Sacred Heart Review.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

CLXXIV.

Error (9), says the Champion, which all Protestants agree in rejecting, is Celibacy.

Of course these slouching writers, who never stop to consider whether they say what they mean, wish to express here that all Protestants agree in refusing to make the celibacy of the clergy a matter of obligatory discipline. Of course this is true.

Final Protestantism does not go so far in this direction as the first Protestahts. Luther, as he denies outright that there can be any such thing as unmarried chastity of course must maintain a universal obligation of marriage, and indeed of marriage as early in life as it is possible. His language on this point is so horribly foul, that I should not dare to communicate it except to an audience of men, and that carefully chosen. Even in the most confidential correspondence I have not been able to bring myself to translate the loathsome original. Let us hope that the Melancthonians are warranted in declaring that Luther means about one word in twenty of what he says.

As to monastic vows, it can not well be said that all Protestants condemn them, for I have seen them defended by a Presbyterian writer in a Presbyterian journal, the New York Evangelist. It is true, nevertheless, that the general temper of Protestantism is adverse to them, holding, for instance, that a vocation to a single life is better maintained by the continuous sense of obligation. However, I have known Protestant, and even Presbyterian, ladies to bind themselves by triennial engagements of celibacy.

(10.) Indulgences. It is not true that all Protestants condemn indulgences. They simply do not use them. Indeed, they can not, since we have no functionary who claims the power to grant them. The simple and reserved statement of the Council of Trent, that the right of conferring indulgences has been given by Christ to the Church, and that the use of it is highly salutary to the Christian people, is something which a Protestant, as such, need not hold himself bound either to affirm or to contradict. He simply lets it stand or fall on its own merits. Of course this is by no means the Roman Catholic position, but on the other hand, it is in utter contradiction to the assumption of these people of the Champion, and their kind, that everything which Protestants do not use, they all agree in rejecting. Froude maintains that the chief value of true religion lies in denial according to which Lucian, whom he so highly venerates, is greatly superior to St. Paul. Christians, however, hold that we are nourished by truth, and not by vacuity, and that my inability to see this or that is true which excellent Christians value does not warrant me in saying that it is false.

Thus we have seen that out of seven positive propositions which these editors give as distinctive doctrines of Protestantism, six are just as much Catholic as Protestant, and that the seventh, namely, that the Bible ought to be studied in the vernacular by those who do not know the originals, is affirmed also by the Catholic Church, only not so peremptorily.

Of the ten propositions which these men tells us that all Protestants agree in rejecting as false, we have seen that one, Salvation by Works, is accepted by most Protestants in the sense in which Rome teaches it, and that in the sense in which most Protestants reject it, Rome rejects it also. Four of these propositions, undoubtedly, all Protestants agree in declining to accept. Five are not by any means rejected by all Protestants, as we have seen.

The result of all this examination of ours is, to make plain that these editors of the chief Spanish organ of a great denomination, chosen to set forth to the Catholics of Spanish America the true gospel, and the distinctive nature of Protestantism, which they identify with the true gospel, show themselves grossly incompetent to explain the points in which all Protestants agree, and monstrously unqualified to explain the points of disagreement between the two religions.

However, we need not be surprised. In the denomination in question competency of thought and honesty of statement are jewels, much too precious for everyday use. Besides, they are far too valuable to be thrown away on Spanish Papists. Mendacious blackguardism serves the turn just as well, and comes a great deal cheaper, and is a weapon which the editors of the Champion have swung far too constantly to be easily beaten in the use of it. If the editorial arm ever does feel weak, there needs but to translate something from The Converted Catholic, or to transfer something peculiarly nasty and false from La Patria, and it serves the holy purpose still better.

We will now return to Professor Frank Hugh Foster's Third Chapter, with a view of going through it consecutively. His purpose in it we remember, is to prove that the true doctrine of the Roman Church is, that no one can be saved outside of visible communion with her.

The whimsical comment of the Independent's reviewer, that Foster objectifies the Roman system of doctrine, even to ideality, has really some appearance of confirmation in his first two chapters. In them he in fact does struggle to put on an appearance of lofty impartiality. However, this artificial endeavor fairly breaks down in the third chapter, which is eagerly, almost passionately, though, to do him justice, never virulently, controversial.

Dr. Foster is a much more carefully disciplined mind, above all in theology, than the "Nun of Kenmare." Yet he seems as absolutely oblivious as Miss Cusack herself of the necessary truth, that a doctrine which the greatest Roman Catholic divines, of every rank from cardinal down, are placidly allowed to challenge, and which the Pope authoritatively, and as Dr. Foster is inclined to view it, *ex cathedra*, contradicts, can not possibly be a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. His knowledge of Catholic theology here shows itself to lack the very underpinning.

We have already seen several cases in which Catholic theology would compel him (if he knew enough of it to own that visible separation from Rome does not imply the lack of saving grace. First, validly baptized children of non-Catholics, who are certainly out of visible connection with Rome, are allowed by all theologians, if dying in infancy, to be saved.

(2) Men unjustly excommunicated are separated visibly from the Holy See. Yet, as is said by St. Augustine, Cardinal Bellarmine, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and all the theologians, "though condemned in public by man, they are crowned in secret by God."

(3.) Men justly excommunicate, but dying contrite without opportunity of confession are, as all acknowledge, finally saved.

Here is enough to break up his contention at once. However, let us go back to the beginning with him.

Professor Foster allows that there are some qualifications of his position. Yet if he allows that there are any, he breaks down. The qualifications that I have given although they rest on undisputed Catholic theology, he never once mentions. He seems to know nothing of them. Indeed, he expressly assumes that Roman Catholic doctrine is, that every one dying excommunicate is *ipso facto* lost. The qualifications which he does mention he treats as illegitimate. We will come to them presently.

Professor Foster reasons in this way. It is, says he, the fundamental Catholic position that the visible Church is the true Church, and that the Roman Church is that visible Church. Evidently none can be saved except such as belong to the true (invisible) Church. . . . "If, then, the invisible Church is to be identified with the visible Roman Church, membership in the former is the same as membership in the latter, and salvation will depend upon connection with the Roman Church."

Foster, gives, as Catholic doctrine: "The visible Church is the true Church." I give, as Catholic doctrine: "The true Church is visible." It is very important here, which is subject and which is predicate. Foster's form naturally implies that visibility comes first, and truth is the conclusion. My form implies that truth comes first, and visibility is the conclusion. I venture to think that mine is the sounder Catholic doctrine. The generating principle of the Church is not visible, for it is the Holy Ghost Who is invisible. Yet surely the holy brotherhood which He engenders is essentially visible. How can that be a brotherhood in which the brethren do not know each other, and do not visibly express their fellowship? We may well allow that the spirit of such a brotherhood may go farther than its defined bounds. Yet it is none the less true that the brotherhood, in its proper consummation, is definitely visible, and that its distinctive blessings are first fully received when a visible and permanent consciousness of membership is attained.

We will go on next week.

CHAS. C. STARBUCK.

Andover, Mass.

FIVE-MINUTES SERMON.

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany.

TAKING COURAGE.

Sometimes, my brethren, we feel discouraged because we have not kept our good resolutions, and are even ready to say it is better not to make any at all, so often do we break them. I have no doubt there are some listening to me who began the new year courageously and with some sincere promises to God of leading a good life, and have already slipped back into the bad old ways; and now they say, What is wrong with my good resolutions? I did not mean to lie to God, yet I have not kept my word with Him; I have relapsed; I am as bad as I was before, maybe I am worse. What, then, was the matter with my good resolutions?

Now, in considering this question let us no get into a panic. God knows us just as we are, and far better than we know ourselves. Therefore He is not so cruel as to hold us strictly to all our promises. "God is true and every man is a liar," says Holy Writ, and our experience of human nature demonstrates that although we are honestly determined to tell the truth, and do tell it, when we promise to God to behave ourselves properly, yet we know very well that in a moment of weakness we may break down, and that is understood when we make our promise. I remember reading of St. Philip Neri that sometimes on waking in the morning he would say, "O Lord, keep Thy hand on Philip to-day or he will betray Thee."

Hence it is a great folly to say, "I do not want to make a promise for fear I could not keep it." That would be good sense if you were going to swear to your promise, or if you were to make a vow. But a promise to attend Sunday Mass, to keep out of saloons, to stop stealing, to be more good-natured at home, and the like is a very different matter. In such cases we must shut our eyes and go ahead, and meantime pray hard for God's assistance.

There is such a thing as being too fidgety about the future, looking back too far into it or imagining temptations not likely to come up. Once there was an army officer who led an edifying life, and who came to a priest of his acquaintance and informed him that he was in great distress, and feared that he could not persevere. "What is the matter?" said the priest. "Why I know that duelling is a deadly mortal sin; yet if I were challenged to a duel I fear that I should not have the virtue to decline the challenge and suffer the disgrace which would be sure to follow." "But," said the priest, "has any one challenged you or is any one likely to do so?" "Oh, no! not at all: but—" "But wait until the temptation comes. You have made up your mind not to commit mortal sin, and when this articular temptation comes God will give you grace to overcome it."

Do not cast your net too far out into the stream; do not be in a hurry to promise to abstain from any particular sin, or to do any particular act of virtue for your whole life except in a general way. In a general way you are determined to keep God's law, honestly and firmly determined. As to this or that particular sin, you hate and detest it and have made up your mind against it; whenever the temptation comes you are resolved to resist it.

There are three things about which one should make good resolutions rather than about any others; First, the practice of prayer; second, going to confession and Communion; third, avoiding the occasions of sins. The first two fill our souls with God's grace and the third keeps us out of danger. Put all your good resolutions into company with prayer, and monthly, or at least quarterly, Communion; and you will have no great difficulty in pulling through. From month to month is not so long a time to keep straight, and a good confession and a worthy Communion is God's best help. Morning and night prayers are a mark of predestination to eternal life; keep away from bad company and dangerous places, and avoiding bad reading and all other dangerous occasions, has very much to do with an innocent life and a happy death.

THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION.

On Sunday we again celebrate the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In common speech we call it Candlemas, because on this day the candles prescribed for divine service are blessed. The candles must be made of bees-wax. This is so imperative that the Church has preferred to have even her most sacred rites performed without lights rather than have those used that are not made of this material. The very word candle (Latin candela) in the language of the Church always signifies a candle made of bees wax. Tallow, sperm, paraffine, patent wax, or any other than bees-wax candles cannot be blessed, and are forbidden to be used for divine service.

It is an ancient and praiseworthy custom for Catholics to procure at least one candle for this day, and after it has been blessed to take it home to use at the bed of the dying or during a storm, or for any other proper end as the Church wishes. Good Catholics, we know, are not satisfied with this alone; they offer one or more candles for the service of the altar, thus following the example of Mary, who, though not subject to the law, offered a sacrifice in the temple.

In a book entitled "The Sacraments of the Holy Catholic Church," we find the following beautiful remarks in regard to this custom:

The Church calls us to the temple for the Purification that our eyes too may see this glorious Light recognizing it in its symbol, the blessed candle; that our hands too may hold the Infant Saviour in holding the waxen taper which represents Him.

How full of meaning are all these rites of our religion!

Not by chance has the Church chosen the wax candle as a type of her Lord and Master. St. Anselm of Canterbury, tells us the reasons: "The wax product of the virginal bee represents Christ's most spotless body; the wick enclosed in the wax and forming one with it, images His human soul, whilst the ruddy flame crowning and completing the union of wax and wick, typifies the divine nature, subsisting unconfusedly with the human nature in one divine person.

Let us then make, on receiving our blessed candle, an act of faith in Christ, the Light of the world, enlightening every man coming into the world. Let us remember we are the children of light, and that as such we should shed around us the light of good example. Oh! dear readers, if our lives were as they should be, we would be like so many torches placed upon the pathway of truth to show our poor erring countrymen the way to the glorious city of God, the Holy Roman Apostolic Church.

We should make on this festival an offering of candles for the service of the altar. Oh! what a consoling thought for us, when we are at our daily work, that perhaps our candles are that moment burning before the Blessed Sacrament, taking the place of our hearts, silently, purely burning in their stead before the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Nor should we forget ourselves. We ought to have at least one blessed candle for our own private use to burn before the crucifix or an image of the Blessed Virgin, to remind us that our souls like it ought to be consuming the dross of earthly affection in the pure, heaven-aspiring flame of love.

We must put our confidence in these holy candles, for the prayers of the Church have ascended to God that "He might bless and sanctify them for the service of men and for the good of their bodies and souls in all places." Pious Catholics light them during thunder storms that God, in consideration of Christ, Whom they represent, may deign to protect His servants. Let us light them whenever we are threatened with calamity, and if we do so in a spirit of faith, we shall experience signal proof of God's fatherly care of us. But, above all, let the holy candle burn by the bedside of the sick and dying, dispelling by its blessed light the shades of trouble and despair which the prince of darkness strives to cast around the Christian soul in the hour of its dissolution, and illumining the dark road through the valley of death to the mountain whose light is God.

THE BLESSING OF THROATS.

A Legitimate and Pious Use of Sacramentals.

In the office for the ordination of priests the Pontifical says: "It is the part of a priest to bless," and blessing in its most general sense is a form of prayer begging the favor of God for the persons blessed. The act of blessing should excite good dispositions in persons who make a right use of them, and in the Blessing of Throats, which will take place in the majority of our churches on the 3rd inst., it should be remembered that the crossed candles used by the priests have no innate power in themselves of helping us. But surely, as it has been pointed out so often, there is no superstition in believing that God will listen to the prayers and in a special way touch the hearts of his children in whom such good dispositions have been excited by the use or sight of objects which have been blessed for their use by the prayers of the Church. Why, then, should we not avail ourselves of the sacramentals of the Church?

The blessing of throats is appointed for St. Blaise's day because that saint once saved from death the child of a poor woman who was likely to die from the effects of a fish bone in her throat. The saint and martyr in life was Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia and met his death in the year 316. Iron combs were used to tear his flesh from his body at his martyrdom; hence he has been adopted as patron of the Woolcombers.

With regard to the pious ceremony of the blessing of throats there is a special blessing of the wax candles to be used as may be found in the Roman Ritual. By it a power is attached to the Candle "that all whose throats are touched therewith in pious faith, may be freed by the merits of St. Blaise's martyrdom from sore throat of any kind." Two candles lighted and placed in the form of a cross, are applied to the throat of the person seeking the blessing while the priest says: "By the intercession of Blessed Blaise, may God free you from sore throat. Amen." It will easily be understood that this is but a legitimate and pious use of the blessings and sacramentals sanctioned by the Church.

For the CATHOLIC RECORD.

DREAMS.

We dream of the distant Future,
And we dream of the shadowy Past,
And we mourn that the living Present
Has its magic about us cast.

Why should we dream of a Future
That perchance will never be ours?
And whose glittering golden cloudlets
May fall in cold grey showers?

And why does the Past entice us
With the joys and sorrows of yore!
Why do we ever glance behind us,
Or send out bright dreams before.

Let us live in the grace of the moment,
And look to brighter years;
Let us bear to-day's light burden
And not give the Past our tears!

Until the Present has faded
And the Past has ceased to be,
In the glare of the golden Future
Of Heaven's Eternity!

—A SAN OSE.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

The King's Highway of the Holy Cross.

Know for certain that thou must lead a dying life; and the more a man dieth to himself, the more he beginneth to live to God.

No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things who hath not resigned himself to suffer adversities for Christ.

Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more wholesome for thee in this world, than to suffer willingly for Christ.

And if thou wert to choose, thou shouldst prefer to suffer adversities for Christ than to be delighted with many comforts; because thou wouldst thus be more like to Christ and more conformable to all the Saints.

For our merit, and the advancement of our state, consist not in having many sweetnesses and consolations, but rather in bearing great afflictions and tribulations.

If indeed there had been any thing better, and more beneficial to man's salvation, than suffering, Christ would certainly have shown it by word and example.

For He manifestly exhorteth both His disciples that followed Him, and all that desire to follow Him, to bear the cross, saying:—If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up His cross daily and follow Me. (Luke ix. 23.)

So that, when we have read and searched all, let this be the final conclusion, that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts. xiv.)

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