

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. BY A PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN. CLXXXVIII.

I am afraid I have given Professor Frank H. Foster more credit as a theologian than he deserves. Where facts and doctrines lie on the surface, sharply defined and perfectly ascertained, he picks them up and reproduces them with uncommon accuracy. As I have said, I have examined almost all his Roman Catholic articles in the cyclopaedia issued by the Christian Literature Company, and have not found a mistake. So also the later chapters of his book, so far as I have yet looked over them, seem to be decently accurate, because they mostly turn on clearly defined doctrines of the Catholic Church, which give little room for blundering. How far they will endure a close examination remains to be seen, but I am sure that they will not show him, and the Presbyterian Church with him, falling into the usual uncharitable pits of unintelligence and misinterpretation as in this third chapter.

The reason why this third chapter of the first part turns out such a *pois asinorum* is easy to explain. The subject requires a knowledge of theological development in the Catholic Church with which he is very scantily provided. He leaves out vital facts, or misconceives their significance; knows nothing of crucial decisions of the Church; misinterprets those which he adduces; gives wrong meanings to theological terms; or puzzles unintelligently over them; and shows himself completely a tyro in the later theological history of the Catholic Church, especially since the middle of the seventeenth century. Above all, his mind seems to be utterly blank as to the profound significance of the Jesuit theology in this matter, and of its victorious conflicts with the Jansenists concerning it.

If Foster were a pretender, all this would not matter much. However, he is not that. He is a serious and painstaking scholar, and whatever significant fact he knows, you may be sure that he will bring it up, even if it makes against himself. His modesty, though it is not over-easily abashed, would protest against my comparing him with one so much on all levels as are ahead of Froude in this, that we are both honest men.

Froude is capable of a wide scope of vision, but we commonplace men wish to be supported by facts, and these Froude fails us utterly. Not that he does not give abundance of facts, and fundamental facts, but that we can never trust him. He is the most unscrupulous of liars, and besides the deep insolence of his class, shown still more flagrantly by his Catholicizing brother Hurrell, mendaciousness is so ingrained in his character that even when he has no interest in lying, and no present particular purpose of lying, he still lies on, from sheer immoral indifference to the truth.

Now Foster and I are mere ordinary men compared with Froude, but we may lift our hands, with easily pardonable Pharisaism, and say we are not as better than he, for we try to tell the truth. Foster tries to tell the truth, but gets sadly away sometimes, just because he does not know what he is trying to tell. However, he is worth saying in America because he is exactly overflowing with scholarship, and where we get hold of a man that really has a creditable taste, we ought to compel him to complete his course, even if we have to send him to Luzen for a little taste of evangelical army discipline. He is only 50, and Cato at 80 thought he was not too old to turn his colloquial into literary Greek. Foster has plenty of time. Let him give himself up for ten years to careful non-political study at the East or in Europe and he will come out a very decently creditable scholar of Catholic theology and history. If he were living here now, I have no doubt I should be proud to take off my hat to him.

It is a little mortifying, meanwhile, to find that he does not know even Protestant history near as well as we had thought. Think of anybody's extolling Luther as an example of piety, showing that he has never read Melancthon's letter to Camerarius, and has never read that tissue of abominations which, by Martin's own acknowledgment, made his writings favorites in evil houses! Think of his extolling the mildness of the man who wants the pitch and hell-fire, and wants the Pope and Cardinals hung up on gibbets with their tongues cut out!

So also think of his denying that Luther damns Catholics as Catholics; Luther, who again and again, and yet again, denies the salvability of any one who does not accept his doctrine of justification! Sometimes, it is true, charity overcomes him, but he soon shakes himself loose and is as relentless as ever.

Then as to the Calvinists. Calvin, it is true, taught that there was a small proportion of Roman Catholics who were the victims of Anti-Christ rather than his accomplices, and who might perhaps be saved. However, he can not have done more than to whisper this opinion, for when it was mildly suggested in Scotland, Knox and the Calvinists there raised a perfect howl of protest against the zealous patronage of the Jesuits. Foster seems to know nothing about the black lools of which Baxter complains, for his including Catholics in the covenant. How far the Protestants, in the previous century, were from standing where Foster imagines them to have stood, we may see from Hooker's case, Richard Hooker was one of the moderate of divines of the most moder-

ate of Protestant Churches, the Church of England. Yet he did not dare to suggest that any of the Catholics then living could be saved. He only suggested that here and there one of these Catholic ancestors, who would probably have accepted the Reformation had it dawned earlier, might possibly have slipped into the kingdom of heaven. Even this little glimpse of allowance greatly displeased his brethren. However, their sulkeness relaxed somewhat when he promised them that all the Lutherans should be damned as well as all the Papists then living. Says he, even the Papists of to-day are not as far from the Gospel as the Lutherans. Such auspicious prospects of perdition for almost all Europe seemed to them worth a little fantasia about the possibilities of grace for here and there a hypothetical great-grandfather. The Primate, to whom the matter was referred, would say nothing but that the Papists were not to be put quite on a level with the Jews.

As to the heathen, whose destiny Dr. Foster reproaches the Catholics with making so dark, the severest divines have only taught what was taught among us when I was in the divinity school. I remember how angrily my teacher, the famous Edward Robinson, denounced the heresy that a heathen could be saved. President Fairchild of Oberlin, just deceased, held and taught that probably the salvation of a heathen, except by explicit profession of the Gospel, was impossible, although he never denounced the opposite opinion. He did not apply this to the Jews. The stereotyped formula of the missionary societies in my youth was this: "One thousand millions of heathens constantly renewed, going down in one unbroken column to eternal death!" Men like Dr. Schaff were regarded as blasphemous for mildly suggesting that they thought that was saying more than we knew.

This style of speech is out of fashion and indeed has largely given way to mere moral indignance. Yet even now I hardly think there is an orthodox Church board in America that would venture to publish a Protestantized recitation of "The Saved and the Lost," by the Rev. Nicholas Walsh, S. J., of Dublin, although this is published with the approbation of his provincial and of the archbishop. I wish somebody would send Father Walsh Professor Foster's third chapter. If he is at all desympetic, the jolly national laugh which it would elicit would go far towards curing him. I have dwelt at peculiar length on this third chapter of the first part of Dr. Foster's book because its misapprehensions and misstatements are so numerous, so far as I am yet able to judge, to outweigh those of the whole book besides, both in number and in practical importance. However, we have nearly reached the end, and can promise a final summing-up of this chapter in our next paper.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK, Andover, Mass.

A BOY CONFESSOR.

Interesting and Curious Anecdote Told by an English Priest.

An interesting and very curious anecdote is told by good Father Robert Plowden, who was for many years priest of Bristol, England.

A certain young midshipman, who belonged to the ancient faith, when making a voyage, contracted a strong friendship with a Protestant boy in the same service. Our nautical "Damon and Pythias" were each about fourteen years of age and for prudent reasons the former had not made known his creed to the latter.

When far away on the high seas, the Catholic lad fell dangerously ill and was sedulously waited upon by his mate, the Protestant "middy," all medical skill proving of no avail, the poor boy was rapidly approaching death's door when he drew nearer to him his faithful friend, in whom there seems to have been apparent a simple piety in which he could confide. Accordingly, he bravely told him that he was a Catholic and that the nearer death approached the firmer he clung to his faith. He must have deeply astonished his mate by the startling news that, as no priest, or even Catholic, was at hand, he wished to make his confession to him. Then by an effort, unusual and heroic, the poor lad poured his tale into the ear of his friend, but he told him, however, to keep it well in his mind, and to repeat the full confession of sins if he had made to him to good Father Plowden as soon as ever the ship should reach Bristol. Then giving him the priest's address, he bade him a long adieu and breathed his last.

The Protestant "middy," sad at the death of his mate, kept true to his word so carefully pledged and daily recalled to mind the duty committed to him. On landing at Bristol, he made straight to the old priest's house and told Father Plowden the dying request of his dear old friend, relating how the latter had lamented his inability to get shriven by a priest, and how he had solemnly warned him: "Remember the confession I make to you, and on reaching the port go and relate the whole to Father Plowden, word for word." But here the young sailor stopped. He thought and paused, but in vain did he bid his memory to give up the confession once told to him. Then, in confusion, he told the priest that though he had often thought of it, as his dying friend had desired him, yet it had all vanished from his mind. The old priest came quickly to his assistance and relieved him of all anxiety, informing the boy that there was no necessity to try to tell him the confession. He added that his dying friend had done a brave act, and one which was not required of him, yet that doubtless his humility, thus severely tested, had procured a speedy pardon from all-merciful God.

The priest spoke so kindly and so wisely that other visitors were used to the presbytery, the doctrines of the Church were explained, and the "middy" started on his next voyage a devout Catholic.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON. The Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

BACKBITING. "And he spake rightly." (St. Mark vii. 26) The Gospel tells us, dear brethren, that no sooner had our Lord touched the tongue of the dumb man than he began to speak rightly.

How often he has touched our tongues by coming to us in Communion, and yet how far we are from speaking rightly! It may be that we need healing more than the man of whom the Gospel tells. He had not the use of his tongue, and consequently could not employ it in the service of sin; we are blessed with his use and yet, perhaps, we do not sufficiently realize that God wants us always to speak rightly.

The tongue wrongly used is capable of effecting a great deal of evil. St. James calls an evil tongue a "world of iniquity." Calumny, slander and backbiting are but a few of the many sins of which it is the cause. Whence, indeed, come so many disputes, quarrels, and as a consequence so much animosity between those who were formerly, or who ought to be, on terms of intimacy? Ask your own experience if charity is ever wounded while you guarded against idle conversation, vain disputes and unkind remarks. You may be certain that if the tongue be carefully watched over, sins against charity will be fewer.

I am far from thinking that such faults are to be found only or indeed generally among habitual or hardened sinners. Some persons who consider themselves very pious and nearly perfect, who find it hard to collect sufficient matter for confession, do not always shun uncharitable conversations. Let them remember what St. James says: "He who offends not with his tongue is a perfect man." No piety is solid and genuine unless it be founded upon charity, which is the queen of virtues. We deceive ourselves in supposing that we are perfect, or even really pious, if we continue to gossip about our neighbor.

Sins of the tongue are often most grievous, and are often likewise irreparable in their consequences. Let us dwell upon a few such sins as offend God by reason of the injury which they do to our brother who is made according to His image, and who entertains an unkind feeling may seem to some people trifling or at most only venial. This is a great mistake if what we say does notable harm to him. It is no less grievous to injure our neighbor in his good name than in his property. To restore his goods is not very difficult, but to still possess them or from spreading the injury which we have done by speaking falsely about him, then the task assumes a much greater difficulty. It is about as possible to stay the progress of a forest-fire as to prevent the fire of an evil tongue from spreading in all directions. Nevertheless, we are bound to make every effort in our power to repair the injury. We need not hope that God will pardon us unless we are so disposed.

But some one will say: "I do not belong to the class that you here described. I do not say anything that is untrue of my neighbor, but simply mention to others those faults of which he is guilty." To this I answer: "If you do so in a grave matter, without necessity, and to those who are not concerned about the welfare of the person in question, you are guilty of the sin of slander. By whom have you been authorized to make known his failings? Are you perfect in virtue? Would it please you if some one were to make your faults public? Do not then treat others in this way, since you are unwilling to suffer it yourself.

If you have been thoughtless in the past, let the future be a kind, charitable disposition towards all, even those who offend you. Weigh your words with care, think of your own sins, avoid idle conversations and gossip.

THE PORTIUNCULA.

The Great Garden of Saint Francis of Assisi at it Came Down Through Seven Centuries.

FROM 3 P. M. OF AUGUST 1 TILL SUN-DOWN OF AUGUST 2. N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

Several miles out from Rome to the northeast rise the Umbrian hills, beyond which again tower the Apennines. On the sunny side of one of these Umbrian hills, called Mount Subasio, nestled the little town of Assisi, the delight of artists for its picturesque situation and quaint, unconventional streets, and the joy of devout souls for the thousand holy associations that make it a veritable gem in the Christian world since St. Francis exalted "Holy Poverty" there nearly seven hundred years ago.

It is a little town of hardly six thousand people, but the visitors to its many shrines of St. Francis and St. Clare often greatly outnumber its regular inhabitants. Especially is this true on one day in every year, without fail, since A. D. 1223, August 2 (or more properly speaking from 3 p. m. of August 1 until sundown August 2) the day of the Great Garden of St. Francis. People from all the surrounding country, and from remote parts of Europe, fill the church and the surrounding streets of our Lady of the Angels to obtain the plenary indulgence so singularly won for them by that simple man, the founder, after Jesus Christ, of the most numerous body of Religious in the

Church, whose very name stands for burning love for Jesus Christ—the seraphic St. Francis.

The Portiuncula—or little portion—was originally a small chapel belonging to the Benedictines, and dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. In St. Francis' time it had fallen into disuse and decay. The Benedictines, had left it for larger quarters. Answering his first call to God's service, Francis had it repaired. Besides working at it with his own hands, he begged help for it from passers by, until it was perfectly restored. Two other disused sanctuaries in Assisi were in the same manner repaired by St. Francis, his assistance thus given physically typifying the spiritual aid rendered by him and his Order to God's Church in need.

Shortly after the restoration of St. Mary's Francis and his disciples were looking for some place where they might praise God together, and the Benedictines offered them this chapel and the house and group adjoining. Francis joyfully accepted, naming it his "Portiuncula," or little part, and to emphasize his repugnance to absolute ownership of anything, he there and then made it a rule that every year his brethren would present to the Benedictines a certain quantity of fish as a sort of fee. Around the little chapel is now built a basilica. It is the cradle of the great Franciscan Orders, and one of the great shrines of Christendom.

Here, in 1221, on the anniversary of the dedication of his little chapel, St. Francis was favored with a vision on the Altar of our Divine Lord and His Blessed Mother in a glory of soft light. As he fell on his face, our Lord accented him in those words, according to the historian, the great Irish Franciscan, Luke Wadding:

"Francis, ask me what thou wilt for the salvation of souls, for I have given thee to the world to be the light of peoples and the support of My Church."

After a moment's pause, Francis answered: "O thrice Holy God! If I have found favor in Thy eyes, grant that all who, contrite and absolved, visit this little church may receive a full pardon of all their sins and of the punishment due to their sins."

There was no answer immediately, as if the favor were too great, and Francis beseeched the Mother of God to aid his plea.

"Go, then," said our Lord, "to My Vicar and demand this Indulgence in My name."

Francis lost no time in repairing to Rome with two companions, and presenting his petition to Pope Honorius III. in these words:

"Most Holy Father, a few years ago I repaired a little church in your dominions dedicated to the Mother of God. I beg your Holiness to enrich it with a valuable indulgence without the obligation of almsgiving."

"For how long a time, my son, do you wish this indulgence?"

"Holy Father, may it please you to grant me souls, not years. I ask all who, repentant and absolved, shall visit the Church of St. Mary of the Angels shall receive plenty remission of their sins for this world and the next."

"What thou askest is great and quite unusual at the Court of Rome," answered the Pope.

"I do not ask it in my own name, but in the name of Jesus Christ, who has bled for me," Francis answered. And inspired as the Holy Ghost, the Pontiff replied promptly, and repeated it three times: "In the name of Our Lord, we are pleased that thou shouldst have this indulgence."

Some Cardinals present demurred, remarking it would interfere with the pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem.

"We cannot revoke what we have freely granted. It is Our will that this indulgence be available in perpetuity, during the space of one natural day from the first vespers of one day to the last vespers of the next."

St. Francis had not named any day, nor could he decide for nearly two years afterward, till our Divine Lord again appeared, and bidden him for the day. St. Francis begged our Lord Himself to choose the day, and He graciously answered:

"It is My will that it be the day when I broke the chains of Peter, the prince of My apostles—from the first vespers of that day to the evening of the morrow. Go again to him who is My vicar that he may promulgate this Indulgence."

And so he did. St. Peter in Chains was celebrated on the 1st of August, so the great day of mercy so singularly chosen by our Lord Himself was inaugurated, and Pope Honorius sent seven Bishops to the little town of Assisi to solemnly announce it. It is related by the great Annalist Wadding that each of the seven Bishops in turn announced it "in perpetuity," though each one desired to suppress the phrase.

Such was the commencement of the great garden of St. Francis. For two hundred years it was confined to that little chapel of the Portiuncula, which was each 2nd of August, the scene of a wondrous gathering of penitents. After all the Franciscan churches of the world, succeeding Popes have still further extended it to churches where members of the Third Order (the lay order) meet, and even to other churches when no Franciscan church is available. The obligation of receiving Holy Communion, either required for the day before or that day or the day after, is that day or the day before, Confession and communion and a visit to the church so privileged are all that is necessary to gaining the indulgence of the Portiuncula. One may not gain it but once for himself, but he may gain it as many as a hundred times for the souls in purgatory if he can go in and pray and come out again so often. There is no set form or duration of prayer. Five Our Fathers and Hail Marys and Gloria in unison with the Sovereign Pontiff's prayers are commanded, but any form may be followed for the souls in purgatory. St. Francis himself was in the habit of saying on entering a church:

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Catholic. As the summer the subject of va and a chat on it to many readers. 1. Everybody least once a year usual occupation. ers need this, and do the young than do the time. and then a perio change of thoug most benefice Still, it is a goo ment is acqui keeps a genera town, and who g day for what he lost." He has store in the pla longer and ama any of his comp A week for week. "While life, let us liv Americans keep the grindstone, live, but live to this life—lo ly. We'll be long enough, occasionally on to visit our fr to get acqui selves, to indu enjoyment that some idea of v when we'll have reveal in bliss. "All work an dull boy." Of course the tion who have in the home, in or in the off something usef buttoffles, wea amends for thei ing to some fr that they now unnecessary ou And, by the would like to every city buy suburbs, with into a resort shop girls and taking charge o for a week or a It is useful in the opinion every one who summer for a w It is best, away from hom at home at nig to a different suburbs—to pa car routes, to and to the hom to pursue is r division of n and change of 2. After o mind to take a ment to be— That questio for himself, fo his means, th ready visited, as amount of tim But he nee journey would men's money, fortnight on a delightful res It is not dista desirable, as from his ordin Nevertheless, by railroad novelty is at lives. But where stay over 1 occasion a ple at Mass. Th on Sunday is as well as at 3. Campin amusing ways to camp out for But campin must be unde tion. Under most fascinat which is to Mismanned, all discomf The proble hand, the p house camp veniences, i suburbia vie wilderness, harsh depri and trapper. The first to whom the sent its self an escape fr convention, est pools of cious consu tained by 2 of "roughi into the gro participatory n needs will l hunter's a lie down. In this go, inexper join the gl the wilder camp, in s smoke that into the c of song and mosquitoes. In the w-mo-sec- them—are and toward the wane, as a deep, ing moss, or a knot the weary appears, st dulation refuses to then the puffed face diffusion party bac in their h At the