

further; I will suppose the extremest possible case; namely, that, in spite of this solemn asseveration, thousands of you were, not only, to persist in your unbelief, but to turn your backs upon your Jesus, and abjure him for ever, as a liar and impostor!—How, think you, would your Saviour act in this emergency? Would he let you go, when a word would keep you? Would he, who came to teach you—to die for you—would he suppress the truth, and by that suppression, leave your souls to ruin? Would the lover of souls do this? Nay, more, would he, again and again, tell you, that you should “eat his flesh and drink his blood;” and that too, with the threat of your “not having life in you,” unless you did it? Would Christ say this, if the truth did not oblige him? Would he say this, if at the same time, he only meant, that you were to eat bread and wine, as the *figures* of his flesh and blood? and when, by candidly telling you so, he could remove all your difficulties, at once, and save you from the perdition of infidelity? Would, in a word, the Lamb of God be guilty of so gratuitous, so cruel an imposture? Now, then; suppose, as I was saying, that, standing in this very pulpit, he were to act in this very manner I have just described. Would this, O Calvinists, be sufficient for you? would this remove the obstinacy of your unbelief?

“It would,” you reply; “but the supposition is absurd; Christ could not act so.”—I deny it. He has acted so. Read the sixth chapter of John.—He, there, for the first time, said: “The bread which I shall give, is my flesh for the life of the world.” No sooner had the word passed his lips, than the Jews questioned its possibility, debating among themselves, and saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” What did Jesus reply? Did he tell them they had mistaken him? that it was only, in *figure*, they were to eat his flesh? No. But, using that asseveration, which, with him, was in lieu of an oath, he said: “Amen, amen, I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.—For my flesh is meat indeed; and my blood is drink indeed: &c.” What followed? Why not only were the Jews still more offended, but many of his own disciples exclaimed: “This saying is hard, and who can hear it?” And yet upon so alarming a symptom of desertion, how did Jesus act? He who was so wont to explain his parables to his disciples, nay soften down his words, lest they might, prematurely, offend the prejudices even of his enemies—did he do, or say aught, to stop the spreading apostacy of his own followers? Did he palliate? did he explain? did he clothe in metaphor, his first assertion?—On the contrary, to confirm its absolute truth; to show them; that unqualified belief must be paid to his infallible word, he added to its apparent impossibility, by saying: “Does this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?” In other terms: “You do not believe,” says he, “that I can give you my flesh to eat, now while I am present among you, that it

shall be eaten, even after I have ascended to my Father?”—Such was the manner, in which the Eternal Truth met the doubts, the questions, the unbelief, not only of the Jews, but of his own disciples. Every word, which their infidelity extorted from him, was but a stronger, and still stronger, declaration of his corporal reality in the eucharist. Nay, he saw them go back, quit his company, and abjure his doctrine altogether, rather than let fall a sentence, which might even by possibility throw a doubt on the wonderful mystery of Transubstantiation. He grieved—Oh! how his loving heart grieved at their obstinacy! But he would not purchase their salvation at the expense or even with the palliation, of the truth. And beholding himself now almost alone, turning to the twelve, he said: “Will you also go away?” When Peter like every faithful & rational Christian, subjecting his senses to his faith, and believing the word of a God, because it was the word of a God, replied: “Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed, and have known, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.”

To be continued.

ORIGINAL.

The Protestant, or negative faith, refuted, and the Catholic, or affirmative faith, demonstrated from Scripture.

Continued

XXIV.

ON PRAYING FOR THE DEAD.

PROTESTANTS, contrary, as we have just seen, to the belief and practice of the Jewish and universal Christian Church; and without the merest shadow of scripture proof; condemn, and prohibit all prayers put up, and good works performed *for the dead*: all supplicatory interposition with God in their behalf: all being baptized *for them*, as St. Paul expresses it.—1 Cor. xv. 29.—The ties of their mutual charity are thus wholly broken; and all their religious sympathies, and well wishing to one another, destroyed by death, as if they had never been. Though commanded in scripture *to pray for one another*—James v.—they, as if the dead and the living were no longer that *one another*, are forbidden to pray for their brethren departed. They must no more wish well to their nearest and dearest friends, for that were *to pray* for them. They must take no interest in their posthumous fate; but forget them quite, as if they had never been; and were never more to meet again. She is not the true mother of the child, who, persisting in her claim to it, can thus with indifference see it doomed to destruction, and not interpose with the sovereign judge to spare it.—3 Kings iii. 26. The real mother seeks at any cost, to preserve her cherished offspring from the threatened doom. By such maternal fondness still is the real mother of the faithful known. She flings not so her children from her; nor forgets her immortal progeny: but in yielding them up, when called for, by her divine spouse, she implores him not to deal with them according to the rigor of his justice; but to spare them according to the multitude of his mercies. Nor will he turn a deaf ear to her sup-

plication, who hath assured her that *whatever she asks the father in his name, shall be granted to her* Mat. xxi. 22—John xiv. 13.

They are still her children, all those, whom her spouse has not disowned; and for them she exerts with him her tender solicitude, to induce him by the blood of his testament to set them quickly free, and send forth his prisoners of hope from the pit, where no water is found: where no refreshment is now within their reach; nor means at hand to mitigate their pain.—Zach. ix. 11, 12. All their relief must come from without; for their day of meritorious labour is ended, and they are overtaken by that night, in which, as our Lord assures us, *no one can work*.—John ix. 4.

For these she pours forth her prayers, offers up her sacrifice, and uses every deprecatory means for their relief, till she obtains at last their longed-for deliverance: and then she exults in their final exaltation to that bliss and glory, for which they were created; and where, from the influence they now have with their maker, they will amply repay the charitable concern manifested for them in the hour of their distress by their mortal brethren here below.

XXV.

OF INDULGENCES.

Protestants deny the Catholic doctrine of Indulgence, without knowing, or choosing to know, what that doctrine really is: but, as usual, taking for granted the studied misrepresentations made of it by their crafty reformers, who found it their temporal interest to mislead the public; they have been even brought to believe the wicked absurdity that the Catholic indulgences are but so many licences granted to commit sin. It is truly wonderful that they, who believe nothing on so great an authority as the unanimous and never varying testimony of the whole Catholic Church; so readily believe every thing against her, even the most obvious and palpable falsehoods, on the bare word of any one known to be her adversary. Their credulity on the side of error is as unaccountably great, as their incredulity, and aversion to know the truth. Under the blindfolding influence of the spirit of error, they exhibit to the eye of the unprejudiced observer, an awful spiritual phenomenon: their dread of being made acquainted with the real doctrines of the Catholic Church; and their bold and unblushing misrepresentation of them, blaspheming, as Saint Peter says, the things which they know not.—2 Peter ii. 12.—and of which they are *wilfully ignorant*.—Ibid. ch. iii. v. 5.

An indulgence then, in the Catholic sense, is only the commutation of a greater, more difficult, or longer lasting penance, enjoined for past transgressions, into a less, more practicable, or shorter one; as the spiritual director, from his knowledge of the disposition, situation and circumstances of the penitent, sees fittest to prescribe.

In the rigid discipline of the primitive Church long lasting, severe humiliating penances were prescribed, public and always for public and scandalous offences; private for private ones. These penances, public or private, were often prudently