

From the U. S. Catholic Miscellany.

THOUGHTS ON THE ANGLICAN CHURCH. CONCLUDED.

It will be time enough to enquire what would be the effect if the Church should declare that to be right which the scripture declares to be sin, after such a disaster shall have happened. If this has occurred, prove it. Until then we shall rest on Christ's promises to abide with the church all days even to the consummation of time, and we shall humbly comply with the injunction to hear His church that we may not be reputed as heathens or sinners.

The remark on the 3rd article is inconclusive if it were founded in fact. The importance of no Sacrament acknowledged to have been instituted by Christ, and to be necessary or even conducive to salvation is superseded by recourse to any other rites or ordinances believed to be also means of grace and not forbidden by God. But the church does rely on Scripture authority for each and every one of its sacraments.

The assertion about what it terms the fourth article is flippant and false. The council of Trent does not teach that any man has merits "of his own." It teaches indeed that although Faith be necessary to salvation, "as without faith it is impossible to please God," yet that "Faith without works is dead," and that men "is not justified by faith only." (See Epistle James ch. ii vers s 17, 24, and 26.) It teaches that good works the fruits of faith are "meritorious" in the sight of God, not because they can claim a reward from God's justice, but because he has been graciously pleased to promise eternal rewards to them, and His promises cannot fail. And in order to prevent the miserable cavil that it supposes man to have "merit of his own," the council explicitly declares "that we who can do nothing of ourselves can do all with the help of him who strengthens us, so that Man has nothing of which he can glory himself, but that all our glory is in Jesus Christ in whom we merit, in whom we satisfy, bringing forth fruits worthy of penitence, which derive all their value from Him, which by Him are offered to His Father, and through Him are accepted of His Father," Sess. 14. Ch. 8. Does the writer know the doctrine of the council on this point? If he does not, what presumption is it not in him ignorantly to arraign it? If he does, what is the guilt and meanness of knowingly falsifying it?

His remarks on the fifth article of the creed of Pius the 4th may claim a passing notice. He either knows not, or wilfully misrepresents, our doctrine in relation to the Holy Eucharist. The church does indeed regard it not only a Sacrament but as a Sacrifice. In the latter sense it is renewed and commemorative offering in an unbloody manner; on the Eternal Father of the same precious victim which was offered to Him in blood on Mount Calvary. The offering is made by the same High Priest the Son of God, through his authorized ministers, in obedience to his command, "do this in remembrance of me," and in order "to shew forth the death of

the Lord until he come." How can the solemn renewal and commemoration "superseede the value of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, when from that sacrifice alone it professes to derive all its efficacy?"

It is low ribaldry to represent us as believing that "man can by his word create God out of a bit of bread." We certainly believe that Christ can change the essence or substance of bread into that of his body, and when this is done in the venerable sacrament we believe that it is by *his word* that the change is effected. Man may indeed be the instrument but God is the agent. The writer himself believes, or at all events his church teaches as an article of Faith, that by baptism the infant "who was born in sin and the child of wrath is regenerated or born again and made a child of grace." Does man do this by his word or his act? Or does God effect this supernatural change through the instrumentality of Man?

It can not be denied if Christ be actually present in the blessed Sacrament that he is received entire during either form; for assuredly it is the living, spiritual, glorified body of Christ, and not dead flesh such as is sold in the shambles, which is communicated to the receiver. The reasons for the present discipline of the church on this subject are set forth in all our Catechisms and need not be here repeated.

It is a vile slander to assert that the church "assigns to the Blessed Virgin all the attributes of God!" All that it ever asks of her is to pray to God for us, and is this base falsehood, which the writer says "can be shown"—but which is not shewn—is it asked to be believed without proof against the great majority of the wisest and best men of Christendom? Is our church to be regarded at the same moment as being a living branch of God's true church, and as assigning to a purely human creature all the incommunicable attributes of the one only God?

It is not easy to understand the writer's train of thought in the remarks which he makes upon the tenth and eleventh articles. He professes to believe with us in "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." We believe that the church which is spread throughout the whole world, which is everywhere recognised by the appellation of Catholic, and which acknowledges the Bishop of Rome as its visible head is the "one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" designated in the creed. How this belief can have a tendency to supersede the creed itself, or any part of it—is inconceivable.

There is a Holy Catholic and Apostolic church to be believed, or this article of Faith is without meaning. There is some church existing which corresponds to that referred to in the creed. Let it be shown that any other than our's, has the just claim to this designation, and it will then be a duty to believe that church. It is equally difficult to understand what he means about the want of a "visible transmission of authority and imposition of hands." He can hardly be ignorant that when the Pope or Bishop of Rome dies, his successor always receives episcopal consecration. It is "the bishop of Rome" whom we acknowledge for "Pope" (or Father) or the visible head of the Church.

Surely here is a "visible succession by imposition of hands."

It is not true that any canon of the Church—or of any council received by the Church—in any age, ever forbade any article to be believed as necessary, except those contained in the Nicene Creed. Will the writer assert that a belief in hell as a place of eternal punishment was not *always* an essential article of faith in the Catholic church? Is this doctrine in the creed? Does he not hold as an article of faith "that Christ established in his church two Sacraments" viz: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, "as generally necessary to salvation?" Does he find this doctrine, or any allusion to Baptism or the Lord's Supper in the creed? He, beyond doubt, holds as an essential truth, that the gospels and the other books of the New Testament are the inspired word of God. Does he find this article of faith in any of the creeds? There is indeed a reference in the Nicene creed to the Prophets of the ancient Jewish church, "through whom the Holy Spirit spoke," but neither the New Testament nor any part of it is either mentioned or alluded to in the creed. The Apostles' creed at first—afterwards the Nicene creed—and even the creed of Pius the 4th; which was compiled in obedience to the directions of the council of Trent—are respectively the authorized formularies or symbols of faith presented according to the discipline of the church to the alleged convert as tests of the sincerity of his profession. If it can be shown that they contradict each, other then, indeed, one or more of them must be false. But they are not contradictory merely because the second and the third are more full, or enter into greater details than the first. These additions are but specifications of the general article, "I believe the holy Catholic church."

I had forgotten to notice a gross violation of truth in the writer's remarks on the 9th article. His words are "In this article it is maintained that the Pope by granting an Indulgence, may put an end to this state of suffering and cause that any particular soul may at once pass on to Heaven." Is it so? What pretence has he for this assertion? The words of the article are, "I also maintain that the power of Indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christiana people." It is, therefore, untrue that the doctrine attributed "is maintained in this article." The doctrine of Indulgences has been explained over and over again in our catechisms, until we would reasonably think the most captious criticism ought to be satisfied in regard to it. Probably the writer has never seen these explanations, and never inquired of Catholics or from Catholic authorities what is the doctrine of the church on the subject; and takes for granted that Indulgences are what he so confidently declares that in this article of the creed of Pius the 4th, they are maintained to be. But surely truth, modesty, and decency required that before he arraigned us, for specifically maintaining an impious doctrine he should have

ascertained what our doctrine truly is. Had he done so, he would have found that the Church, holding that it had the right, after the sinner's guilt was remitted, to impose on him a penalty because of his past misdeeds, thought proper in the third century to prescribe as a part of its established discipline, certain terms of public penance to be observed by repentant and confessing sinners who had given public scandal, these terms varying in devotion according to the enormity of their offences. But at the same time it left with the Bishops of the church—not the Pope exclusively—the power to lessen the term of penance—or to dispense with it altogether by "an Indulgence" when the fervour or weakness of the penitent, or any other mitigating circumstance might in his judgment call for such clemency. This is the power of Indulgences, which is recognised in the councils of Nice, of Ancyra, of Laodicea, and Carthage, and the use, not the abuses of which, according to the council of Trent, we maintain to be wholesome.—It is not a license to sin—it is not a pardon of sin—but a remission to sinners already pardoned of the penalties imposed by church discipline. He may deny the right of the church, (for it is difficult to say what authority he admits the church to have,) to impose such restraints of discipline. But admitting that right, it would be absurd to hold that it cannot dispense with its own regulations, in what it deems proper cases. In all governments there must be a power lodged somewhere to shew clemency, and controul the too rigorous execution of penal laws.

There is a misrepresentation in the writer's remarks about the 11th article. It is not required of the convert that he should believe *severally* the doctrinal and disciplinary judgments and regulations set forth in the canons of the General Councils, but he is bound to acknowledge, that the doctrinal decrees of these councils are legitimate expositions of the revealed faith, and that the regulations of discipline are entitled to his obedience. As to the assertion, that the canons of the General Councils received by the church contradict each other—if it is to be understood of a contradiction in definition of faith—the assertion is peremptorily denied. If he means that regulations of discipline have been changed from time to time, the fact is admitted, but then what is the force of this objection? The first General Council of which we have any account is mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when it was enjoined upon the faithful "to abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled." I would ask of the writer was it not the duty of the faithful to obey this command? Does his church now obey it? Does any Episcopalian scruple to eat blood pudding? Why is the ordinance now disregarded, but because the discipline of the church has in this case been changed?

It would be doing injustice to the writer to charge him with maintaining that Christ has left no authority in his church to expound his revealed law; but I am obliged to say, if I understand his opinions, that the authority which he acknowledges to have