

Yes sir, many thousands of sinners, and of the most abandoned sinners, have been reclaimed in the tribunal of penance, and by the pious exertions of Christ's ministers, brought back to the practice of virtue. There have been instances of sinners dying in the confessional, their hearts breaking with grief at the thoughts of having had the misfortune to offend their merciful God and Saviour. Thus, according to Christ's declaration Luc. vii. 47, in one moment they expiated, by the perfection of their love, the sins of many years.

I shall here add one remark, made by the celebrated author of the Philosophical Catechism. "A thing well worth observing (says he) and really supernatural and miraculous, is the seal or secret of Confession, entrusted every day to thousands of priests, some of whom, alas! ill qualified for their profession, and capable of any other prevarication, and yet so faithfully kept. Scarcely can ALL church history, during a period of more than eighteen hundred years, furnish one example of infidelity in this point, even among those who, like Luther and Calvin, turned apostates to the Church. If any one reflects on the inconsistency of mankind on the curiosity of some, and the loquacity and indiscretion of others, on the nature and importance of the affairs entrusted to confessors, the revelation of which would often have astonishing effects, on the means which various interests, avarice, jealousy, and other passions fail not to try, in order to compass their ends, &c. there will remain no doubt but that God watches over the preservation of his work." Philosophical Catechism, vol. 3. chap. vii. art. 1.

I cannot forbear recommending, for your perusal, a book not very long since published in the city of New York, entitled, the Catholic Question in America,

You will there find what respect was paid to that venerable institution, (sacramental confession,) by a Protestant Court of Justice, at which presided the Hon. De Witt Clinton. The Rev. Doctor Kohlman, a Catholic Priest, in the city of New York, was by that sacrament, an instrument of restoring stolen property to its owner. Certain persons had been previously arrested on suspicion, and a prosecution instituted against them; Doctor Kohlman, after restoring the stolen property to its owner, was summoned to give in evidence, and required to disclose the person or persons from whom he had received it. He in a most respectful manner, stated to the Court, that not having any knowledge of the theft, by any natural or common way of information, it being solely acquired by sacramental Confession, it was his duty to suffer any punishment, even death itself, rather than divulge the knowledge acquired in that way. The Court unanimously decided in his favor; and there being no evidence against the defendants, they were acquitted.

In that same book there is a complete treatise on Sacramental Confession, wherein by the most respectable testimonies from the Holy Fathers, it is clearly proved that a sacramental Confession owes

its origin to the divine founder of our holy religion and has been practised from the earliest dawn of Christianity, and in all the ages of the Church, down to our present times.

To be continued.

ORIGINAL.

SCRIPTURAL AND RATIONAL HARMONIES OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Thou art all fair, O my love! and there is no spot in thee. Cant. 4, 7.

There is a wonderful congruity in the doctrines of the Catholic Church: a constant harmony and a perfect agreement; as every one, who either attacks or defends them, must feel. a mutual, self-sustaining sympathy throughout; which to the sincere seeker of truth, demonstrates her divine origin: and shews her, in whom all is invariably consistent, to be the spotless favorite of the beloved in the Canticle of Canticles; the chaste spouse of Christ, whom St. Paul designates *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; whom he has presented to himself holy and without blemish.* Eph. 5.

Like all the other works of God, the nearer she is inspected, the more unexceptionable she appears: whereas, the sects of man's invention, like all his other works, lose in our estimation on being closely examined; exhibiting nothing to our view, but incongruities, contradictions, and practical, as well as doctrinal deformities: which their interested inventors, propagators and abettors, well knowing to be the case; endeavour, by every possible artifice, to hide from the public view: smoothing over with the varnish of hypocrisy the haggard, harlot and vice worn countenances of their several sects; and adding, to allure the ignorant, careless and unthinking, the heightened glow of a fictitious bloom; agreeing together in nothing, but in hating, misrepresenting, calumniating, and persecuting where they can, the beautiful and much envied bride of the beloved; the sole Church of the Redeemer: ever thrusting between us and her majestic form their various blinds and caricatures; which represent her in all the hideous and disgusting shapes, that their own wicked and obscene imaginations are capable of suggesting: bawling out against her with tireless malignity: and proclaiming her to all in every sense abominable. But all their spiteful efforts to traduce and vilify her, only tend to shew in her a nearer resemblance to her divine founder: who, though God, and sanctity itself; the Lord of nature and wisdom infinite; was treated by his enemies as a fool: a mock king: a blasphemer: a breaker of the Sabbath: a Samaritan, who had a Devil: a wine bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners.

I was led into this train of reflection on considering the wretched and deceitful shifts, to which all Protestant Reformers have recourse, in order to captivate the multitude; and gain the ascendancy in their opinion: to get the Saviour's religion proscribed; and each his own system established in her stead. To effect this, not content with pouring out upon her their own calumnious accusations: in order to disfigure her quite, they rake together and

fling against her all the blackening falsehoods and foul aspersions, with which her ancient enemies, their predecessors, the old condemned heretics, were wont incessantly to assail her. They all delight particularly in renewing against her the long exploded clamours of the Iconoclasts, or image breakers of the eighth century; who accused her of idolatry, on account of the respectful manner in which she always kept the images of Christ and his Saints, for the instruction & edification of the faithful.

To support this renovated falsehood, they not only, like its inventors, misconstrue God's prohibition to make images or likenesses of any kind to be adored, as Gods; like the Heathen Divinities: and ridiculously pretend that all images and resemblances whatever, and for whatever useful, or harmless purpose, are thereby forbidden: but improving in the reformation tact upon their very masters; and to make their careless and credulous followers believe that the Catholics sin against a particular and express commandment; they have absurdly ventured even to derange the two tables of the law; and discompose the Decalogue. Thus have they made two commandments of the first; which is evidently but one: and therefore, not to exceed the acknowledged number TEN; they were forced to make but one of the two last, which are as evidently two distinct ones.

Their first commandment is: *thou shalt have no strange Gods before me.* Their second is but an explanatory repetition of the first: *for to make, adore and worship as Gods, any likenesses, or graven things, is having strange Gods before God.*

Let us only put this point to the test of common sense. The first duty of the rational creature; and consequently of man, is to worship God; and him alone, as God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things. To prevent therefore his chosen people from giving to any creatures or things, as the surrounding nations of the Pagans did, that supreme homage of adoration, which is due to him alone: he issues his first commandment in these peremptory terms: *thou shalt have no strange Gods before me*; and then, in an explanatory clause, (like what he uses in some of his other commandments) describes the sort of objects, which, in imitation of their idolatrous neighbours, they might be, and often were, tempted to adore and worship. The Protestant's second commandment is therefore implied in the first: and both are but one and the same on the first table of the law. Suppose a lawful Sovereign, observing a great proportion of his subjects disowning his authority, and dividing their allegiance, which is due to him alone, between a number of usurpers; suppose such a rightful superior to issue to his faithful adherents his prohibitory mandate thus: *You shall have no strange rulers before me.* Could it be accounted a distinct second mandate, were he immediately to add: *you shall not honour, nor obey, as your rulers, neither Alfred, nor Robert, nor James, nor Charles, for I am your lawful liege and sole sovereign Lord?* This is evidently but a more explicit repetition of the first order. Just as evidently is the Protestant's second