

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN.

CLXXXIX.

This paper will finish up with Foster's Third Chapter. As he begins this chapter with a fundamental falsehood, so he ends it with the same. He says that Rome identifies the visible with the invisible Church. Then, as every one who at death is invisibly, that is, spiritually, in the membership of the Church, is certainly saved, it follows, if visible is the same as invisible membership, that that every one who dies in visible communion with Rome is saved. Otherwise the whole foundation of his assumptions is shattered.

Now the Presbyterian Church, to her infinite disgrace, has already, through the medium of Mrs. Wright, formally declared that this is Roman Catholic doctrine. Nor does Foster, from beginning to end of this chapter, breathe a syllable at variance with her opinion. Neither writer, nor yet the Presbyterian Church, which publishes their books, betrays the faintest consciousness that such a belief is abhorrent to all Catholics, and has been solemnly anathematized by the Church.

It seems incredible that Professor Foster, who certainly has given considerable attention to Roman Catholic theology, should suppose Rome to teach that every one who dies in an undoubted and unexcused Catholic is saved, thus putting into her mouth the doctrine which she detests, that faith saves though unaccompanied by charity. Yet this is as credible as that the learned Presbyterian Church, through her central Board, should propound this to the world as undoubted Catholic doctrine. At all events, if he recedes from this position, his whole contention is broken up. Such a retreat at once makes way for the distinction between the Body and the Soul of the Church, which has prevailed in the Catholic world since St. Augustine, and has been received into her canon law, declaring that as Christ finds much within His Church which is not His, so He may find much beyond His Church which is His.

Yet from beginning to end of this chapter Foster never once mentions this distinction, though it is absolutely vital to the subject, though it has been acknowledged and received by the Church for more than fifteen hundred years, so that all subsequent decisions of doctrine must be understood on the basis of this distinction, as the Church never allows her declarations of one age to be so explained as to contradict those of another. For all his pretensions, though he has picked up plenty of theological hits, he must be pronounced a fundamentally ignorant man, who shows no signs of acquaintance with this essential distinction, a commonplace of Catholic doctrine, found even in catechisms intended for the instruction of the common people. Thus the catechism of the Jesuit Deharbe, commonly used in Germany, and largely used within the range of our language, expressly instructs the people, that besides the members of the Catholic Church, there are those who belong to the soul of the Church, and are partakers of her gifts and graces, although, of course, other things being equal, in an inferior degree, and with less assurance of a favorable end.

And as he shows himself so strangely unconscious of this important teaching, so he only mentions the allied commonplace of theology, and of popular Catholicism, "invincible ignorance," once or twice, and with expressions of helpless perplexity. What does it mean? It seems to inquire the poor man. I will try to help him. Invincible ignorance is that which is not so rooted in the mind but that it is removable by a clear presentation of a doctrine, and of the evidences for it. Supposing, therefore, the doctrine to be true, and adequately presented, it can not be rejected without sin. Invincible ignorance is that which is so rooted in all the habits of the mind, and in the most sacred associations of earlier belief, that in this life even a candid nature has not intellectual force enough to receive teachings which are at variance with these. Such error, therefore, being inevitable, is not morally condemnable, and may be consistent with love to God, and faith in Christ, and loyalty to His appointments so far as the man in this life is capable of recognizing them.

Certainly this does not seem very hard to understand. One is led to suspect that Foster's ignorance here is voluntary and "vincible." If it is really insuperable, he must not imagine that everybody is as hopelessly mystified as he. If he really can not master as simple a matter as this how would it do for him, at present, to confine himself to writing on the best manner of cultivating turnips? Perhaps his doctrinal apprehensions might gradually ripen along with his rutabagas.

"No!" says he with solemn unction, suggesting a slight suspicion of the Rev. Mr. Chadband, "this theory is not Romanism." The fact that it has been received by the Church for fifty generations, not being denied before; that it is confirmed by the Canon Law; that the Inquisition has refused to censure even its strongest form; that the mighty weight of the Jesuits, those "Romanists of the Romanists," as Protestants regard them, has been thrown in favor of its concrete realization; that now a theologian who evades it is the exception not the rule; that it has been much the more strongly maintained where apologetic considerations have been entirely out of the way; that voices begin to be heard inquiring whether those who are shy of receiving it are not treading the borders of heresy; and that finally a Pope has solemnly affirmed it: all this goes for nothing with the Rev. F. H. Foster. He has shaped to his imagination a grim and relentless monster of spiritual cannibalism, which he calls "Romanism;" and as the facts of Catholic history and theology, but above all the facts and teachings of the later ages, overwhelm him with growing and inex-

orable contradiction, it is, with him, to do him justice, he knows wonderfully little about them. He knows enough to inspire the childlike praises of the Booklovers' Library, and with that he seems to be content.

He seems to have a vague notion that "Romanism" is like Lutheranism, or Calvinism, or Methodism, built up of certain abstract determinations of doctrine, to which the concrete system is to be conformed; and beyond which it is not permitted to go. Now Matthew Arnold has pointed out that Anglicanism is much more comprehensive than its schemes of doctrine. Assuredly then Catholicism, although she has many defined doctrines, and maintains them firmly, may well claim to be incomparably wider and deeper than all her definitions of doctrine. With Presbyterianism or Methodism it is the doctrine that support the Church; with Catholicism it is the Church that supports the truth in the measure and form for which there is occasion, not troubling herself very much about a nice and snug adjustment, with mortise and tenon, of every definition to every other definition. The apostles do not trouble themselves very much about this; and why should the Church? The systems of her great divines are very valuable; but it is not they that bear the Church, but the Church them.

Dr. Foster seems to imagine that the Roman Catholic Church exists for the one purpose of enforcing the Church's visibility with intellectual rigor. She exists for nothing of the kind. She maintains that the Church is essentially visible, it is true. Why should she not? The doctrine is apostolic and sound. If Protestants have such a dislike of the visible Church, let them take comfort in the thought that there are always bad Christians enough to obscure her visibility. We might as well complain that the sun is a luminous and rounded orb. This helps, it does not hinder, his light to ray off into space, as a principle of infinite life.

In fine, as Rome does not identify spiritual and visible membership of the Church, but abhors and denounces such an identification, Foster's whole argument collapses. It is a singular instance and example of predetermined and obstinate unintelligence.

CHARLES C. STARRBUCK.

Andover, Mass.

VINDICATING THEIR RIGHTS.

One Way of Bringing Bigots to Terms.

The Rock is the name of an English publication which is rabidly Catholic, and which for years has been the leader of the attacks of the ultra-Protestant party in Great Britain on Rome and Romanism and Pope and Popery. Since the Jesuits are such a bugbear to Protestants in general, it is not to be wondered at that The Rock took particular delight in assailing, in season and out of season, as they were ignominiously, the Jesuits, as they were in fact the contrivance of The Rock and kindred sheets to scatter broadcast the most odious accusations against the Jesuits; imputations so framed, as The Tablet expresses it, "that everybody could identify the persons to whom they were meant to apply, though as they were nominally directed against bodies the corporate existence of which is not legally recognized, the victims were precluded from defending their character in a court of law.

About a year ago, however, these Protestant sheets began to overstep the danger line. Accustomed for so long a time to the patient endurance of the Jesuits in general, and of the ultra-Protestant party in particular, had borne their attacks, long immunity rendered them incautious and they began to introduce the names of individuals into diatribes heretofore wholesale. And just at this point is where they made a mistake. Even the worm will turn, and some of them. The Jesuits assailed by name in The Rock were of the latter kind. They had quietly borne the obloquy for a long, long time, but they at last resolved to seize the opportunity given them by their journalistic foes. They made up their minds to have a question threshed out in open court before a jury. Writs were accordingly issued against the offending journals.

The result was entertaining and amusing as well as being highly instructive. One after another the fire-eating editors began to see the logic of the situation, and like Davey Crockett's Jesuits in particular, had borne their attacks, long immunity rendered them incautious and they began to introduce the names of individuals into diatribes heretofore wholesale. And just at this point is where they made a mistake. Even the worm will turn, and some of them. The Jesuits assailed by name in The Rock were of the latter kind. They had quietly borne the obloquy for a long, long time, but they at last resolved to seize the opportunity given them by their journalistic foes. They made up their minds to have a question threshed out in open court before a jury. Writs were accordingly issued against the offending journals.

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When served with the writ, however, even The Rock tried to explain, preferring a worthless apology which while it exculpated Father Vaughan personally from its charges, heaped still further abuse upon the Jesuit order of which Father Vaughan is a member. This was almost a year ago. It was only on June 1 that the case was finally decided. The Rock's counsel tried to compromise the matter by an apology. Father Vaughan insisted, however, that such an apology must be made not to him personally but specifically "as a Jesuit." This the defendants would not consent to. So the question of libel was fairly, fully and freely discussed, and The Rock was mulcted in the sum of \$1,500.

It is not, however, the pecuniary damages which are significant. Far more so is the fact that a libellous sheet has been given a setback in its bigoted attacks upon an order of the Catholic Church. Eminent satisfaction, accordingly, is," says the Tablet, "not only the opportunity afforded to Father Vaughan of challenging in the witness box any proof of any one of the

assertions so recklessly made against his order—not only on account of the lucid and instructive presentation of the Jesuit position furnished by Mr. Hugo Young, and the manner in which Sir Edward Clarke tore to tatters the miserable subterfuges under which the libellers, not venturing to defend their own case, pleaded for mitigation of damages; not even on account of the admirable summing up of the judge, and the convincing verdict of the jury—but still more on account of the evidence afforded by all the facts that the appeals to bigotry and prejudice so sedulously made had met with no response."

No doubt in the case of Father Vaughan's libel suit, as in the case some months ago of the Columbian's effective exposure of Margaret Shepherd, there were many weak-kneed Catholics who deprecated the whole thing—people who have grown so accustomed to being libelled and maligned, and of having obloquy heaped upon their most sacred beliefs that their moral sensibilities are blunted, but we are glad that Father Vaughan went right ahead and showed the malicious mud-throwers of the English sectarian press that a Jesuit and a Catholic had rights and that he dared to maintain them under the law.—D. A. McCarthy in Catholic Columbian.

FIVE-MINUTES SERMON.

The Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

OUR NEIGHBORS.

"And who is my neighbor?" (St. Luke x 29)

There are two opposite faults to both of which almost everybody is more or less inclined. The first of these is meddling with other people's business; the second is shirking one's own.

It is rather the second of these than the first which is rebuked in the gospel of to-day in the persons of the priest and the Levite who went by without helping the poor wounded man.

Now in the first place, let me explain what I mean by shirking one's own business or duties. It is not simply leaving them undone and expecting that they will remain so; but it is putting off what one ought to do on one's self or somebody else, and expecting somebody else to do it for you. So if, for instance, you are drinking, and it is your duty to stop, and you are trying to do somebody else's duty for him when he would prefer to do it himself.

Now, this shirking was just what the priest and Levite were guilty of. I do not suppose that our Lord meant to describe them as really hard-hearted men, willing to let the poor man die rather than help him; but they said to themselves; "Oh! this is not my business particularly; there are plenty of other people passing along this road all the time, and I am a little hurried now. I have got a deal to attend to, and there will be somebody coming this way before long. Five minutes or so will not make much difference; and perhaps there is not so much the matter with the man after all. It may be his own fault. Very likely he has been drinking. At any rate, he has got no special claim on me."

This is a very natural state of mind for a person to get into, and how common it is in such a case as this, we can see from the common proverb that "everybody's business is nobody's business."

There are very many good works that really are everybody's business, that everybody ought to do something towards at least, but which are in great danger of being done at all account of this habit of shirking which is so common. And the ones which are most in danger are those of the kind of which this Gospel gives an example; that is works of charity toward our neighbor. People say to themselves, just as the priest and Levite did: "Oh! there are plenty of other people that can attend to this matter a great deal better and easier than I can. I am not sure it will be done somehow or other. Such things always are attended to. I don't feel especially called on to help in it."

Well, this might be all very good if those people did not really help in some things generously, and the case before them was one of no very urgent need. Of course we cannot contribute to everything. But the difficulty is, not occasionally but all the time, if a poor man comes to the door, or a collection is taken for the poor in the church, they say to themselves: "The St. Vincent de Paul Society can look out for those things; I am sure they must have money enough. I shall do my part in the poor box now and then." If contributions are called for in times of famine or pestilence they say: "There is plenty coming in to supply all that is wanted; I can see that by the papers. They can get along very well without me. And so it goes with anything to anybody or do anything for anybody—that is, nothing to speak of without getting a return for it. They will go to picnics, fairs, or amusements for a charitable object; but when it comes to doing anything simply for the love of their neighbor, that is left for somebody else.

If our Blessed Lord had only desired us to watch we might have supposed ourselves strong enough to resist temptation by our own exertion, but He saw our vigilance would be useless. He Himself watched with us.—St. Francis de Sales.

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MASCULINE PIETY.

It is hard to find reasons why men should not be as devout as women. They have souls to save; they desire peace of conscience, and God is willing to console them if they come to Him. The commandment, also, obliges them to hear Mass on Sundays and holy days. Yet at the Communion railing many more women are found than men.

It is not because women crowd men away from the confessional, though this may at times have some influence. Neither is it because men have less time, for their labor, if they are patient and humble under it, only helps to prepare them for the sacraments, and the time required for immediate preparation is not long. It is true the greater responsibilities weighing on men's minds may prevent their attending to devotion, but even this springs from an illusion. Nothing so stays the mind and heart of a man as the familiar habit of piety toward God.

We must then conclude that if men frequent the sacraments less than women, it is either because they have some mistaken notion in their minds or are become the victims of sluggish habits in religion. The sodalities of men equally with those of women ask monthly Communion of their members. So in the Communion of reparation by the associates of our League, and in all other devotions, the Church recognizes no distinction in inviting all Christians to the sacraments. If a distinction is made in practice, it is unauthorized and harmful.

In some countries where the spirit of revolution is abroad, a fashion has sprung up by which men who do not even comply with their Easter duty fasten themselves with being good Catholics. This cannot yet be said of our own country. Yet it is true that, here, too, the proportion of men faithfully frequenting the sacraments is far too small. Against this evil—for it is an evil resulting in worldliness and coldness and indifference—the pious society and popular devotions of the Church are instituted. This is a prime work of the League of the Sacred Heart; and its associates should exercise their apostleship of prayer frequently in favor of men's frequenting the sacraments more faithfully.—Catholic Columbian.

THE INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE IN LIFE.

The London Athenaeum for June 14 declares that it is now "high time to investigate the influence of literature in life, for we believe that it is now immeasurably greater than the influence of life in literature."

It considers the revolution wrought by literature in the case of love, for instance, to be of such a destructive nature that the transformation is tragic and an actual menace to humanity. To quote exactly the very remarkable words which conclude this remarkable article: "This tragical transformation is a menace to humanity. In order to escape from it, mankind at some remote period may be compelled to burn its books and make literature a capital crime."

This extraordinary declaration, of the truth of which some far-seeing minds may have felt already a premonition at thought of the flood of misleading and evil literature let loose upon the world, recalls the vision which the inventor of printing is said to have had before he proclaimed his invention public. He seemed to perceive the immense evil as well as the immense good it would cause, and he experienced grave doubt as to whether the ultimate result would be for the best. The time is surely coming when men will see the wisdom of the Catholic Church in proclaiming to her children that the books we read or write are as much a matter of conscience for us as the company we choose to associate with or the words we decide to speak or hear.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of Acknowledging our Unworthiness in the Sight of God.

And it is very wonderful that I am so quickly raised up, and so graciously embraced by thee—I, who by my own weight am always sinking to the bottom.

It is Thy love that affects this, freely preventing me, and assisting me in so many necessities; preserving me also from grievous dangers, and, as I may truly say, delivering me from innumerable evils.

For by an evil loving of myself, I lost myself; and by seeking Thee alone and purely loving Thee, I found both myself and myself again.

Because Thou, O most sweet Lord, art bountiful to me above all desert, and above all that I dare hope or ask for.

Blessed be Thou, O my God; for, though I am unworthy of all good, yet Thy generosity and infinite goodness never cease to do good to those even who are ungrateful and who are turned away from Thee.

Convert us unto Thee, that we may be thankful, humble and devout; for Thou art our salvation, our power and our strength.

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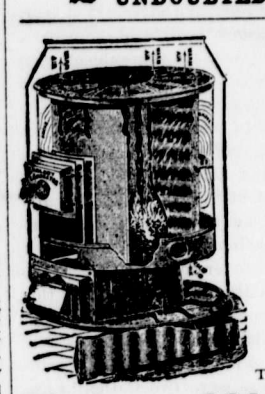
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