can do it. Who is to hinder Him from giving such power to man?" Well, I am going to prove to you, now, that God has given this power to man. "No, sir, you can never do that," says my Protestant friend." But, I will prove to you that God has given such power to man: for no man, with common sense or reason, can doubt for a a momont that God can give this power to man. I shall prove it to you from the Bible, and that is the book you like, do you not, my dear Protestant friends? It is the book of God, for which we Catholics have a very high veneration, and it is from this holy book of God, that I shall prove that God has given such power to man.

In the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew we read that on a certain occasion there was brought before our Divine Lord a man sick of the palsy, and when our Blessed Lord saw the poor palsied man He was moved with compassion, and said to the palsied man: "Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee," and

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISES

heard the Blessed Saviour say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and they murmured within themselves, and said, precisely as our Protestant friends say: "Who can forgive sins but God?" And Christ, reading the secret thoughts of their minds, said: "Why do you murmur at this? Which is it easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee, or take up thy bed and walk into thy house?" "But," said He, "that you may know that the Son of Man"—He does not say that you may know that the Son of God, but—"that you may know that the Son of Man (You know Christ was born God and man. He is God from all eternity, equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost, and He became man eighteen hundred and seventy-nine years ago, when He was born in the stable at Bethlehem) hath the power on earth to forgive sins—"and then did He say to the man sick of the palsy: "take up thy bed and walk into thy house;" and the sick man was instantly cured, and he took up his bed and walked into the house. Here, our Divine Saviour performed a miracle to prove that, even as man, He had the power of forgiving sins.

Now, in St. John, twentieth chapter, our Saviour says: "All power hath been given to Me in heaven and on earth, therefore, as the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. As I have been vested by the Father with all power, so I also send you vested with all power," and then breathing upon them (Apostles) He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Now, my dear Bible friends, you who say the Bible is your teacher, I beg of you, in the name of God, to divest yourselves of all prejudices, of all preconceived notions, and kindly, sincerely, before God, study the Bible, study the words of Jesus Christ. What did Christ mean when He said, breathing upon His Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost?" Who is the Holy Ghost? The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Adorable Trinity. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" that is, "Receive ye the power of God," for Holy Ghost, in the Holy Scriptures, frequently stands for the power of God, as in the first chapter of

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

our Divine Saviour says: "Not many days hence you shall receive the power of God." What was that power of God? It was the reception of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost "Receive ye, therefore, the power of God, and whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." Is not that clear and explicit? What did our Divine Saviour mean when He said, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them?" Did He mean what He said? Most assuredly so. There was no duplicity in Christ; there was no double dealing in Him. He did not say one thing and mean another thing. When He said to His Apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them" He gave them the power of forgiving sins.

Some years ago, when I was pastor of St. Francis Xavier church, in St. Louis, Mo., I was called to a sick lady, and when I came to the house I found with the sick lady a Protestant doctor. I asked the doctor to leave me alone with the lady for a few moments, and he did so. In the meantime, I heard the lady's confession, and administered to her the consolations of our holy religion, the sacraments of the Church. Having got through, I said to the doctor that he might come in; but the doctor was a Yankee, and you all know that the Yankees are a very inquisitive people, and always want to know the ins and outs of everything (laughter), and so, the doctor said to me: "What have you been doing, sir?" "Well, doctor, that is a very impertinent question, but as I know what you are driving at, I will answer you. I heard the confession of that lady." "You do not pretend to forgive the sins, do you?" said the doctor. "Yes, sir, I do." "Well," sir, continued the doctor, "that is a very extraordinary power." "Yes, sir, it is; but you do not believe in that power, doctor?" said I. "No, sir," said he, "no; no, I do not believe in any such nonsense as that." "Well, doctor," said I, "do you believe the Apostles had the power of forgiving sins?"

"NO SIR," SAID HE, "I DO NOT."

"Well, doctor, what did our Divine Saviour mean, when, breathing upon His Apostles, He said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them.' What did Christ mean, doctor, at that time?" "Well, I declare," said he, "that is a tough question." "A little tough, doctor. Will you be kind enough to answer it?" "Well," said the doctor, "I am not prepared for that now. I am here on professional business, and am not prepared to answer you now; but I will see you again." "Do, doctor, please see me again." The doctor was a sincere and honest man, and when he arrived at his office, he remembered his promise to see me again, and knowing that he should become familiar with the subject in order to talk with me, he procured himself some books on the Catholic doctrine, and read them through very carefully, until he became convinced that confession is of divine origin. He became interested in the matter and procured more books, and finally became convinced that the Catholic Church is the only true Church of God. Three weeks after that there came a rap at my door: "Walk in," and the doctor walked in. "Father," says he, "will you be kind enough to hear my confession?" "Eh, doctor! hear your confession? Why, you do not believe in that?" (Laughter) "I do, Father," says he, "and believe in all the other doctrines of the Catholic Church. I am thoroughly convinced that it is the only true Church of God, and I would like to make my confession." "All right, doctor; get on your knees." He got on his knees and I heard his confession and received him into the Church. Well, perhaps, some of my Protestant friends will say to-night: "Was he not a fool of a man?" No, my friends: he was a very wise and well educated man—a very smart man; and so wise you will be,

MY DEAR PROTESTANT FRIENDS,

if you would only take the trouble that the doctor took, to examine both sides of the question. But here is your misfortune; you are a one-sided people; you never examine both sides of the question. Tell me candidly, did you ever read a Catholic book in your life. "No, sir, I would not take up a Catholic book!" "But you have read a great many books against Catholicity?" "Yes, I have, and that is the very reason I do not want to read any more about it." Well, that shows you are a one-sided people. How can you give an impartial judgment when you have examined but one side of the question? What would you say of a judge who sits in the criminal court, when a policeman brings in a poor fellow, and says to the judge: "Judge, this man is guilty of such a crime." "Well, then, hang him," says the judge. "But," says the poor man, "Judge, I am innocent, and I am able to prove my innocence. I am able to bring you evidence and witnesses to prove that I am innocent." But the policeman insists that he is guilty. "Well, then," says the judge, "hang him anyhow." (Laughter.) What would you say of such a judge? "Ah!" you would say, "Unjust, cruel, bloodthirsty man—you are guilty of shedding innocent blood. Why do you not hear the man? Why do you not hear his evidence, and his witnesses, and his proofs? You are guilty of the blood of an innocent man, and you have condemned him without examination." Well, now, my dear Protestant friends, allow me to tell you (and I hope you will not be offended, for no man of sense can be offended by the truth) that is the way you have been treating the Catholics all the time. "Hang them anyhow," you say. Did you ever examine the doctrines of our holy religion? Did you ever read a Catholic book? Never in your life; and, then, you condemn us, condemn us without knowing what we are.

IS THAT THE PART OF A SENSIBLE MAN?

Is that just, I ask you? It is very hard to tell you that you have been acting so unjustly to us Catholics; but, certainly, none of you can be offended, for you know it is a fact. You have been condemning us; you have been turning us into ridicule; you have been holding us up to the odium of the people, without knowing what the Catholic religion is at all. That is the way Jesus Christ was treated, and that is the way you are treating the followers of Jesus Christ. Oh! my dear Protestant friends, do become more just, more fair, more honest and charitable towards your fellowmen. Condemn him not without knowing that he really deserves to be condemned. Do not examine one side of the question, but give a fair hearing to both sides. Do I ask anything unreasonable? Is that not fair and just? I would therefore recommend you to procure yourselves Catholics books. You have read a great many books against us; now examine the other side of the question. Procure yourselves Catholic books, in which our doctrines are thoroughly stated and thoroughly defended. I recommend to you the three following books, "Protestantism and Catholicity:" second book, "Points of Controversy;" and the third book, "The Manual of Instruction." You can get these three books, during the Mission, at the door of the church. If you do not remember the titles of the books, only mention the three books recommended and the young man will hand them to you.

I must continue with my proof from the Bible on Confession. In St. Matthew our Divine, Saviour says, sixteenth chapter: "I will give to you," says He to His Apostles, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed likewise in heaven." Here, you see, our Divine Saviour gave to His Apostles

A VERY EXTRAORDINARY POWER.

For what purpose were the keys? Why, of course, to open the door. They were giving for the purpose of unlocking Heaven to the repentant sinner. Here, again, our Divine Saviour confers the same power on His Apostles that He conferred upon them in the Gospel of St. John, twentieth chapter. Now, did the Apostles understand these words of Christ in the same manner as we Catholics understood them, in the nineteenth century, and as they have been understood for so many centuries? Did they really believe that they had the power of forgiving sins? They did, and they glorified in that power. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, says: "Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God, for we are the ambassador of Christ." Now, what is an ambassador? An ambassador is one who is sent by one power to another power to act for the power that sent him. If, for instance, the English Government sends an ambassador to Washington, that ambassador acts in the name of the English Government, and whatsoever he does in Washington is considered as done by the English Government itself: his acts are the acts of the English Government. "Now," says St. Paul, "we are the ambassadors of Christ." When did Christ constitute them ambassadors? When He said: "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven." It was then that Christ constituted His Apostles, and their lawful successors in the ministry, the priests and Bishops of the Church, His ambassadors. Again, says St. Paul in his second Epistle to the Corinthians: "We have the ministry of reconciliation." What does he mean by that? Why, of course, he means reconciling sinners to God. But how can they do so? Only by forgiving them their sins in the name of God. The sinner only becomes reconciled to God when his sins are forgiven. "So," says St. Paul, "He has placed in us the word of reconciliation, the power of reconciling the sinner to God, by forgiving him his sins." And, therefore, St. John the Apostle, in his first Epistle and first chapter, says: "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from our iniquities, if we confess them."

"IF WE CONFESS THEM."

There, St. John the Apostle makes confession a condition, without which no sin is forgiven. God is faithful and just to cleanse us from our inquities, "to forgive us our sins" "if we confess them." Hence, we see, that in the primitive days of Christianity the Christians went to confession. In chapter xix 18th verse, of the Acts of the Apostles, we read: "And many of those who believed, came, confessing and declaring their deeds." The multitude of the people—those who had been received into the Church—they came, says the Bible, "confessing and declaring their sins" to the Bishops and priests of God. They did the same as Catholics do now; they came in crowds to confession, as Catholics do now on greatf estivals, such as Easter, Christmas, etc., so says the Bible. Did the primitive Christians not know the Catholic doctrine? Were they ill instructed? They knew its doctrines from the very lips of the Apostles, and hence the Catholic religion is now as it was in the primitive days—in the days of the Apostles.

And, St. James the Apostle says to the priest of the Church: "Confess your sins one to the other, and pray one for the other, that you may be saved." Here, you see, St. James the apostles makes the confession of sins a condition of salvation also on the priest of the Church. In the Catholic Church it is not merely the laity that are bound to go to confession and tell their sins, but also the priest is bound to do so; and so, also, must the Bishops and the Cardinals: and even the Pope himself is bound to go to confession, should he have the misfortune to fall into sin, for he is a man like the rest of us. Confession is a divine law and must be observed by all. The priest, however, does not wait to fall into sin before he goes to confession, for as a general thing, the priests of God strive to lead pure, moral and holy lives and keep themselves from sin; but, even if they do not commit any sin, they go to confession once a week or twice a month or so, and when they have nothing to confess, they confess the sins of their youth, of their young days, in order to humble themselves before God and once more obtain the forgiveness of Christ.

I might, my dear Christians, give you many more texts from the Bible in order to prove that confession is an institution of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that our Lord and Saviour has given to the Apostles, and to their successors in the ministry, the Bishops and priests of the Church, the power of forgiving sins. The words of Christ that I have quoted are so plain, so explicit and so expressive, that it is impossible for any man who believes in the Bible to doubt them. "Whose sins you shall forgive," says the Son of the living God, "they are forgiven them." There is no other meaning to them but that He gave them them the power of forgiving sins. "Well," says my Protestant friend, "I suppose the Apostles had the power of forgiving sins—that is plain from the Bible; but how do you get that power?" Well, now, when our Divine Saviour established His Church here upon earth, tell me, did He mean that the Church which He established was to last only during the lives of the Apostles? Was it to die with the Apostles? "Oh, no!" says my Protestant friend, "of course not; it was to last forever, for if it were not to last forever, we would then be very badly off." Well, then, it was to last forever, you say. Was it the intention of our Divine Saviour that the Church which He established should continue as He had established it, without any change? "Well, I suppose so; I guess that was His intention." Well, then, as He established it with the power of forgiving sins, therefore that power must remain in the Church; that necessarily follows. If you admit the premises you must consequently admit the conclusion. Christ established His Church with the power of forgiving sins, and He wished His Church to remain as He established it; and therefore He wished that power to remain in His Church to the end of all time. He wished that power, which He had given His Apostles, to be communicated to their successors to the end of time, hence we see that the Apostles gave the power to St. Paul. You all know, of course, that St. Paul was not one of the twelve original Apostles. I say you all know that; but the fact is, my dear Protestant friends, you who are talking so much of the Bible, know very little about it. Do you really know, now, that St. Paul was not one of the twelve original Apostles? That is a clear fact from the Bible. St. Paul was a persecutor of the Church established by Jesus for a long time. He was a Jew, and a very zealous Jew; but by a miracle of God he was converted, and after he was converted, and having been baptized by Ananias and received into the Church, he was consecrated a Bishop of the Church, as you see in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Then St. Paul was consecrated, by the other Apostles, a Bishop of the Church. Therefore, St. Paul was not present when our Divine Saviour said to His Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." Hence St. Paul did not receive from Christ Himself the power of forgiving sins; he received it from the other Apostles, when he was ordained a Bishop of the Church. And St. Paul again consecrated Timothy and Titus, and so on. These, St. Paul consecrated Bishops of the Church, and gave to them the power of forgiving sins in the name of God and by the authority of God, just as he received it himself. Now, I will not quote any more texts from the Holy Scriptures, because it would occupy too much time. I will now, however, give quotations from

THE EARLY WRITERS OF THE CHURCH,

those who lived in the very days of the Apostles themselves, and who received all their Christianity from the Apostles. I will quote from their writings to show that in their days, eighteen hundred years ago, the doctrine of confession was preached as much as it is preached now. The first one from whom I will quote is St. Clement. St. Clement was a disciple of St. Peter, the Apostle, and he was baptized and instructed by St. Peter in all the doctrines of the Catholic Church. He also was ordained by St. Peter a Bishop of the Church of God, and afterward became one of the successors of St. Peter as Pope. St. Peter was the first Pope and St. Clement was the fourth. Of St. Clement, St. Paul says in one of his Epistles, "that that name of Clement is written in the book of life," so that the Bible testifies that Clement is a saint of God. Now, Clement says in his first and second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Blessed Peter has taught that the faithful are bound to confess their sins to the priests of the Lord. If, therefore, any one of you has conceived in his heart thoughts of infidelity, of envy, or jealousy, or any other evil thought, let him not be ashamed to confess this to the priest of the Lord, that, by salutary counsel, and by the word of God, he may be healed by Him." This is the language of a disciple of St. Peter, the Apostle, written eighteen hundred years ago, when Catholicity was in its very cradle. In the same century lived Dionysius, the Areopagite, who was a convert of St. Paul, and we read of his conversion in the Bible. There, we read that when St. Paul went to Athens to preach the Gospel many became converts to the faith, and among those converts was a very eminent judge, a great philosopher—Dionysius, the Areopagite (Acts xvii.)—and when St. Paul had instructed him he baptized him, and after more thorough instruction St. Paul consecrated him Bishop of Athens. Afterward, Dionysius was transferred from Athens to Paris, France, by Clement, and he became the first Catholic Bishop of Paris. Well, Dionysius had in his diocese a certain priest called Demophalus, and another priest, having the misfortune to fall into sin, went to his brother priest Demophalus, and confessed his sin in order to obtain absolution; but, Demophalus, comparing

THE SACRED OFFICE AND FUNCTIONS

of the priest with his sin, upbraided and reproached him, and refused him absolution, thereby, driving the priest into despondency. In his despondency and despair, the priest wrote to Dionysius, complaining of the harshness of Demophalus, who refused him absolution for his sin. And then it was that Dionysius wrote his Eighth Epistle to Demophalus, in which he said: "We have received the keys of the kingdom of heaven to pardon the repentant sinner, but you have abused this power, and you have driven the repentant priest to desperation by refusing him absolution of his sins." Hence, from this you see that, at that time—eighteen hundred years ago—not only the laity, but the clergy, confessed their sins, in order to obtain absolution. In the second century—namely, over seventeen hundred years ago, lived Irenæus, who was a disciple of Polycarp and he (Polycarp) was a disciple of St. John the Apostle. Now, Irenæus mentions that some women came to the church and publicly confessed their sins, but others were converted with much difficulty—they spent their lives in holiness, confessing their sins, but others renounced the faith. Why did they renounce the faith? Because they had not the courage to confess their sins, and they knew that the true faith would not save them, unless they did confess their sins: and, as they had not the courage to do so, they abandoned the faith. Such was the conviction of the Christians seventeen hundred years ago, that they must either confess their sins or be condemned. In the same century lived Tertullian, who has written a whole book on confession, and that book is called "De Pœnitentia." In that book he enters into all the particulars of the subject: how confession must be made; what preparation must be made for it, and what are the dispositions we must have in order to obtain the

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