

me good but in vain. Having thrown far from me the yoke of obedience, I gradually became insensible to the voice of Religion, neglected the observance of any form of worship, and avoided as much as possible the society of those who were anxious for my welfare. Hence, my friends, I alone am responsible for my past misconduct. Ungovernable pride, a revengeful spirit, and disappointed ambition, have been the fatal cause of my ruin, and I have no reason to complain that when I left the fold of the Good Shepherd, my friends, neighbours and brethren, should abandon me. It was only just that when I had broken the vows of fidelity, which I had pledged to the Lord of Heaven and earth, it was only just, I say, that I should be regarded by the people of God as one unclean and loathsome; as, in fine, one struck by a fearful anathema. But, as I had sown so, by God's providence, I was destined to reap the bitter fruits of crime. I became indeed, and in truth, a castaway. Determined to live without constraint, and entirely regardless of the means of grace, I laboured, indeed, and foolishly confiding in my own strength, and taking a false view of my own resources, I flattered myself that the evil day would never come. But, my friends, woe to the sinner! the work of his hands shall perish. Thus it was with me; the hand of the Lord was heavy upon me, for rather the Almighty became in my regard as a wall of brass or adamant. He would not permit that the feast of my works should prosper—and then, humbled to the very dust, and reduced to the lowest degree of misery, deserted by all; bereft of those earthly goods in which I had trusted as a never-failing resource; brought down even to the gates of the grave and surrounded by the sorrows of death, and placed as it were on the brink of a frightful precipice, can you wonder (reflecting that despair naturally arises from a long continuance in a state of sin) that I should have been tempted to cry out "My sin is too great that I may deserve pardon." But at this trying hour, God, rich in mercy, inspired a kind Samaritan, in the person of a Catholic priest, to come to my assistance. With gentle words he bid me hope for mercy; he spoke of Him, one drop of whose precious blood is more than sufficient to wash away the sins of the world; he pointed to Mount Calvary and reminded me of this consoling truth, that Jesus is the saviour of sinners. My friends, I might perhaps have perished in my sins had not this good priest to whom, under God, I am greatly indebted for my present happiness, interested himself for my soul's welfare. He would not leave his work unfinished; he witnessed the triumph of grace over passion, and then accompanied me to my long forsaken home; he led the trembling prodigal to his father's house, and he saw and can bear testimony to the affectionate kindness with which I was received by that good father, and by my brethren, and by the community in general;

he heard how my superior sought to cheer my drooping spirits and to encourage me in my good resolutions by saying that *all should be forgiven and forgotten.*

I cannot express my thankfulness to Almighty God for his goodness to me. I am once more safe within the Holy Ark or Church of Christ. To use the words made use of by the church in the Office of this Festival, I may say "The winter is past, yes! the winter of sin and sorrow is at an end, the flowers have appeared in our land;" the consolations of religion are once more mine, and I feel an humble assurance of obtaining mercy at my last hour.

Permit me, in conclusion, respectfully to remind you that my conversion should prove a subject of joy and instruction to others,—of joy, because a brother was lost and is found, he was dead and liveth; one of instruction, because from my example you may learn the value of humility and the duty of obeying those whom Almighty God has placed over us and who watch as having to give an account of our souls. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and if by humble obedience we become as little children, we shall be really and truly great in the sight of God, who humbles the proud and delights in exalting the lowly-minded, whose ambition is to secure His love, friendship, and protection, and we shall all become truly happy, because the truly humble seek God alone in all things. Finally, I am fully aware of the many and weighty obligations I have to fulfil, and hope, with the blessing of God, to satisfy all in due time,—if time be allowed me, and patience taken with me. Requesting a share in your daily prayers to Almighty God, I remain, my dear friends, your affectionate servant in Jesus Christ,

HENRY LEWIS OXLEY.

APPROXIMATION OF HERESY TO THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TABLET.

Dear Sir—I know not whether as a convert, I am right to address you on a subject which was wont in the days of my ignorance to strike my soul with astonishment, and which probably was one of the reasons of her submitting sooner to the guidance of St. Peter—the approximation, or rather I should say, the imitation of every sect in its infancy to the Catholic Church. This truth, for such I feel constrained to call it, seemed to me so apparent that I often marvelled how any could deny the fact of Rome being the "Mater Ecclesiarum" and the Sponsa Christi." For example of what I mean (for I shall give but a simple sketch, hoping that your able correspondent, "T. W. M., of Tours," will fill up the skeleton.) I should refer, first, to the Laudean movement. Men at that time infatuated with fanatic zeal, were wont to exclaim that