most commonly used, we should probably be greatly surprised at the unanimity of opinion exhibited. And we shall find if we consider the Hymns the world persists in singing that they are those which came out of a spiritually deep man's most profound depths. An ecstatic touch has opened the breast down below the shallow depth of mere surface agitation, and the song that has arisen, almost irresistibly, is not mere frothy, musically bubbling words, but a song of such powerful intensity, such fathomless sincerity, as to excite the desires, and lead captive the wills of others. If the hymn is to endure and to be sung, it must be true of the maker that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Carlyle says truly enough "it's a man's sincerity and depth of vision, that makes him a poet." One can understand for instance something of the popularity that the hymn "Abide with me," has secured, when one considers the circumstances under which it was written. The Rev. Henry Francis Lyte, a curate of the Church of England, at Lower Brixham, in Devonshire, had already written several hymns which the Church will not readily allow to die. "Pleasant are Thy Courts Above," "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven," "Far from my Heavenly Home," are amongst the best known of them. While still some distance from the limit of life, his pulmonary trouble declared itself to be the fatal, insidious consumption. Relief was sought in travel, but in vain. And it was in Nice just after he had celebrated the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for the last time, with the glow of the revived Divine indwelling pervading his soul, with eyes trying to pierce into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, that the spirit's cry, found utterance in the words,

"Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
"The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide!"

It is not the plaint of a poor consumptive, crying out of mortal weakness, so much as the cry of a heart, accustomed to rely upon a strong, abiding Presence, in protestation against the natural shrinkings of the *ancient couriers* of the king of terrors. There is challenge in the words,

"I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless,
"Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
"Where is death's sting? Where grave thy victory?"

"I triumph still, if Thou abide with me."
as there is also an anticipation in the grand words, from the Gospel of the Resurrection, so soon in the Burial Service of the Church, to be read over his earthly part.

A would be hymnologist, in a Canadian Diocese, one of the gently protesting souls, whose only Satan is seen in Romish guise, when adding this hymn to his collection, stumbled at the glorious climax verse,

"Hold Thou Thy Cross, before my closing eyes,"

and eliminated the cross, making the line read

"Reveal Thyself before my closing eyes."

But the brilliant alteration has not won much renown, for that compiler so far. The same shame-faced fear is answerable for the unpoetical change in Watt's great Passion Hymn, "When I survey the wondrous Cross," wherein in some collections the line,

"Save in the Cross of Christ my Lord"

is found

"Save in the death of Christ my Lord"

And we would have thought dear old Dr. Watts, safe enough for the most pronounced Protestant.

Henry Lyte's death song was much more however than a song for the dying. It would not be a bad thing, if it formed part of our every evening's devotion. It expresses well in the universal language of the heart, what every evening prayer should express. But it is also psychologically interesting, as bearing witness to the fact that death is very like the evening of life. The very first death the writer witnessed as a minister of consolation was that of a little child. Just at noon, the dumb little brain,—it was a fatal case of concussion—recovered itself, little hands were uplifted, and the sweet committal prayer began

"Now I lay me down to sleep"

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep."—

The little lily spirit slipped away before the verse was ended. Another case which came before his knowledge was that of an aged Christian lady, a beautiful character, who wakened from the stupor of approaching death to beg her grandchildren to sing. "What?" was the request. The wrinkled lips moved tremblingly and made rather than spoke the words,

"Now the day is over," and so passed away, from her day's work. The experience of those who had little to fear from the change, does seem then to make for Lyte's idea

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day"

"Earth's joys grow dim, &c."

As against the Rev. S. Baring Gould in his fine marching hymn

"Through the night of doubt and sorrow."

But this is a point which must wait another week for illustration, from some of our best known hymns.—W. P. C.

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL ON "THE ORNAMENTS RUBRIC."

The Bishop of Southwell in addressing lately a conference of his diocese spoke as follows:—

I cannot blame men who regard themselves bound to obey the Ornaments rubric (applause)—as part of the Prayer Book which they have solemnly declared at their ordination that they will follow. There it stands, facing them every time they begin the morning service, and little as it were observed or understood, I feel sure that no one of my generation ever doubted that it was a rubric. They may well ask how advertisements of Queen Elizabeth's affect it, when it was introduced long after her time. They naturally ask how an opposite custom can be taken to prove that it was a rubric, in the face of the other rubrics that has prevailed in such constantly recurring matters as, e. g., the daily morning and evening prayer and festivals and feasts. If they are told that it is no rubric, and was introduced without authority, they may still reply, and, to my mind, unanswerably, "It is in the prayer book presented to me by authority for my promise of obedience, and if kings, parliaments, bishops and lawyers have let it be sent so to generations by the authority which they and I have sworn to obey, that what they and I promised to obey, and wrong, the blame lies on others, not on us."

* * * * *