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The Catholic.

Quod semper; quod ubique; quod ab omnibus.

VOL. I.

KINGSTON, FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1851.

NO. 23.

ORIGINAL.

EASTER SUNDAY.

ON THE GREATNESS OF THE EVIL OF SIN.

Purge out the old leaven,—1 Cor. v.

THE old leaven, which the Apostle here exhorts the faithful to purge out, is sin: which like a poisonous leaven, has infected from the beginning, and still continues to infect the whole mass of mankind. The Jews, as you know, by one of their ceremonial and figurative laws, were strictly prohibited at this holy time from eating, or even keeping in their houses any thing leavened. The meaning of which ceremony is explained to us by St. Paul in the lesson of this day. where, alluding to the practice of the Jews, he exhorts us to purge out the old leaven, in a spiritual sense, and to become a new lump, as we are unleavened; for Christ our pasch is sacrificed: meaning that, the figure being fulfilled in Christ, must also be fulfilled in us. That as to the figurative paschal lamb, the mystical food and victim of the Jews, is substituted the real paschal lamb Jesus Christ the innocent Lamb of God, and the divine food and victim of the Christians; so, to the figurative purging out of the leaven practiced by the Jews, might succeed our spiritual purging out of the leaven of sin, that we may thus be worthy to partake of the flesh of the real paschal Lamb; of whom the Jewish paschal lamb was but a type and shadow. *Wherefore concludes the apostle, let us feast not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

At present therefore the Church of God by a special law obliges her children to purge out this old leaven of malice and wickedness, that, being thus cleansed from the defilements of sin, they may worthily celebrate the true Christian passover, by approaching to the holy sacrament of the altar.

Many of us, I trust, have already purged out this old leaven of sin; and some have already eaten their paschal lamb; while others are going this morning to partake of the same heavenly food. But of all those who have eaten, or who are going to eat their paschal lamb, are there none among us, in whose houses, that is, in whose interior, in whose souls, nothing of the old leaven of sin is to be found? Have all so purged it out, as to have become a new lump, an unleavened bread pure & unmixed? Let such as have done so approach with confidence to the table of the Lord, and feast with joy on the bread of life, for to them it is a feast indeed. But if any are conscious to themselves of still retaining in

their hearts the leaven of sin, the leaven of malice and wickedness; let not such presume to eat of the christian pasch. For, as Moses of old declared to the Jews that whoever, during the time of the passover, should eat leavened bread, that soul should perish out of Israel; (Exod. xii. 15.) so the great apostle and doctor of the Gentiles assures us, that whoever at this divine banquet eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord. 1 Cor. xi. 27.

It is not however meant that such persons are not at all to approach to this heavenly feast. No the commandment of the church obliges all at this time to keep the pasch; and he, who neglects to hear the Church, is, as our Lord declares, to be looked upon as a heathen & a publican. that is, as one incapable of inheriting eternal life. Almighty God in the old law commanded those who neglected to eat the pasch, as well as those who presumed to eat it, without having duly purified themselves and purged out the old leaven, to be exterminated from among his people. Numb. ix. 13. In like manner shall they, who neglect to receive the body of our Lord at this time; as well as they who receive it unworthily, be exterminated from among the people of God. Here then we have a twofold obligation; an obligation of eating the pasch, which necessarily includes in it the obligation of disposing ourselves for eating it worthily. *Wherefore, says St. Paul, let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice: for he who eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.*

Were we only properly convinced of the greatness of the evil of sin, and of its dreadful consequences for time and eternity, we should not need long exhortations to induce us to get rid of it as soon as possible. We would think ourselves happy indeed to have it still in our power to atone for it; nor would we rest satisfied till such time as we had every reason to believe that we were perfectly reconciled with our offended but merciful God. It is with the view of producing this salutary effect on the minds of those among us, who may be conscious to themselves that they are still in the state of sin; as well as of guarding those, who at this holy time have had the happiness of recovering their innocence, from relapsing into sin any more, that I propose at present to your serious consideration, the greatness of the evil of sin. The contemplation of this hideous monster in all its deformity, must be a strong inducement for us to withdraw ourselves out of its reach, nor ever more to expose ourselves

to become its prey? The great reason why the generality of mankind make so light of sin, is because they never think how great an evil it is in itself, and how dreadfully fatal in its consequences. This is the cause why iniquity so much abounds, and why so great a proportion of the human race are daily perishing without resource. *With desolation is the whole earth laid desolate, says the prophet, because there is no one who thinketh in his heart.* Jerem. xi.

Let us then at present consider with the utmost attention this sovereign evil sin, that we at least may not be of the number of those who perish for want of reflection. Let us consider in the first place how great an evil sin is in itself; and how highly injurious to the Majesty of God. And in the second place how great an evil it is in its consequences, and how destructive of the welfare and happiness of the creatures. The enormity of sin in itself, and its essential opposition to God, the enormity of sin in its consequences, and its essential opposition to the welfare and happiness of the creatures; this shall be the subject of my discourse to you at present.

1. Sin is not only the greatest of all evils; the sovereign evil; but properly speaking it is the only evil. For all other evils, such as poverty, sickness afflictions and sufferings of every kind, if we make but that use of them which God intends we should, are so far from being real evils, that they are to us the occasion of obtaining the greatest good, the enjoyment of himself and a happy eternity. For if the industrious poor consider those as their benefactors who furnish them with employment, and afford them [the means of earning] with the sweat of their brow a mean and scanty subsistence; how much more ought the christian to thank himself indebted to God for having put it in his power, by such easy means as the short labours and sufferings of this life to secure to himself the kingdom of heaven. These temporal sufferings are not then real, but reputed evils. nay, they are rather favours and real goods, bestowed upon us by the kind hand of Providence; since they are to us productive of so much good. For as the work of the master, however hard and tedious, is a real good to the servant, because it procures him a hire proportioned to his toil and labour; so the evils of this life, sin alone excepted, are a real good to the Christian, because, according to St. Paul, the present tribulation, which is momentary and short, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. 2. Cor. iv. 17.

Whereas sin is an essential evil, and the only

evil from which no good, but evil is derived: for, as the same holy Apostle affirms, *the wages of sin is death*. Rom. vi. 22. It is the only evil, which God never made; which God, though omnipotent, could not make; because he is essentially good; and what is essentially good cannot produce what is essentially evil. Because he is essentially perfect; and that which is essentially perfect cannot produce that which is essentially bad: for essential evil is the very reverse of essential perfection. Sin is therefore the sovereign evil, as God is the sovereign good; and therefore it deserves to be hated with a sovereign hatred, as God deserves to be loved with a sovereign love. This then is the measure of your hatred for sin, that you hate and abhor it as much as you love God. Now if there is any thing in this world which we love as much as God, then we do not love God as we ought. And if there is any evil in nature which we abhor and avoid as much as sin, then we do not abhor and avoid sin as much as we are in duty bound to do.

Besides, sin is a formal contempt of God, in as much as by it the sinner prefers the creature, and often the very meanest of creatures to the Creator. For finding himself in the absolute necessity of either renouncing the unlawful pleasure he proposes to himself in committing sin; or of losing the divine grace and favour; he chooses rather to break friendship with his God, and to forfeit his grace, than to forego the proposed criminal satisfaction.

In the mean time he knows that God deserves to be loved and preferred before all things; and this knowledge serves to augment his guilt, and to heighten the outrage offered to the Deity; since, in spite of what he knows, he still prefers a vile creature, and the gratification of his passion before him. What an insult is here offered to the divine Majesty! And by whom? By a poor worm of the earth. This is what makes the insult so intolerable. For the heinousness of an offence is always estimated by the dignity of the person offended and the meanness of the offender. If one insults his equal the offence is not so great as if he insulted his superior; as if a servant, for instance, insulted his master. But if a subject insult his sovereign; if a beggar insult the king, the offence becomes a capital crime and deserves death. Every insult then, which the sinner offers to God, who is infinitely raised in dignity above all the creatures, must be an offence infinitely heinous, and consequently must deserve an infinite chastisement.

Add to this the black ingratitude of the sinner towards the best of Benefactors, whose inestimable favours he repays with the very worst of evils. His breach of the indispensable obligation of ever loving, honouring and serving God, which obligation is nothing less than infinite, otherwise he might acquit himself of it in time, so that after some given term he would no longer be bound to love, honour, and serve his God; which is evidently absurd. Now if this obligation is infinite, as it most certainly is, it necessarily follows that every breach of it is a crime of infinite malice, because it is the breach of an infinite obligation.

But nothing can give us such an idea of the enormity of sin, as what St. Bernard affirms upon the subject. "The sinner," says he, "who prefers his own will to the will of God, destroys and annihilates, as much as in him lies, the very being of a God. For he must wish either that God were ignorant of his sin; or that he had no power to chastise him for his sin; or that he had not, any will to punish his sin. He must wish then that God were without wisdom, without power, without justice. But a God without wisdom, a God without power, a God without justice, is no God. Therefore the sinner would wish there were no God." *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus.* The good said in his heart there is no God.

"In fine," continues the same holy Father, "we must observe that the very essence of the Deity consists in his independence and the absolute dominion he has over all his creatures. So that if but one man could exist without depending upon God, God would then cease to be God, and that man would occupy his place. Now as the sinner does not choose to depend upon God, but withdraws himself from his dominion, and refuses him his obedience, he wishes consequently to wrest the sceptre from the omnipotent hand of God, to strip him of his crown; and as much as in him lies, to deprive him of his very existence."

Christians? what a complication of guilt is here! And yet all this complication of guilt is found in the perpetration of one single mortal sin. O cruel and unnatural monster, sin; which armet the creature against the very author of its being and of all its good! Which forest the Creator to cast away for ever, as polluted by thee, the noblest portion of his work; and to devote to endless misery those, whom he had made to be for ever happy in the enjoyment of himself! But, O blind presumption! O fatal and unaccountable madness of the sinner, who dares thus to wage war with the Almighty, and to set all his power at defiance! Great God! how canst thou endure for one moment such insolence in a mere worm of this earth.

The reason, Christians, why Almighty God bears so very patiently with sin, is the extreme desire he has of the sinner's conversion. He is loath to see his beloved creature perish, for he still loves the sinner, though he hates the sin, and would save him, did he but consent in time to be separated from the sin. O the stupendous goodness, the ineffable mercy of my God, who while I was so outrageously offending him, had nothing more at heart than my eternal welfare! And shall I still continue to provoke so good a God by sin? No, my God! assisted by thy grace I will never more be guilty of such monstrous ingratitude. I will think on my past sins in the bitterness of my soul. I will judge myself now as the apostle exhorts, and condemn myself, that thou mayest not judge and condemn me hereafter.

2^o. Having considered the greatness of the evil of sin in itself, and its opposition to God; let us pass on to consider the greatness of this evil in its consequences, and its opposition to the welfare and happiness of the creatures.

The dreadful consequences of sin appear first in

the condemnation of the rebel angels. No sooner had those once glorious spirits consented to sin, than the fire of hell was enkindled against them. Their beauty was instantly changed into the very excess of deformity; and from the height of heaven were they precipitated into the flaming, deep, unquenchable abyss.

Man was created to succeed in their room, and inherit that bliss, from which they had fallen. Man therefore becomes the object of their envy; and they endeavour to compass the ruin of this new favourite of heaven, Satan, the chief of those rebel spirits, being allowed to put man's fidelity to the test succeeds in tempting our first parents to disobey the command of God, by eating of the forbidden fruit; and thus renders them his accomplices in guilt.

But mark now the dreadful consequences of sin in the human race; and the many miseries temporal and eternal flowing in upon us, like a deluge, from the crime of our first parents.

Man having therefore yielded to the suggestion of the fiend; his soul was immediately stripped of her original innocence. Her knowledge, in which she proudly wished to have equalled God himself, became overclouded with ignorance, and liable to error and illusion. The passions, no longer under reason's controul, began to mutiny and to domineer in their turn. Her body, which had been created immortal and incorruptible, was made liable to all kinds of diseases, and was finally doomed to return to the dust from whence it was taken; and thus the whole man, now vitiated by sin, was sentenced first to the temporal death of the body; and finally to that of the body and soul in the flames of hell.

It is true, God moved by his unspeakable mercy had resolved to put it in man's power to rise again from his fallen state, and to regain his lost inheritance. But still all the children of Adam must feel at least the temporal effects of sin. And they who neglect to profit by the means allowed them of regaining that bliss, from which all have fallen, after having been subjected in this life to the temporal consequences of sin, shall in the next be also subjected to the eternal.

Let us then consider a little more in particular those consequences of sin temporal and eternal, that we may form to ourselves once for all a proper notion of this sovereign evil; and learn to detest and to shun the poisonous source, from which such waters of bitterness flow.

Man had no sooner revolted from his God by sin than he found the inferior part of himself beginning to rebel against the superior. His whole frame was unbinged; and his passions, which had been given him only as incitements to what is laudable and becoming a rational creature, began to tyrannize over him; and have since proved the cause of all the moral evils, that have ever afflicted the human race. Look round you, dear christians, and consider for a moment the present state of the world, and see into what excess the unhappy children of Adam are hurried by their unruly passions.

In all ranks and degrees of life we discover no-

thing but persons sacrificing their honour, their virtue, and their conscience to the great idol interest; and breaking through every legal restraint that withholds them from attaining to the object of their wishes. Others, styled in scripture *Sons of Belial* scruple not to expose their fortune and reputation, their life itself, their eternal salvation; all that is near and dear to them in this world and in the next in order to gratify a beastly appetite, which leaves nothing behind the momentary transport, but shame, guilt, and remorse. Some are seen pining away with envy, and meditating in silence the means of undoing their hated rivals. Others transported with anger, rowing and executing revenge. To say nothing of the common effects of pride, that great general vice, which insinuates itself into all our actions, and seems to pervade the whole mass of mankind from the highest to the lowest; from the king to the beggar: let us only consider its fatal effects in those whom it fires with ambition, and prompts to affect the sceptre and the diadem. What dreadful calamities have not the proud contentions of such produced in the world! Through what blood and slaughter do they not commonly wade towards a throne. Famine and devastation mark their progress. The most populous and wealthy cities are taken, plundered and destroyed with all their inhabitants; and whole nations are laid waste and desolated with fire and sword. Turn your eyes towards our neighbor nation. Consider what France alone has suffered during her late eventful revolution, and what streams of human blood have every where bowed in that unhappy kingdom, while the great and virtuous continued to fall beneath her murdering machines. Next see an universal war enkindled all over Europe, extending itself to the remotest corners of the earth, and sweeping before it so many millions of the human race. What think you, is the cause of such great and extensive calamities? Nothing, dear Christians, but that tyrannical dominion, which, since the fall of Adam, the passions have usurped over the mind of man. These, like so many demons, continue to lash him on in his criminal career; and to hurry him headlong into all kinds of vice and atrocity.

Another fatal consequence of the sin of our first parents is, that ignorance which has since so clouded our minds, and has proved a most copious source of the greatest evils to mankind. For, not to mention the hindrance it puts to our advancement in learning, in which the mind of man takes such delight; and in the knowledge of all those things that are not connected with the duties of religion; how extremely hurtful and pernicious in a religious sense has not this ignorance proved at all times to the great bulk of mankind, over whose minds it has spread, and (in spite of the great light of revelation, which the redeemer has brought into the world) still continues to spread the dark and dismal night of infidelity. Take a view of the world before the coming of our Saviour; and see to what excesses and absurdities in point of religion all the nations of the earth, (that of the Jews alone excepted, and they also frequently erred like the rest) had been hurried by this fatal ignor-

ance. Forsaking the God that made them, they adored the very works of their hands. Scarcely was that thing to be found in nature, to which divine honors were not paid. The very vices and passions of men were consecrated into so many divinities: and no species of wickedness could be devised, that had not already for its patron and model some imaginary deity.

And even since our Saviour's time, in consequence of this same ignorance, the mind of man has still continued prone to error and incredulity. Hence so many heresies have appeared in the world, the authors and abettors of which have often endeavored to establish and propagate them with fire and sword. Every age of the Christian Church is marked with some new defection from the faith, but none so much as that in which we live. Every new year brings us some new systems of religion; and men at present differ not so much from one another in their features and complexion as in their creeds and modes of worship, as if religion were still to be discovered, and had not been already sufficiently revealed by Jesus Christ. Indeed discord and division has ever been the portion of those, who breaking loose from the unity of the Catholic faith, have preferred the extravagant fancies of their own heated imaginations, to the sure and invariable testimony of the universal church. Of such it has been foretold that *they shall be ever learning, but shall never come to the knowledge of truth: always growing worse and worse; erring and driving into error.*—2 Tim. iii.

Out of all these monstrous sects there hath arisen one in our latter days, more monstrous than them all together: and which, to judge by the progress it daily makes, will in all probability, soon swallow them up. I mean the fashionable sect of our deists and free-thinkers. These seeing the manner in which christians are divided among themselves about the great truths of revelation begin to call in question revelation itself, and to sap the very foundations of christianity. They never think of looking back to their mother church, to the holy religion of their ancestors, from which they have strayed; or if they do, they discover nothing in her that flatters their passions, to which they are enslaved. Wherefore, turning from her with disgust, they fix their eyes on the more indulgent sects of the day; and in them they spy nothing but inconsistent and contradictory creeds. Concluding therefore that the whole of religion is one system of imposture, they easily debar themselves of what little remains of it they had hitherto retained, and commence its most sworn and inveterate enemies. Unhappy man! who in thy search after the eternal truth, to which of thyself thou canst not rise because of the extreme weakness of thy corrupt nature, wilt not allow thyself to be directed by the only guide that God has given thee, to bring thee to that truth: nor use the only remedy that can cure the ignorance of thy nativity; the infallible testimony of the Church, which all are commanded to hear, under pain of being reckoned as heathens and publicans.—Mat. xviii. 16.

Such dear Christians, are the fatal consequences of sin on the human mind. But if the soul of man

has so much suffered in all her faculties and powers; the body has no less suffered in all its senses and members. For who shall attempt to describe the numberless diseases, to which the human frame is made liable; that frame which, till polluted with sin, was incorruptible and immortal! Draw near to the bed of death, and read there in the pains and agonies of the sick and dying the effects of sin. See the poor suffering mortal tossing and writhing himself in all the variety of anguish, and racking torments he endures. Or pass into those hospitals, where every disease is lodged; visit the cells of the several patients, and contemplate the variety of their distempers and the intensity of their sufferings. There death, the first born of sin appears in all his terrors, lording it unmercifully over the unhappy children of Adam. Or if you could wish to see a scene still more humiliating, if a scene more humiliating than this can be; go to the burying places of the dead, and contemplate there the mouldering fragments of the human frame. See them mixing with their mother earth and trodden under foot. Here indeed is seen the havoc sin makes in the world, and the fulfilment of the sentence passed upon our first father Adam, and, in him, on all his posterity: *from the dust wert thou taken, and into dust thou shalt return.*

But what are all these temporal consequences of sin, compared with the eternal? What are all the miseries and sufferings of this life, compared with those which God in his wrath, has treasured for his enemies in the life to come? The frighted imagination recoils with horror at the thought, of that immense gulf of fire into which the wicked are plunged; and which according to the prophet Isaiah, *the breath of the Lord like a torrent of brimstone enkindles.* x. 2. What mind can conceive, or tongue can describe the wretched condition of those, who, on account of sin, are cast forth for ever from the face of the Lord into that land of misery and darkness described by the holy Job, *where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwells.* x. 22. Where nothing is to be seen amidst the dark and scorching flames, that gleam over all the surface of that woe-ful region, but the hideous forms and frightful phantoms of their furious tormentors the devils; but red-hot bolts and chains, but scorpions and fiery dragons; but all that is, or can be imagined, most horrid and terrifying. Where nothing is to be heard but the shrieks and groans, the howlings and yellings of their companions in misery: but the loud shouts and jeerings, and scoffs and reproaches of insulting fiends, their cruel executioners. In fine, but the curses and blasphemies which the damned in despair pour forth against that God, whose justice now inexorable can never be appeased.

Such dear Christians, is the dreary habitation, such the dismal abode, which the justice of God has prepared for the impenitent sinner in the world to come, a place where all evils are found, without the least mixture of good; and, where nothing but the rigour of divine vengeance appears. Where

as we read in the Gospel, *The wicked are salted with fire—Where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.—Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never extinguished.—Where according to the wise man, (Eccles. xxxix. 33.) There are spirits created for vengeance, & in their fury they shall lay on grievous stripes. In the day of destruction they shall pour out their forces and appease the wrath of him who made them. Fire hail, famine, and death, and the teeth of beasts, and scorpions, and serpents. Where in a word, according to St. John; the wicked shall be made to drink of the wine of the wrath of God; and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone; and the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; and they shall have no rest day or night. Apoc. xiv. 10, 11. Which of you can dwell with devouring fire, exclaims the prophet Isaias: which of you can endure everlasting burnings?*

Alas! dear Christians, which of us, for any reward, could be prevailed upon to hold his finger in the flame of a candle, but for one quarter of an hour? But to be chained down for ever to a bed of fire, who can endure the idea of such a torment? And yet, as the royal prophet assures us, *the Lord will make his enemies as an oven of fire in the time of his anger; he shall trouble them in his wrath; and fire shall devour them up. Ps. xx, 10. Fire and brimstone, says he, and the spirit of whirlwinds, shall be the portion of their cup for ever. x. 7.*

O ye, who at present delight in good cheer, and in drinking off your cups! *enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is your belly, & who glory in your shame!* Who now think it hard to obey your holy Mother the Church, when at certain seasons she commands you to mortify your sensual appetites by fasting and abstinence, and thus make up for the sin of disobedience and intemperance by which our first parents opened the flood-gates of misery upon themselves and their posterity? How shall you some day endure to swallow down those nauseous draughts of liquid brimstone, which the devils shall in mockery hold out for you to drink? *Fire and brimstone, and the spirit of whirlwinds, shall be the portion of their cup for ever.* Or rather say, how shall you be able to keep that rigid and eternal fast; how shall you endure that craving hunger, that parching and intolerable thirst, to which the rich glutton is condemned? And you, who suffer your eyes to wander without restraint on every immodest object, how shall the scene, alas! be changed in your regard, when instead of the short-lived beauties, on which you were wont to gaze with such rapture, and criminal desire, you shall behold nothing but hideous spectres and terrifying apparitions. When, instead of those carnal embraces, in which you took such sinful delight, you shall find yourselves close locked in the foul embraces of fiery dragons, that shall gnaw into your bosoms, and prey upon your vitals for all eternity! When your ears, that listened with such attention, to the malignant whispers of detraction and calumny, to lewd and immoral discourse; or to the scoffs of the impious at God and his saints, at his holy Church and her Pastors, at

whatever savoured of religion, virtue, and piety, shall be for ever stunned with the dreadful noise and uproar, the curses and lamentations of the devils and damned. When your tongue, that so often took the name of God in vain; that was so accustomed to cheat and lie; that has been made the guilty vehicle of evil advice, or the cause of discord and dissention among your fellow-creatures; that has often so little scrupled to injure the character of your neighbour; has frequently dipped in immodest and criminal conversation; when that tongue, in fine, that so seldom was employed in prayer, or in praising its Maker, to whom all praise is due; shall be condemned to curse that God, whom it would not bless; and to pour forth for ever the most bitter and lamentable, but vain and unavailing complaints. Yes, dear Christians, each of the senses, by which the sinner offends his God, shall find its own particular torment in hell.

But the most bitter ingredient of the cup of the wrath of God, which the damned are compelled to drink, is the dreadful reflection that their miseries shall never end; and that their torments, without intermission or diminution, shall last for ever. And, indeed, if one short night seems so long to a man in a burning fever; if he tosses and turns, and no where finds rest; if he counts every minute and longs for the morning; how long ah! how insufferably long must that dreadful night of eternity seem to the damned, who feel such exquisite and excruciating torments! But, alas! that night shall never know the morning; nor ever expect the dawning of the day. No glimpse of hope shall ever penetrate into those gloomy regions of never ending despair. Millions of millions of years shall roll over their heads; and ten hundred thousand millions of ages shall pass away; and yet at the end of this immense tract of time, their torments shall be just as far from ending as when they first began. Then shall the sinner look back through the long and immeasurable space of ages spent in hell, on the small and scarce perceptible point of time, during which he lived on this earth: and he will scarce be able to credit his own folly in having for the rapid enjoyments of a moment, forfeited a happy eternity, and that crown of immortal glory designed for him; till for his crimes it was taken from him, and given to some other more worthy than he; who now reigns with his God in heaven, while he lies howling in hell.

Here spiritual writers scruple not to assert, and their assertion, which is evidently true, is enough to chill the blood in our veins with horror, and to make the very hair of our head stand on end. They assert, that such a soul would find herself considerably comforted, were she but assured that she should be delivered out of hell, when, at the rate of shedding but one tear every thousand years, she should have shed tears enough to make an ocean, like that which surrounds our globe. The imagination is more than lost in computing the time it would require to shed such a prodigious flood of tears. For, as the world has not yet lasted six thousand years: the first of the damned could not as yet have shed six tears, a quantity so

small that you could scarce perceive it, if trickled on your clothes. Yet certain it is, that the time shall come, when any one of the souls in hell may at the rate of shedding but one tear every thousand years, have shed tears enough not only to make such a sea, but even to drown the whole world; to fill up the immense space between the heavens and the earth: and to deluge the whole creation! And yet, dreadful to think! her misery were still then as far from ending, as when it first began.

O eternity, eternity! how little does the worldling think of thee in the midst of his criminal enjoyments! How little does the sinner think of thee, when he is about to sin! How little do I myself, who now hold thee forth to the consideration of others, make thee the object of my meditation! But thou, O my God, who hast chosen me, though unworthy, from among men; and hast commissioned me to feed thy sheep; do thou so fill my mind with the awful idea of eternity; do thou so aid and assist me with thy grace, that while I preach to others, I may not myself become a castaway. Do thou also give to my words the power of touching the hearts of my hearers, and of persuading them, in fine, to take off their affections from the perishable goods of this world, and fix them on those of the world to come!

After all I have said concerning the evil of sin, and its dreadful consequences for time and eternity; I have but one observation more to make, which will enable each of us to bring home the subject to himself in particular: and that is, that if the sin of our first parents, that of only eating an apple against the command of God, could bring upon themselves, and entail on all their descendants such an endless train of calamities; what has not the habitual sinner to fear, whose transgressions of the divine law are daily so multiplied, and each of them is probably of a much deeper dye? And has he not also the more cause to dread their consequences, as now the whole of his guilt rests with himself alone, and is not, like that of our first parents, extended to others: so that the sinner now alone must take all the consequences of his sin. But if the consequences of only eating an apple against the command of God, are so dreadfully fatal, when extended to all; or in other words, if that sin, so comparatively small, could bring such miseries on the whole human race; what misery is not the impenitent sinner exposed to, whose sins exceed in number the hairs of his head; and each of them, perhaps, is more heinous than that of our first parents, the full consequences of which he must now take upon himself alone.

Christians! let us stop here at last, for there is no end of reasoning on the enormity of the evil of sin, and on its dreadful consequences. To whatever side we turn ourselves to consider this monstrous evil, the mind is apt to lose itself in a boundless and fathomless abyss. No finite mind is capable of fully comprehending the Deity. No finite mind therefore can fully comprehend the evil of sin. Only God himself, who knows himself, can

know the full extent of its malice and enormity. Or if there is still any consideration remaining to be made, capable of adding to our idea of the enormity of sin; it is the reflection that nothing less could atone for it, than the incarnation, sufferings and death of the Son of God; so that by the greatness of the atonement we may judge of the heinousness of the offence. It may be proper also to recollect how vain and fruitless it renders even all the good we do in this life; since it is of faith that a soul in the state of mortal sin, not only forfeits, so long as she remains in that deplorable state, all the merits of her former good works; but is also wholly incapable of deserving for the best works she can perform, the least reward in the life to come. For God owes nothing to his enemy, but punishment. The soul besides in that state is dead, her vital principle charity, or the love of God being extinguished in her by sin. For he, who loves not, says St. John, remains in death. And hence the apostle St. Paul declares, that should he give all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and have not charity, it would profit him nothing. 1 Cor. xiii. What an idea must not all these considerations give us of the infinite malice and enormity of sin. Indeed, what is hell itself and all its torments, compared with sin? Hell is but the effect of sin, and the cause is always greater than the effect. On this very account all the torments of hell will never equal the guilt of one single mortal sin; and hence the eternity of their duration.

If then, dear Christians, you have reason to fear that you are still under the domination of sin, delay not a moment in profiting of the means still allowed you of extricating yourselves from so great an evil, and of recovering the liberty of the Children of God. A few tears proceeding from a contrite heart, and the humble confession of your guilt, with the firm resolution of sinning no more, will at present go farther to expiate your iniquity, than all the flames of hell for an endless eternity hereafter.

Behold then now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Work therefore, as your Saviour exhorts while yet it is light, lest you be overtaken by that night, in which no man can work.

And when you have reason to believe yourselves freed from sin, and reconciled with your merciful God; O let nothing ever after induce you to lose his friendship again! Let your resurrection from the death of sin to the life of grace be, like that of your Saviour from the grave, real and permanent. For Christ, says the apostle, once dead dies no more: death has no more power over him. If then you are risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ. Now when Christ is come, who is your life, then shall you also appear with him in glory.—Coloss. ii. So be it. In the name, &c.

SELECTED.

Arguments in favour of the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation and the real presence; Selected from the sermons preached on that subject by the Reverend Richard Hayes. Continued.

SERMON II.

FACT OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION, FROM SCRIPTURE.

I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you: do this for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink it, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord until he come.—1 Cor. c. xi. v. 23, &c.

I demonstrated, that there is no impossibility, no contradiction, no absurdity, in the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. I proved, not only against the sectarios, who admit the scripture, but against the Deists, who reject it, that God has the power of changing, if he please, the substance of the bread and wine, into the substance of his body and blood, preserving, still, the sensible qualities of the bread and wine. I have, thus, I trust, removed from the minds of all sincere enquirers after the truth, those obstacles, which a blind and unreasonably enslavement to the impressions of their senses, throws in the way of that calm consideration, with which they are bound to hear the words of Omnipotent Truth. If, then, I shall now make plain from the sacred writings, that the Redeemer of mankind has been pleased to perform this wonderful change; that he has, in the most positive, express, and literal manner, declared, that the bread is changed into his body, and the wine into his blood; no one, who admits his power—no one, who believes his divinity; no one, who receives the scripture as the word of his truth—can refuse to bow down, with the Catholic Church, and adore the body and blood of Jesus Christ, substantially existing in the blessed sacrament of the altar, under the outward appearance of bread and wine.

I say, then; if our opponents admit, as they must the possibility, how can they deny the fact? In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul, Christ says:—“Take and eat: this is my body, which shall be delivered for you.—Take and drink, this is my blood, which shall be shed for you.” In John, he says: “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.” Paul again says: “The chalice of benediction which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?—And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” And in another place: “Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.”

There are some things, my brethren, so clear and evident, that an attempt to demonstrate them, only serves to involve them in a factitious obscurity.—Who would undertake to prove, that the sun shines at noon-day? Could any argument of his, add light to the lustre, by which the luminary makes known its own presence? After I, for instance, who am but a mortal, had, repeatedly, and with the most solemn asseverations, stated a fact, would I feel complimented by a person, who should, as repeatedly, tell me, that I did not mean what I said; that I spoke metaphorically; when I cautiously avoided the least appearance of metaphor? Would I make a distinction between such a caviller, and a man who should, roundly and plumply, tell me I lied? The latter, in fact, would only be expressing, (in

a very uncourteous way, it is true,) his disbelief of my words; but the former, while he equally disbelieved me, would be aggravating the insult, by wishing to persuade me, that I was, not only a knave, but a fool. Yet, such is the treatment, which Jesus Christ receives from those, who, with his scriptures in their hands, and his words in their ears still deny, that he changed bread and wine into his body and blood!

Were I—a Catholic, believing, as I do, in transubstantiation—were I to have been so blest, as to sit among the apostles at the last supper; were I there anxious, that Christ should make use of words, which should leave no room for doubt, which should silence all possible cavil upon the truth of this dogma; were I allowed to suggest, to the Saviour of mankind, the very terms of the institutional form; could I, could any man, could any apostle, could any angel, could the God of eternal wisdom himself, have selected words more expressive, or so expressive of the miraculous change he was about to effect, as those which he actually did use: “This is my body?” When I now say that it is his body, no one dares to tell me, that I do not mean that it is his body; and when Jesus himself says that it is, shall any one, calling himself Christian, or even pretending to understand the most simple and obvious words within the range of human speech, dare to contradict the Son of God, and tell him that it is not his body? that it is only a sign, a figure, a representation, and—I know not what—which he has pawned upon mankind, declaring it to be his body? and that, with an “Amen, amen, I say unto you?” and—to keep up the solemn imposture—carefully avoiding the most distant allusion to sign, figure, or representation of any kind? Oh blasphemy!—Why, thy very murderers, O Divine Victim! who were to hang thee upon thy cross on the morrow—the very Jews, though they called thee seducer and impostor, never charged thee with an imposition so gross as this!

Well, Calvinists, will you still persist in telling your Redeemer, that he does not mean what he says? Will you still contend, that it is not his body, after he has, so expressly, so repeatedly, assured you, that it is? What shall I do to remove your obstinacy? for, it is so absolutely void of the slightest shadow of common sense, that I cannot even palliate it with the name of—delusion. Perhaps, the Son of God himself, if he were to address you in person, might succeed in convincing you. Let us see. Suppose, then, that Jesus Christ should descend, once more, from his heavenly throne, and standing, in my place, should invite you to question him on the subject. Would you not rejoice at the opportunity, thus given you, to dispel your doubts for ever? Would you not eagerly ask him, whether the sacrament was really his body? And, if he most solemnly assured you that it was, would not that be enough? would you not instantly bow to his infallible word, and believe though you do not comprehend? Yes; if you deserve, at all, the name of Christians, I am convinced you would. But I will push my supposition still

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 caudally 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

shortened, or changed into easier performances; sometimes wholly remitted; as in the case of the incestuous Corinthian, on account of his extreme sorrow and edifying repentance.—1 Cor. v.—2 Cor. ii. 5. Now every such diminution, commutation, or remission of the temporal punishment for past sin, is an *indulgence*: a total remission, is what is called a *plenary indulgence*.

But all such penances, enjoined by the proper authority, are binding and obligatory; otherwise the Saviour's declaration to his pastors, whose sins you shall retain, they are retained—John xx. 23, —was vain: and that, in particular made to his chief pastor,—to thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven.—Mat. xvi. 19. If then what is thus bound, is not loosed in this life, either by the exact fulfillment of the penance enjoined; or by the indulgence granted by the binding authority; a punishment proportioned to the penance enjoined here remains to be endured hereafter.

But, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, is granted to the chief pastor the power to open as well as to shut: to loose, as well as to bind: to forgive, as well as to retain sin. It is then of this discretionary power, granted by Jesus Christ to his pastors, that the Church avails herself, under the constant guidance promised her of the holy ghost, for the spiritual advantage and final safety of her children. She relaxes therefore, though reluctantly the primitive holy rigor of her penances; which, in the present lukewarm state of the world, would lighten from her communion too large a portion of mankind; who, to avoid the temporal punishment here, would thus incur the eternal hereafter. She uses thus, like a tender mother, the saving power granted her by her divine spouse, of screening her dear children by any rate from the wrath to come: Thess. i. 10.—*Pulling them, as it were, out of the fire: having mercy on others in fear; hating also the spotted garment, which is carnal.*—Jude, v. 53.—and substituting, instead of her former rigorous penances, which lasted often for years, and corresponded with the immense fervour and zeal of her earliest offspring; more lenient and practicable duties of obedience: for as it was by disobedience and sinful self-indulgence, that we fell from God; so it is by obedience and self-denial that we can ever hope to rise to him again: and hence are we assured in scripture that *obedience is better than sacrifice.*—1 Kings xv. 22.

Relying therefore on the saving virtue of obedience, she spares the weakness of the weak; and administers her wholesome severities only on the strong; whom she thereby transmits into eternity, and delivers up to divine justice, with less to endure, and a better account to render, than those who shrink here from her mild correcting rod. Such she is forced to leave exposed to the full measure of their punishment hereafter; a punishment far exceeding all that we can imagine endurable in this present life. For it is a dreadful thing, says St. Paul, to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb. x. 3,—Whereas, as the same holy Apostle tells us, if we

judge and condemn ourselves now, we shall not be judged and condemned hereafter.—1 Cor. xi 31.—Such is the Catholic doctrine of indulgence. It is besides, an article of the Catholic faith, that, in order to receive the benefit of an indulgence, one must be in the state of grace: for all in the state of mortal sin, are enemies of God; and God owes nothing to his enemies, but punishment. All such must then avail themselves of the means afforded them in the Church of Christ, of effecting with their offended God a thorough reconciliation. This, every Catholic knows, can never be accomplished but by a sincere repentance; which supposes a real sorrow for our sins; a resolution never to commit them more; a renunciation of our evil habits; a reparation of all injuries done to our neighbor; and a humble, true and full confession of our guilt to our spiritual director; by whose counsel we are bound to abide. This duty concluded with a worthy communion, and the exact fulfilment of what other good works are enjoined, as the conditions of our obtaining an indulgence, will secure to us all the advantages of one; and therefore confession and communion invariably make part of the conditions on which such a spiritual favour is granted. Is there ought in all this encouraging to sin, as has been asserted by the lying reformers?

This granting of indulgence is one of the many ways, by which, during the present season of mercy and grace, the Church applies the purifying and sanctifying efficacy of the Saviour's atonement to the souls of her obedient and dutiful children. That this, or any other of her sacred institutions, may be abused, none will deny. Must then the institution itself, when abused, be rejected? Or is the Church to be blamed for the infringement of her precepts?

The indulgence granted for contributing towards the building of St. Peter's Church in Rome, was Luther's first pretended plea for quarrelling with the Pope; and the occasion of his apostacy from the faith. He began by railing against that particular indulgence; the preaching up of which had been transferred from the monks of his order, the Augustinians, to those of the Institute of St. Dominic. He next attacked the general doctrine of indulgence: and then continuing to pull down article by article, the whole Catholic faith; proclaimed his work of ruin a glorious reformation: his random negatives, his loose and contradictory ravings, a fairer scheme of christianity, than any hitherto existing, or henceforth imaginable.

Yet, what rational christian, but must own that the undertaking, for which this indulgence was granted, was proper, pious, praiseworthy and meritorious? The building of the temple by Solomon; and the rebuilding of it by Esdras, were undertakings, as the scripture shews, praised and rewarded by God himself. And is the building of a temple to the same God by the converted nations less deserving of his approbation? Was it not becoming the christian world to rear such a monument to the glory of the Messiah; who, disowned and rejected by the Jews, was received & worshipped by the Gentiles? To erect on the ruins of idolatry, laid prostrate in her own warring capital, an illustrious trophy to the victorious prince of peace? To bid his blessed banner be displayed; the cross, his royal standard, be exalted, on the remarkable spot, where Peter, his chief Apostle, and deputed champion, had beaten down the proud imperial standard of Satan; the gory ensign of Mars, the slaughtering Abaddon; the destroyer?

To be continued.

BIBLICAL NOTICES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Continued.

NUMBERS.

Chapter 24th, V.—It is allowed by all that Balaam's prophetic praise was spoken in favor of the Church of the redeemer; of which in the camp of Israel he beheld only the figure. It is of her he exclaims: *How beautiful are thy tabernacles, o Jacob! and thy tents, o Israel! As woody valleys; as watered gardens near the rivers; as tabernacles, which the Lord hath pitched; as cedars by the water side.*

Verse 7th. *Water shall flow out of his bucket.* The cleansing and refreshing stream of grace in Messiah's sacraments; particularly in baptism.

And his seed shall be in many waters: that is, his offspring born to him of water and the holy ghost,—John iii. 5.—These are his seed of many waters; children, no more of the natural, but of the spiritual Adam, who is Christ.

For Agag, his King, shall be removed, and his kingdom shall be taken away. This seems to denote the fall of some great opposing power to the Saviour's spiritual sway; the greatest such was pagan Rome, and her persecuting emperors.

Verse 8.—*God hath brought him out of Egypt.* The circumstance of the Saviour's return out of Egypt, whether he was carried to avoid being slain with the innocents in Bethlem, is here foretold, as it was afterwards by the prophet Oseas, 11, 1, under the collective figure of Israel, out of Egypt have I called my son, whose strength is like the Rhinoceros; that is irresistible and destined to prevail.

The Nations shall devour his enemies; and break their bones: and pierce them with arrows. The Romans first destroyed and scattered his enemies, the Jews, who had rejected and condemned him to death. The Romans themselves next, for persecuting him in his members, are devoured up, by the Northern hordes, that broke into their empire; and thus have been seen in various warfare the nations to devour his enemies.

Lying down, he hath slept as a lioness; whom none shall dare to rouse.—This is the same figurative description of the Saviour, as that given by Jacob, in his blessings to Juda. Gen. xlix. 9. Shewing his terrific might if roused, even while he seems to slumber.

He, that blesseth thee, shall also be blessed: and he that curseth thee, shall also be cursed. He is the sovereign and sole source of benediction.

Balaam, still full of the spirit of prophecy, continues, in spite of Balac's angry remonstrances, to pour forth his predictions.

Verse 17.—*I shall see him, says he, but not now: I shall behold him, but not near.* This evidently points at the Saviour.

A star shall rise out of Jacob: and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel; and shall strike the chiefs of Moab; and shall waste all the children of Seth. And he shall possess Idumea; the inheritance of Seir shall come to their enemies; but Israel shall do manfully.

The miraculous star is here predicted, which appeared at the birth of the Saviour; and the sceptre mentioned, indicates his regal dignity. Hence the wise men from the East, who recognizing the wondrous sign, and following it, had come to worship him, enquired: *Where is he, who is born King of the Jews; for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to adore him?* His spiritual conquests, and subjugation of the nations are next alluded to under the names of Moab, Seth, Seir, and Idumea. These the Prophet follows down, till he comes to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and the disappearance of the Romans themselves.

To be continued.

SELECTED.

MUSENBETH'S DEFENCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Continued.

In St. Matt. xviii, 18, our Saviour assured his Apostles that whatsoever they should bind or loose upon earth, should be bound or loosed also in heaven. In St. John. xx, 22, he gave them the Holy Spirit, and declared that whose sins they should forgive, should be forgiven; and whose sins they should retain, should be retained. Now, how could the Apostles exercise this power, unless they knew what the sins were which they were to forgive or retain? And how could they come to this knowledge, except by the confession of those who had committed them? The power granted by Christ was clearly a judiciary power, which could only be exercised with full knowledge of the cause: such knowledge could only be obtained by the criminal's own confession. And thus the obligation of confession is clearly founded upon the Scriptures, no less than on the uninterrupted tradition of the Catholic Church, in every age from the Apostles.

Protestants have often repented of the abolition of confession, and earnestly desired its re-establishment. This can never be among those who have taught that Sacramental Confession was not instituted by the Divine Founder of Christianity. They will no more submit to such a yoke than the first Christians would have done, if they had not believed it of divine appointment.

It is a curious fact, that Mr. White's difficulties about Confession were very ably treated by a celebrated royal theologian, no less a personage than King Henry VIII, who wrote as follows, in his "Defence of the Seven Sacraments, against Luther."—"But as to Confession, if not a word was said or read in figure, or spoken by the Holy Fathers; yet when I see every one for so many centuries confessing his sins to the Priests, when from that very practice I behold so much good come, and no evil, I can neither believe nor think but that the practice was appointed and preserved, not by any human counsel, but by divine command. For neither could the people have been ever brought, by any human authority, to pour out in the ear of another, who could divulge them if he pleased, their most secret sins, of which their conscience gave them a horror, and which it was so much their interests to conceal, with so much confusion, and yet so readily: nor could it happen, that whereas so many Priests, good and bad, are promiscuously employed in hearing Confessions, even those should keep them secret, who keep nothing else; unless God, who instituted this Sacrament, protected by a special grace so salutary an institution. I am persuaded, therefore, whatever Luther may say, that Confession comes not from any popular custom or institution of the Fathers, but owes its establishment and preservation to God himself." Thus wrote our royal "Defender of the Faith" against the patriarch of the Reformation.

From Confession, Mr. White, after a sentence or two about the unscriptural encroachments of Romanists, passes on to the subject of Relics and Images. He thus questions his reader:—"Did you ever find mention of Relics in the Bible?" The reader is made to answer—"Certainly not." We suppose, then, that the obsequious reader never looked into the Fourth, or, as it is called in the Protestant Translation, the Second Book of Kings ch, xiii, v. 21, where it is mentioned that a dead body was raised to life by having touched the bones of the Prophet Elishus, or Elisha: and that he never saw, in the second chapter of the same Book, that the same Prophet had used a Relic, namely, the cloak of Elias or Elijah, to divide the waters of the Jordan. He never read, we presume,

the 19th chapter of the Acts, where it is stated that diseases and wicked spirits were driven out by the application of handkerchiefs and aprons from the body of St. Paul. Who can say, with these passages before him, that the Bible never mentions Relics?

Mr. White next amuses his reader with assuring him that Rome has long "carried on a trade in bones," and recounting numerous abuses and impositions, with false relics, &c. &c.; as also with various Images, Pictures, and the like, which he winds up with this sweeping conclusion:—"This I can assure you, before the whole world, that whoever submits entirely to the guidance of Rome, must become a weak superstitious being, unless this natural temper should dispose him to join with superstition the violence and persecuting spirit of the bitterest bigotry."

We shall not trouble our selves to examine the truth or falsehood of Mr. White's pretty stories; but we must say, that the gross and multiplied misrepresentations in which he has been already detected, give a strong presumption against his accuracy in such reports as these. If all the abuses exist which he enumerates, and if many more exist, they are still abuses; and till it can be shewn that our Church gives countenance to them, they will make nothing against the veneration of Relics and Images, properly understood and practised. If Mr. White means to assert that Relics are not to be had in a proper degree of veneration, the evidence of Scripture, of all tradition and the Holy Fathers, is against him; and St. Jerome will condemn him in the remarkable language he used against Vigilantius: "The Pope then does wrong when he offers sacrifice to the Lord over what we account the venerable bones, but what ye call the vile dust of the dead men, Peter and Paul, and considers their tombs as the Altars of Christ?—Oh impious assertion, to be denounced to the ends of the earth!" The Pastors of the Catholic Church have always watched with the greatest care to prevent and correct every kind of abuse in the veneration of relics and holy Images. The use of them is not of obligation upon any Catholic; yet we are unsparingly reproached, as if we placed our hopes of salvation in the possession of them. We cannot better conclude than in the feeling language of the pious and learned Dr. Milner on this subject—

It is a point agreed upon among Catholic Doctors and Divines; that the memorials of Religion form no essential part of it. Hence, if you should become a Catholic, as I pray God you may, I shall never ask you, if you have a pious picture or relic, or so much as a crucifix in your possession; but then, I trust, after the declarations I have made, that you will not account me an idolater, should you see such things in my Oratory or Study; or should you observe how tenacious I am of any crucifix in particular. Your faith and devotion may not stand in need of such memorials; but mine, alas! do. I am too apt to forget what my Saviour has done and suffered for me; but the sight of his representation often brings this to my memory, and affects my sentiments. Hence, I would rather part with most of the books in my library, than with the figure of my crucified Lord."—*End of Religious Controversy, Letter 34.*

To be Continued.

ORIGINAL.

ON OUR SAVIOUR'S PASSION AND DEATH.

[Extracted from a MS. poem on Charity.]

With pray'r in solitude he next prepares
For his last mortal conflict; ev'n to death
Himself devoting; guiltless for our guilt:
Our ransom's willing victim, doom'd to bleed

Behold him stretch'd in agony severe
Of mortal anguish; now preclusive felt

To his great suffering tragedy display'd:
With all our crimes his innocence oppress'd.—*Lerit 16 22*
That loath'd the load it bore: till from him forc'd,
His sweat of blood the ground had all imbrui'd:
And pitying angels stay'd their sinking Lord;
As from its task his human nature frail
Shrank shudd'ring back, and felt unwo't dismay.

Next see him by his faithless bosom friend
With treach'rous kiss betray'd, and now by all
His frighten'd followers left, the butt expos'd
To unrelenting hate, and hostile scorn

In Idiot's guise, was wisdom's self array'd
By man derisive I sore his sacred sides
Smarted beneath the ruffian's scourge applied;
And emblems mock of Majesty were giv'n
To him, great Nature's universal Lord.
The purple, round his naked shoulders hung:
The reed his sceptre; and the thorny crown,
With prickly wreath his bleeding brows that bound
And, more insulting, ev'n with him compar'd—*Psalms 21, 7*
The worst of felons, ready pref'rence found.
Then to the fatal Mount, as Isaac erst,
Bearing the wood of his own sacrifice—*Gents. 22, 6*
He journey'd onwards, nor himself refus'd
A ready victim at his Father's call.—*Hebr. 10, 9.*

Pierc'd were his limbs, and pinion'd to the tree—*Is 49, 39.*
The fruit of which forbidd'n had mortal prov'd.—*Zac 12, 10*
Now fruit that yields divine; death's antidote {*Prov 11, 31*
Sov'reign prescrib'd mid all the guilty doom'd }*John 6 50-1-2*
Sole guiltless he, the criminal chief appears. {*Is. 53, 12.*
Where on his mercy's throne, 'twixt heav'n and earth Mark S.
Conspicuous rais'd; and thirsting for our weal,—*Johr 19, 29.*
Loath'd sorrow's cup ev'n to the dregs he drain'd
Sparing us, also reserv'd, the bitter draught.

Next for his murd'ers earnest he implores—*Luke 23, 34*
Forgiveness; pleading mock their crimes excuse.—
When, loud proclaim'd our ransom's full discharge,—*John 19*
Like faded flow'r, that bends beneath the blast, [30.
With all her blushing honours round her strewd,
He drops recumbent on his peaceful breast
His holy head, resign'd; and calm expires.

Yet did not Nature calm th' event behold:—*Luke 23, 44-5.*
She shook throughout, in all her vasty frame
With horror pail'd, while th' affrighted sun
Torn'd from the sight: and darkness interpos'd,
In deepest gloom the Deicide that veil'd.

The Catholic

Will be published weekly at the Office of the Patriot and Farmer's Monitor, Kingston, Upper Canada, and issued on Friday. Terms—\$2 per annum, (exclusive of postage, which is four shillings a year) payable in advance.

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