

## A ROMAN CATHOLIC'S REASONS

Why he cannot conform to the Protestant Religion.

[CONCLUDED.]

Lastly, a scurrilous libel entitled, *a Protestant's Resolution: showing his reasons why he will not be a Papist*, writ by way of questions and answers in the form of a catechism, reprinted several times a few years ago, and industriously dispersed throughout the kingdom, has the following question and answer, page 10.

Q. What was there in the Romish religion that occasioned Protestants to separate themselves from it?

A. In that it was a *superstitious, idolatrous, damnable, bloody, traitorous, blind, blasphemous religion*.

This indeed is outrageous in the highest degree, and more becoming the brutality of a savage, than one that sets up for a guide and teacher of Christians. I omit innumerable others, to save myself the trouble of transcribing volumes, and appeal to the generality of Protestant knicks, whether the idea of popery being a religion full of gross errors, superstitions, and idolatry, has not been familiar to them from their very childhood: and since such notions are not born with us, they must have been instilled into them by their teachers. I pray God to convert their hearts, and forgive them the guilt of so grievous a sin.

It is however plain and undeniable, that the generality of Protestants have in a manner conspired together, to give this foul character of the church of Rome, and so they stand convicted by their own doctrine and writings, that they cannot without the greatest incoherency, and even absurdity, pretend to derive a lawful ministry from that church, for the reason I have already often repeated, viz: because an heretical or idolatrous church has herself no lawful ministry, and therefore cannot communicate it to others. Nay, had a person had a lawful mission before he would forfeit it by communicating with such a church; because whoever communicates in sacraments or worship with heretics, schismatics, or idolaters, becomes guilty of their heresy, schism, or idolatry, and is thereby rendered incapable of exercising his functions lawfully. And this alone is a convincing proof, that neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor Zuinglius, nor Carlostadius, nor bishop Craumer, nor any of the first reformers, could possibly have a lawful ordinary mission according to their own doctrine, wherein they have represented the church of Rome as an heretical and idolatrous church; because they had all communicated with her for many years, in all her sacraments and worship.

Now then I leave Protestants to consider seriously, from whence they have their ministry or mission? By their blind zeal against Popery, and violent hatred to the church of Rome, they have effectually stopped up that channel against themselves, through which alone it had passed for fifteen hundred years before the Reformation; and when they separated themselves from that church, as they never incorporated themselves into any other society of Christians, so have they been

from the very beginning, and continued to be a separate body and communion from all other Christian churches, as well as from the church of Rome; and so they cannot have received their mission from any of these. Neither can they have received it from the people, or secular magistrate, because they have no ecclesiastical power or jurisdiction themselves. How then do they come by it? It certainly behoves them to give a satisfactory answer to this question; because the salvation or damnation of millions of souls depends upon it.

Some will perhaps say, that though the church of Rome be painted in very black colours, by great numbers of Protestant teachers, yet the more moderate part pretend not that she has lost that faith, but only obscured it. that the foundation remains good, but she has built a great deal of stubble and straw upon it; that therefore she has always had a lawful ministry, and by consequence a power to communicate it to others. But these are all empty words, and serve for nothing else but to throw a mist before the people's eyes. I shall therefore propose two dilemmas to clear the whole matter.

First, Either the church of Rome is a superstitious and idolatrous church, or not. If she be, she has no lawful ministry, nor by consequence a power to communicate it to others. If not, what opinion must all rational men have, not only of the first reformers, but of the generality of Protestant teachers? Must they not regard them as men void of honor and conscience, as seducers, impostors, and the foulest calumniators, that ever were upon the face of the earth? Nay, must they not think their leaders, who still promote or countenance this unchristian calumny, to be utterly destitute of all hopes of salvation, unless they make some public reparation of honor to their church, which both they and their forefathers have slandered in such a notorious manner?—I think the matter is beyond all question, according to this received maxim of Christian morality, that the sin of injustice is incapable of pardon, if restitution be not made.

Again, Either the church of Rome is an heretical church, or not. If she be, it follows again that she has no lawful ministry, nor a power to transmit it to others. If not, there follows a train of the most destructive consequences to all the reformed churches. For if she be not an heretical church, then her whole faith is orthodox, and it follows that the pope's supremacy, the church's infallibility, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the Mass, the lawfulness of communion in one kind, of invoking the saints, and honouring their reliques, images and pictures, and many more articles denied by the reformed churches, are all articles of revealed faith, because they are all proposed as such by the church of Rome, and if any of them were not revealed truths she would be manifestly guilty of heresy: because to add to the revealed word of God, is as much heresy as to detract from it: that is to say in plainer terms, whatever church declares that to be an article of revealed faith, which really is not so, is no less an heretical church, than that which

denies articles of faith revealed by God.

Well then, supposing the church of Rome not to be an heretical church, it follows, 1st, That she is the true church of Christ. 2d, That all the reformed churches have separated themselves from the true church of Christ. 3d, That in so doing they are schismatical churches. 4th, That they are likewise heretical churches in denying the aforementioned articles, proposed by her as revealed truths. And 5th, The being heretical churches, they are incapable of having any lawful ministry; because no man or society of men, ever had a lawful power to preach heresy. This I call a train of consequences destructive to all the reformed churches, if the church of Rome be not an heretical church: and if she be one, they can have no lawful mission from her: and so they are hemmed in betwixt the two horns of this dilemma, one of which must give them a mortal wound let them turn themselves what way they please.

But it may perhaps be asked, whether if the whole church of Christ should fall into heresy or idolatry, there would be no possibility in that case of a lawful ministry, or ordinary mission? I answer, first, that the cause is impossible: because Christ has positively promised his church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. Matt. xvi 18. And that he will be with her unto the end of the world. Matt. xxviii. 20.

I answer 2dly, that if it were possible for the whole church to apostatize, the ecclesiastical ministry or mission, as established upon the footing it now is, would cease of course in that case, and an extraordinary vocation would then be absolutely requisite to authorize persons to establish a new ministry, in case it should please God to form a new church. Which was the very principal the first reformers went upon, when they claimed an extraordinary vocation: and they argued very justly, as I observed before, if it had been true what they pretended, that the whole church was fallen into heresy and idolatry.

There remains now but one popular argument to be answered, viz: that it was not the business of the Reformation to preach a new faith, or set up a new church, but only to bring the Christian religion back to its ancient purity, which surely any minister of the gospel may lawfully do.—Thousands of the laity who know nothing of ecclesiastical history, and swallow down, without examination, whatever their guides teach them, have been, and are still seduced by the plausible appearance of this argument. For nothing is more certain, than that the most ancient christian religion is that which was taught by Christ and his Apostles, and the religion they taught is most certainly the only true one. When, therefore, the people are confidently told by their ministers, that Protestantism is the ancient religion, and believe it upon their word, there they stick, fully satisfied without enquiring any farther whether it be really so or no; whether their ministers can prove it as easily as say it; or whether their averring it be a safe bottom to hazard their souls upon? whereas, if they made those enquiries whith

sincerity requisite in a concern of this importance, they would soon discover their state to be the same as that of persons under the delusion of a pleasing dream. And indeed, as long as they continue under this delusive dream of having antiquity and the primitive ages on their side, all endeavours to convince them of this or that particular truth, is but labour lost, like speeches made to persons in a profound sleep.

For which reason I refer the reader to the book entitled, *The shortest Way to end Disputes about Religion*, part 1, chap. 4th and 5th, where it is made plain that the doctrine commonly known by the odious name of popery, was the doctrine of the Catholic church in the primitive ages, and by consequence, of the apostles themselves.

From the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.

### LETTER OF FATHER FRAS. TCHIOU,

CHINESE MISSIONARY OF THE CONGREGATION OF ST. LAZARUS.

To the Very Rev. Dr. Nuzo, Superior-General of the same congregation.

Macao, 22nd Sept., 1810.

Very Rev. Superior:

I announce to you very sad news, that is the death of Father Torretto, who, since his arrival at Macao, and during eleven years, has taken in our Seminary the greatest care of our young Chinese; and of all the missions in our country, which he has restored. On his arrival, we had no longer any French missionary in China, and the only one who was at Macao, Father Lamiat, died a year afterwards. We hoped that Father Torretto would live a long time to enjoy the success of his labours, and to complete the re-establishment of our missions. But the good God, satisfied with the effects of his zeal, has not willed that he should suffer longer here below: he has called him to His kingdom, after a cruel sickness. The holy Father saw without fear his death approach; he repeated to me many times the words of the Apostle:—*Mihi mori lucrum*, To die is a gain to me. In truth, this death has been advantageous for him, but for us it has been overwhelming. May the will of God be done! Our will ought always to be submissive to His.

In the province of Houpe, a great persecution has just broken out. Father Perboyre, arrested with many Christians, has suffered most cruel torments. The viceroy of the province is furious against him; he is not satisfied with judging the Christian according to the rigour of the laws, and sending them to exile; he no longer condemns to death the European or Chinese missionaries; he desires to force them all to deny the Gospel. Our fellow-missionaries, who have arrived from that province, have reported, that the viceroy puts Father Perboyre to the torture every two or three days, to compel him to name the places where the other missionaries are, particularly Dr. Rameaux. It is a martyrdom very painful, very long, and also very glorious; but God supports and strengthens his ministers, in order that he may be an example for us, and that he may merit the conversion of the pagans.