

FATHER FENWICK'S STORY

Conversations, Father Fenwick said meditatively. Well, I suppose no two are exactly similar. Some converts reach the sure haven of Catholicity over dark and stormy seas, others encounter no stress of weather; some have long periods of indecision and doubt, while in other cases all doubts vanished at once.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF CATHOLIC CHARITY

By the late Very Rev. Thomas M. Burke, O. P. S. Delivered in the Church of Our Lady of Grace, Hoboken, N. J., on the Thursday, April 25, 1912, in aid of St. Mary's Hospital, in charge of the Sisters of the Poor.

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

brothren," he says, "Faith, Hope, and Charity—these three; but the greatest of these is Charity." The life of the Christian, therefore, must be the life of a believer—a "man of Faith." It must be a hopeful life—an anticipative life—a life that looks beyond the mere horizon of the present time into the far-stretching eternity that goes beyond it—a life of hope; but, most of all, it must be a life of divine love. These are the three elements of the Christian character. Nowadays, it is the fashion to pervert these virtues. The man of faith is no longer the simple believer. Faith means a bowing down of the intellect to things which we cannot understand, because they are mysteries of God. But the idea of religion, nowadays, is to reason and not believe. The Apostle, if he were writing to the men of this nineteenth century, would be obliged to say: "Brethren, now there remain to you argument and reason; but no faith, for faith means, in the mind of the same Apostle, the humbling, into full humiliation, of intelligence, before the mystery which was hidden for ages with Christ in God. "Faith," says St. Paul, "is the argument of things that appear not." The Catholic Church, nowadays, is called the "Church of the Intellect," and why? Because she asks him to believe. Mind—men of intelligence who listen to me—because she asks a man to believe; because she says to him, "My son, I cannot explain this to you; it is a mystery of God; and there is no faith where there is no mystery. Where there is the clear vision, the comprehensive conviction of the intelligence, arising from argument and reason, there is no sacrifice of the intellect—there is no faith.

FATHER FENWICK'S STORY

Do you wish to speak to me words of consolation and of love? Oh, Christian man, go seek the poor and the naked, the sick, the hungry, and the famishing! Seek the afflicted and the heart-broken, and in them will you find Me; for, Amen, I say unto you, whatsoever you do unto them, that you do unto Me!" Thus does Christ, Our Lord, identify Himself with the poor and the Church. He remains in the world, in His Church, commanding that we shall obey her—presence we may adore Him; He is God. In His poor—in the afflicted, naked, hungry, famishing, that we may have found and lift Him up—He is God still! A most beautiful example of how the saints were able to realize this do we find recorded in the life of one of Order—a man who wore this habit. He was a Spanish friar. His name was Alvarez de Cordova. He was noted amongst his brothers for the wonderful earnestness and cheerfulness with which he always sought the poor and the afflicted, to succor and console them. Well, it happened upon a day that this great man, who had for his habit the grey habit of St. Augustine, "let me know thee and know thee well, that I may love thee and love thee well!"

THE CATHOLIC RECORD

Now, these being the three virtues that belong to the Christian character, let us see how far the mystery which is in the needy and the poor enters into these considerations of Faith, Hope and Love. Certain it is that the charity which the Almighty God commands us to have—that is to say, the love which He commands us to have for Himself—is united to the other commandment of the love that the Christian man must have for his neighbor. Certain also it is that the poorer, the more prostrate, the more helpless that neighbor is, the stronger becomes his claim upon our love. Thirdly: it is equally certain from the Scriptures that the charity must be a mercerelement of benevolence, a mere feeling of compassion; but it must be the strong, the powerful hand extended to benefit, to console and to uplift the stricken, the powerless, the poor. "For," says St. John, "let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." And he adds: "He that hath the substance of the world, and shall shut up his bowels from him; how doth the charity of God abide in him?" Therefore, your charity must be a practical act, an earnestness, a love being the receipt of God with respect to the needy and the poor, let us see how far faith and hope become the substratum of that charity which must move us towards them. What does faith tell us about these poor? If we follow the example of the world, building up great prisons, paying physicians, paying nurses, paying for the care of the sick, and the sorrowful—if we consult the world, building up its work-houses, immuring the poor there as if poverty was a crime—separating the husband from the wife, and the mother from the children—we see no trace here of Divine faith. And why? Because Divine faith must always respect its object. Faith is the virtue by which we catch a gleam of God. Do we catch a gleam of Him in His poor? If so, they claim our veneration, tenderness, and love. Now, I assert, that the poor of God, the afflicted, the heart-broken, the sick, the sorrowful—represent our Lord. Christ, Our Lord, declared that He would remain upon the earth and would never leave it. "Behold," He said, "I am with you all days until the consummation of the world." Now, in three ways Christ fulfilled that promise. First of all, He fulfilled it in remaining with His Church, the shining apostolic and holiness—so that the Church to be, until the end of time, the infallible messenger of Divine truth, that is to say, the light of the world—the unceasing and laborious sanctifier of mankind. "You are the light of the world," says Christ; "you are the salt of the earth. You are not only to salt the earth, but you are to purify it. In order that you may do this, I will remain with you all days." Therefore is He present in the Church. Secondly, He is present in the adorable sacrament of the altar, and in the tabernacles of the Church—really and truly—as really and truly as He is upon the right hand of His Father. Therefore He said, "I will remain." And He indicated how He was to remain when, taking bread and wine, he transubstantiated them into His body and blood, saying over the bread, "This is My Body," and over the wine, "This is My Blood." But in both these ways Christ, Our Lord, remains invisibly upon the earth. No man sees Him. We know that He is present in the Church; and, therefore, when the Church of God speaks, we bow down and say, "I believe," because I believe and I know that the voice that speaks to me re-echoes the voice of My God, the God of Truth. When Christ, Our Lord, is put upon the altar, lifted up in holy benediction, we bow down and adore the present God, saying: "See Thee, O Lord, but I know that behind that sacramental veil Thou art present, for Thou hast said; Lo, I am here!" "This is My Body! This is My Blood!"

FATHER FENWICK'S STORY

begging. Oh, no! But we come with a strong voice of authority, as commanding you, "If you would see the Father's brightness, remember the poor, and at the ministrations of charity and of mercy." And how does hope enter into these considerations? Ah, my friends, what do you hope for at all? What are your hopes, I ask the Christian man, the benevolent brother? I don't care what your hope are of; Brother, tell me, because hope from his very nature goes out into the future; of hope is realizing by anticipation, of that which will one day come and be in our possession. What are your hopes? Every man has his hopes. No man lives without them. Every man hopes to attain to some position in this world, or to gain some certain happiness. One man hopes to make money and become a rich man. Another man aspires to certain dignities, hopes for them, and labors assiduously until he attains them. Another man centres his hopes in certain passions, and immerses himself in the anticipations of sensual delights. But I don't care what your hopes are; this I ask you: Are your hopes circumscribed by this world, or do they go beyond the tomb? Is all hope to cease when the hour comes that will find each and every one of you stretched helpless on his bed of death, and the awful angel, bearing the summons of God, cries out, "Come forth, O soul, and come with me to the judgment-seat of Christ!" Is all hope to perish then? No! no! no! but the Christian's hope then only begins to be realized. No; this life is as nothing compared with that endless eternity that awaits us beyond the grave; and there all our hopes are; and the hope of the Christian man is that when that hour comes that shall find his soul trembling before its impending doom, awaiting the sentence—that sentence will not be, "Depart from Me accursed," but that it will be, "Come, My friend, My blessed one, come and enjoy the happiness and the joy which was prepared for thee!"—this is our hope. Accursed is the wretch that has it not! What would this life be—even if it were a life of ten thousand years, replete with every pleasure—every enjoyment—unmixed by the slightest evil of sickness or of sorrow, if we knew that at the end of those ten thousand years, the eternity that should never know an end, would be for us an eternity of sorrow and of despair? I would be, of all men, the most miserable; "for," says the Apostle, "in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." "But, Christ is risen from the dead; our hope; and we look forward to the day when we shall be taken up in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord," translated from glory unto glory, until we behold His face, unshrouded and unveiled, and be happy forever in the contemplation of God. This is our hope; yours and mine. But, remember, that although the Almighty God has promised this, and our hope is built upon the fidelity with which He keeps His word, still to man can expect the reward, nor can build up his hope on a solid foundation, unless he enters into the designs of God, and complies with the conditions that God has attached to His promises of glory. Think how largely the poor and the afflicted enter into them! "Come," the Redeemer and Judge will say, "Come unto Me, ye blessed of My Father! This is not the first time that you have seen Me. I was hungry and gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you visited Me." And then the just shall exclaim: "Lord! when did we ever behold Thee, oh, powerful and terrible Son of God, when did we behold Thee naked, or hungry, or sick?" And He, answering, will call the poor—the poor to whom we minister to-day; the poor whom we console, and whom we comfort. And we will lift up our voices, and we will cry out to-day: "He will call them, and say: 'Do you know these?' And they will cry out: 'Oh, yes; these are the poor whom we saw hungry, and we fed them; whom we saw naked, and we clothed them; whom we saw sick, and we consoled them; whom we saw in prison, and we visited them. These were the poor that we employed. Thy spouse, O Christ, minister unto, and to console!' Then He will answer, and say: 'I swear to you that, as I am God, as often as you have done it to the least of these, ye have done it unto Me!' But, if, on the other hand, we come before Him, glorying in the strength of our faith; magnificent in our profession of our Christianity; splendid in our assumption of the highest principles; correct in many of the leading traits of the Christian character—but with hands empty of the works of mercy; if we are only obliged to say with truth, 'Lord, I claim heaven; but I never clothed the naked; I never fed the hungry; I never visited the afflicted.' Christ, our Lord, will answer and say: 'Depart from Me! I know you not; I do not recognize you. I was hungry, and ye would not feed Me in My hunger; I was naked, and ye would not clothe Me in My nakedness; I was thirsty and sick, and ye would not relieve Me, nor console Me in My sickness.' And the reprobate will answer: 'Lord, we never saw Thee hungry, or naked, or sick.' And then once more, will He call the poor, and say: 'Behold these; to these did you refuse my mercy, your pity, your charity; and I swear to you that, as I am God, in the day that you refused to comfort and to succor and to console them, you refused to do it unto Me.' Therefore, there is no heaven for you.' The golden key that opens the gate of heaven is the key of mercy, therefore He will say: 'As often as you are merciful to the poor you are merciful to Me. I have said: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.' Who, therefore, amongst you, believing in these things, does not at once see that there is no true faith that does not recognize Christ in His poor, and so succor them with veneration; who does not see that his hope is built upon the relations which are established between him and the poor of God? Thus, out of this faith and out of this hope springs the charity with which we must relieve them. Now, mark how beautifully all this is organized in the Catholic Church. There is a curious expression in the Scriptures—it is found in the Canticles

ABSORBINE STOPS LAMENESS. A railroad navy may be an honest soul and a worthy citizen, but that does not equip him for the position of general manager of the system.

THE COST OF A RANGE. This book will be sent free to those interested. It will show just how the cost of a range ought to be estimated.

THE cost of a range is not the price of a range. Many a range cheap in price becomes expensive in cost as the years go by.

MONARCH RANGE. Ask your neighbor. Clare Bros. & Company Limited, Preston, Ont.