

## THE ATTRIBUTE AND NOTE OF SANCTITY IN THE CHURCH.

THE sanctity of the Church is a topic whose discussion is more difficult than that of unity, catholicity or apostolicity. The proposition that the Church is holy is commonly taken to mean that it is a society composed of members who are holy. Polemics against the Catholic Church consist largely in a recital of sins and crimes imputed to the members, but especially to the rulers, of the Church. These indictments may be true statements of facts, or exaggerations or calumnies. They are made the basis of a plea that the Catholic Church is not a holy but an unholy society, and therefore not the true Church.

Moreover, comparisons are made of the Catholic Church with the collective Protestant sects or some one of them, intended to prove that in so far as the true Church is a visible society composed of holy members, it is to be found, at least in part, among the disciples of Luther and Calvin.

The controversy is to a great extent carried on as a dispute concerning the relative moral conditions of nations and peoples nominally Catholic or Protestant, by means of statistics. It has also become more a question of civilization and political and social economy than of the Christian religion, of Christian piety and virtue.

Important and interesting as discussions of this kind may be in able and honest hands, they are not conclusive, unless moral facts and conditions are traced to their causes and principles. If these are cited by a Catholic advocate in favor of Catholicism he must show the relation of cause and effect. If those of an opposite character are cited against the Catholic Church, these supposed facts must be traced to Catholicism as their cause, or the plea is null.

At the very outset it is necessary to distinguish between unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolicity as Attributes of the Church, and the same as Notes. As attributes they are her essential, constitutive principles, existing in her in all their perfection from the beginning. As notes they are made visible in their effects, by causing actual unity, actual sanctity, actual extension and multiplication, actual succession of Popes and bishops from St. Peter and the Apostles, in a multitude of members through all ages and nations. As notes they are four outward and visible marks

belonging exclusively to the one true Church and to no other society whatever. These notes manifest and distinguish from all sects claiming to possess the doctrine and law of God and of Christ, that One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church which Jesus Christ founded, which is the true Kingdom of God on the earth.

The note of sanctity, as has been already said, must not be confused with the attribute of essential sanctity which the Church possesses. This essential sanctity is something higher and more perfect than the actual holiness of the individual members of the Church. It is not easy to define that being which the Church possesses in itself as distinct from the aggregate of its living members. Metaphors are employed to express its specific nature, the Body of Christ, the Spouse of Christ, which of course cannot be interpreted in a literal sense, but only in an analogical manner, and by a figure of personification.

It is really Jesus Christ Himself, in His own Person, who is the principle and the cause by His Holy Spirit of all the sanctifying effects produced in men, individually and collectively, through the medium of the Church, its teaching, discipline and sacramental ministrations. The Church is called His Body, that is, His Mystical Body, by analogy with His Natural Body, because it is a visible organism, animated by His indwelling Spirit. As the Head of this Mystical Body, the chief of its Apostolic hierarchy, He holds all its organic parts in unity by the operation of His Holy Spirit. As the author and source of grace He communicates to it sanctity. As the possessor of sovereign power He makes it capable of universal extension and perpetuity. He is the sole Lord of the world, and therefore there is but one authority, which is His own, exercised through his vicegerents. It is His infallibility which makes the oral and written teaching of the Apostles, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to be the Word of God and a divine revelation. It is the same infallibility which by the assistance of the Holy Spirit gives to the Apostolic hierarchy its prerogative as the authentic and unerring guardian, witness and judge of the divine revelation.

It is Jesus Christ who offers Himself as the Lamb of God to the Father, and gives Himself as the celestial food to the faithful in the Holy Eucharist; Who regenerates in Baptism, seals the baptized with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, absolves the sinner in Penance and gives the Sacerdotal character in Ordination. The Church, with its ministries and sacraments, is the visible organ of His divine operation, and is therefore called His Body.

Under this figure, the Church is, in a sense, identified with Christ.

Under the figure of the Spouse of Christ, it is represented as dis-

tinct from Him, and personified as His counterpart, the Eve of the new Adam, the mother who bears and nourishes the children of whom He is the Father in the order of regeneration. This figure presents the Church as the ideal of redeemed humanity, in the elect, regarded as destined to final glorification ; and therefore described as clothed with a perfect and spotless sanctity. This sanctity is one of the essential attributes of the Church, which is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic ; and as the other constitutive and operative principles which are the very essence and nature of the Church cannot be identified with the effects produced, but must be distinguished from the actual phenomena effected in the successive ages and different regions of the world, so also in the case of this attribute of sanctity. And even more so. The principle of unity, catholicity and apostolicity in their active operation, produce their effects in a collective multitude united in the profession of one faith, extended by their number through many ages and countries, under the government of a hierarchy composed of many bishops succeeding to the Apostles. It is this universal and organized society, which is One, Catholic and Apostolic. But sanctity in the sense of moral and spiritual virtue subsists in single, individual subjects. Therefore, the obvious sense of the proposition that the Church is Holy, which suggests itself to the mind at the first sight is, that it is a society composed of a multitude of saints. It is easy to recognize the fact that the multitude of the members of the Church make up a body which is One, Catholic and Apostolic. But it is far from evident that the Church is a society exclusively composed of saints, even in its hierarchy.

The attributes of unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolicity are not directly and immediately in themselves the notes or marks of the true Church. They are not perceived directly, but in their effects, and are manifested by the phenomena which they produce. In its essential, organic nature, the Church is a hierarchy, beginning in the college of Apostles under St. Peter, as a visible, organic corporation, animated and vivified by the Holy Spirit, with power to perpetuate and extend itself in unity, by Apostolic Succession, and to transmit doctrine and grace from their source in Jesus Christ, indefectibly, until the end of the world. The presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church are made manifest and visible by its historical development in time and space, as a society binding a multitude in unity of faith and order, proclaiming an unchanging doctrine and moral law, and preserving an unbroken succession in the supreme pontificate and episcopate. This phenomenon manifests the attributes of the Church founded by Jesus Christ—the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church—which become in this manner notes, or characteristic marks by which

the true Church can be distinguished from all sects, singly and collectively, whose claim to church privileges is spurious. The four notes are found in a visible and illustrious manner in that society which is the true Church, and are not to be seen in any other. It is easy to show that the Church which is known everywhere as the Catholic Church, and is governed by the Roman Pontiff, possesses the three notes of unity, catholicity and apostolicity solely and exclusively. The note of sanctity can also be vindicated for the same Church in the most conclusive manner. Nevertheless, it requires a longer and more laborious explanation to remove the difficulties and objections which envelop with their obscure mist the glorious edifice of the Church, hiding from the view of the world that sanctity which, once made visible, is the brightest and most evident mark of a divine origin and an in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

As an essential attribute of the Church, sanctity is a gift of the Holy Spirit, consecrating the Apostolic hierarchy as His medium of teaching infallibly a pure doctrine of faith and morals, and imparting through sacraments and discipline the grace which produces personal sanctity in all its grades, from the baptismal innocence of the infant to the sublime virtues of the most exalted heroes.

As a note of the Church, sanctity must be an effect of the principle of sanctity, visible and evident, together with the other notes, in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and in this Church exclusively. It consists first of all in the perpetual unchanging proclamation of the true and pure Faith, that is, of the revealed dogma and moral law entrusted by Christ to the Apostolic hierarchy. This includes the proposition of the ideal of supernatural sanctity derived from the example of our Divine Lord. This ideal is unique and without a parallel and is presented only by the Catholic Church.

The principle of sanctity, being vital and operative, must have the power not only of proposing the ideal of ordinary moral virtue and the higher grades of heroic sanctity in a theoretical manner, but also of producing an actual reality which conforms to the ideal of sanctity and exemplifies it. The note and mark of sanctity is therefore exhibited in the most evident and brilliant manner by the multitude of martyrs and other heroes in a continuous and unbroken succession whose sanctity is illustrated and sanctioned by miracles. These supernatural phenomena are not found in any of the schismatical and heretical sects which broke away from the Catholic Church from the first to the sixteenth century, nor in those which have arisen during the last three centuries. It is impossible to present them in a brief exposition in such a way as to

give them their due and convincing effect. It would require at least one large volume to do this in a satisfactory manner. It is necessary to read the history of the lives of the saints in order to appreciate the evidence they afford that there is but One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus Christ, the ecclesiastical society governed by the Roman Pontiff as its supreme head. The general and dense ignorance of authentic ecclesiastical history which prevails, together with the gross and extensive falsifications of heretical and infidel writers, have obscured the note of sanctity, and have involved the glorious fabric of the Catholic Church in a mist which it is very difficult to disperse.

The principle of sanctity in the Church has not only produced the most sublime effects of actual sanctity in its members who have been exalted to the highest grades of heroic virtue, it has wrought a social regeneration of entire nations, educated them in a new and Christian civilization, made millions of virtuous and pious Christians, and converted many more millions from a sinful or careless life into sincere penitents. It has peopled heaven with thousands of millions of innocent souls, translated to the kingdom of God in their infancy, and with a countless host of the elect in all the gradations of merit, to inhabit the many mansions of the celestial country.

Nevertheless, it is precisely the note of sanctity which is most vehemently denied to the Catholic Church by her enemies, especially those of the Calvinistic and Puritan type. They object to her claim that she is the medium and instrument of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of men, that many of her members are sinners, and that sins have abounded in all times and nations which have professed her faith and owned her authority. Alas! it is impossible to deny the fact. But the inference is false. It is implied that the Church ought to make and keep all her members holy, and to banish sin from her domain, which is a false premise.

The grace of God and the sacraments are not magical in their working, and coercive either physically or morally over the mind and will, the character and conduct of rational and free subjects. They give the power to will and to do in the supernatural order of faith, hope and charity, but the willing and doing must proceed from the free co-operation of the human will with divine grace. The regenerated children of God are placed in a state of probation, trial and combat, in which they have to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. They inherit a fallen nature, not perfectly repaired and restored by regeneration. Concupiscence remains, the world is full of dangers and seductions, evil spirits lie in wait along the path of life. Those who sin, sin from their own weakness and malice. However numerous sinners may be, and

however grievous and frequent may be the sins of the members of the Church, the Church is no more responsible than is the Holy Spirit. No one can pretend that the Catholic Church is responsible for the schisms and heresies which have had their cause and origin in rebellion against the authority of the Church. No more can she be held responsible for sins against the moral law which she proposes to her children.

It is chiefly, however, the moral delinquencies of the prelates and rulers of the Church which furnish an offensive weapon against her sanctity to her enemies. Cardinals and bishops, some of whom have occupied very high places in the Church and in the State, have been very worldly men, no better than the generality of secular princes, sometimes even more grievously reprehensible in their moral conduct.

Even in some of the popes, the character of the secular prince has been more conspicuous than that of the pontiff; and there are several who have fallen short of that exemplary sanctity which ought to characterize every bishop, but especially the one who is Christ's Vicar on the earth, and a few, particularly three, who disgraced the Apostolic See by their grievous transgressions of the moral law.

The first Pope who grievously dishonored the tiara was Stephen VII., elected, A.D. 896, by the influence of Lambert, Duke of Spoleto, one of the rival claimants of the imperial crown; but his reign was soon cut short by a violent death. The second on this list of dishonor came thirty-six years later, in 1032—a young prince, not out of his teens, raised to the papal throne by the dominant family of the Conti, who scandalized Christendom by his dissolute life for thirteen years, after which he was induced to abdicate, and who passed the last years of his life doing penance in a monastery. The Pope whom we place third on the list was the too-famous Alexander VI., whose election and reign were really the most grievous and deplorable disgrace which has ever befallen the Roman See. This is so, because he was freely elected by the College of Cardinals, without any serious shock to the moral sense of Christendom. The worst accusations which certain writers have made against Alexander, and the other Roman Borgias, are gross calumnies. Nevertheless, the effort which some well-meaning Catholic writers have made to rehabilitate his private moral character as Cardinal and Pope, has failed. He was faithless to his vow of chastity. This is enough to leave an indelible mark of disgrace upon his name, and upon the names of all who promoted him to the dignities of the Roman Church, because they were more anxious to secure the services of an able statesman and sovereign than to give the Church a holy chief pastor. He was

not, however, as bad as Luther, who took a recreant nun for his mistress, and gave the Landgrave of Hesse a dispensation to keep two wives; or as Cranmer, the apostate Hermann of Cologne, and other violators of their solemn vows, whose names are enrolled with honor in the Protestant annals. If Alexander had been merely a king, and not also a pontiff, his sins would have been condoned and his reign reckoned as illustrious. Even Cæsar Borgia would have received a milder censure on the historic page, were it not that a relentless hatred of the Catholic religion and the Roman Church has driven her enemies to paint every exposed surface of her walls in the blackest colors. It is a singular fact, that a great grandson of Alexander was St. Francis Borgia, one of the most illustrious saints of Spain and of the Society of Jesus, who restored and increased the glory of the name of Borgia, which Alexander and Cæsar Borgia had defaced. This is one of those strokes of Divine Providence, bringing good out of evil, like that which made Solomon, the child of a double crime, the builder of the Temple of Jerusalem. It is in this way that God counteracts the wickedness of men always tending to destroy his kingdom on the earth, and always baffled.

In this way it has happened, that a crisis, to outward seeming fatal, has, in more than one instance, preceded a new development and triumph of the Church contending against the gates of hell. The Church has passed through several disastrous epochs, in which evils existing within her own bosom have been more dangerous than violence from without can ever be.

Her modern enemies, unable to deny that her catholic and apostolic unity, founded on the impregnable Rock of Peter, has survived all these disasters, are driven to contend that she has failed in sanctity. They strive to prove that in the moral convulsions of evil days the Papacy became an evil and immoral power; that wickedness was enthroned when sinners sat upon the throne; that the priesthood became unholy when possessed by unholy men; and the sacrifice was defiled when offered by unworthy hands.

This was the heresy of Wiclef and John Huss. Could the Roman See be called "The Holy See," and be really the supreme and infallible tribunal of doctrine when it was ruled by a dissolute youth like Benedict IX.? Is it possible that such a man as Alexander VI. could be the Vicar of Christ? Such is the argument which is made a plea in bar of all the evidence that Our Lord made St. Peter supreme head of the Church, and that Benedict and Alexander were his successors and heirs in this office. It suffices to rebut this plea to ask: Could it be possible that Judas was one of the Twelve Apostles appointed by the Lord Himself? Could

Caiphas and other wicked men, his predecessors, have been the High Priests of God? Could Balaam have been an inspired prophet?

The enemies of the Church seek to strengthen their cause by exaggerating such historical facts as serve their purpose, adding many other pretended facts, which are either falsehoods or uncertainties, calumniating innocent pontiffs and prelates, drawing false perspectives, and placing historical events in an odious light, in a mist of misleading, distorted and deceptive views, and drowning the whole landscape under a flood of rhetorical invective.

That period which covers a portion of the ninth and tenth centuries, and is justly called the Iron Age of Roman history, affords an abundance of material for the scavengers of polemics. It is true that the great flock of obscene birds has taken flight, scared away by Maitland, Ranke and other non-Catholic historians of the modern school, who have written in a more scholarly and honest temper than that which formerly prevailed. We would not apply any disrespectful epithet to writers of this class, some of whom have really rendered important service to the Catholic cause.

About the middle of the tenth century occurred the extraordinary episode of the brief domination in Rome of a woman, the famous Marozia, which has been made the basis of a most disgraceful historical romance.

Theophylact, Roman senator, and Alberic, Count of Tusculum, were the two most powerful Roman nobles during the glorious pontificate of John X. (914-928). The wife of Theophylact was Theodora; Theodora, the younger, and Marozia were his daughters; and the latter was the wife of Alberic. These women, and another princess, Ermengarda, Marchioness of Ivrea, were remarkable for their beauty, accomplishments and ambition; and have been plentifully bespattered with filth from the sewer of the infamous Luitprand, who was himself an example of how unscrupulous a Catholic bishop can be, and how much mischief he can do. Alberic having been killed in battle, Marozia married Guido, Marquis of Tuscany, brother of Ermengarda; and the three set on foot a revolution in which Rudolph, the nominal emperor, was displaced by Hugo of Provence, who was crowned at Pavia. Guido and Marozia took violent possession of Rome, imprisoned Pope John X., who soon after died, and caused, after two short pontificates, the election of a younger son of Alberic and Marozia, under the name of John XI. Guido having soon after died, Marozia ruled alone, with the titles of Senator and Patrician for about two years. Ambitious of becoming empress, she married her brother-in-law, Hugo, a marriage which was invalid by the



ecclesiastical laws, unless a dispensation, which she could hardly have neglected to obtain, had been granted. The two were preparing to consummate their ambitious projects, when Alberic, the elder son of Alberic and Marozia drove them out and seized on the sovereignty. Marozia was banished, was repudiated by Hugo, on the ground of the canonical impediment, and henceforth disappears from view. Alberic governed wisely and well for twenty-two years, preserving always harmony with the Popes, although for some unknown reasons he kept his brother during the remaining five years of his life in an honorable imprisonment.

Alberic, who had kept up the appearance of governing as the Pope's vicegerent, wishing to end the anomalous division of the spiritual and temporal sovereignties, had his son Octavian educated in the clerical state, that he might reunite both in his own person, which was effected by his election to the pontificate under the name of John XII., who reigned eight years, and called to his aid Otho, the king of Germany, with whom he had afterwards a violent dissension. John XII. is one of the Popes against whom most grievous charges are made, the justice of which we cannot here consider. The tenth age, with all its vicissitudes, was finally closed in 1046, when the series of Hildebrandine Popes commenced, and a new era of the Church and empire, the mediæval period.

We have made this rapid sketch in order to gain a criterion for estimating the justice of the infamous appellation of "Pornocracy" which a distinguished writer has applied to the domination of the family to which Marozia belonged, and in which she played a conspicuous part. It is the vilest term in the English language, and were it not veiled under its Greek form, could not be used with decency. We are ashamed to quote it, and we regret to find it on the page of a Protestant clergyman for whom we have a great respect and a sincere friendship.

Dr. Storrs, who has written many beautiful things about St. Bernard, and even Gregory VII., has dipped his brush in the paint pot of Luitprand to blacken the face and figure of the Roman Church. We fear that he has been moved, like so many others, by the fear lest the tribute to saints and prelates of the Roman Church, extorted by truth and honesty, should make an impression in favor of her claim to be the true Church of Christ.

His ordinary hearers and readers would naturally infer from his language, that the Roman Church became what the old Puritans of England and New England often expressed by a very coarse epithet. The dominion of the Scarlet Woman of Babylon is most exactly expressed by the term "Pornocracy," which is the genuine authentic Protestant idea of the Roman Church.

I have no wish to vindicate Marozia and the group of Italian princes to which she belonged. They were guilty of acts of persecution and oppression of the Roman Church and the Pope, and probably even of assassinations. But there is no evidence that Marozia was such a character as Catharine II. of Russia, the Duchess of Portsmouth, Madame du Barry and Lola Montez. She was married to princes of the highest rank; her sons, Prince Alberic and John XI., were born of her lawful wedlock with the Count of Tusculum, and several of her more remote descendants were illustrious in their character as well as their rank. It is not likely that Alberic, Guido and Hugo would have formed and preserved an alliance with a woman of infamous conduct. And although Hugo repudiated her when she could no longer serve his ambition, his only pretext was the canonical impediment of affinity. The only authority for the heap of foul charges against the Conti family and others which have been spread like dead fish upon many a page of history, is that unscrupulous liar, Luitprand, entirely discredited since the discovery of the Chronicle of Flodoard and the historical researches of Muratori.

Let me ask, now, before leaving Marozia in her obscure tomb, who and what was Ann Boleyn, the mother of the English Reformation and of Queen Elizabeth, declared illegitimate by an Act of Parliament, never repealed? I will not deny the virginity of Elizabeth, but was there no "Pornocracy" in the reign of Henry VIII., and would it not be more modest in those who are derived from him as their religious ancestor to avoid this field of controversy?

No argument can be derived from the sins of rulers and members of the Church against the sanctity of the Church herself. The ideal church is never perfectly reduced to actual reality in the external, collective society of Christians. A society exclusively composed of saints has never existed on a large scale upon the earth. It is not the plan of Divine Providence to shut out moral evil from His spiritual kingdom by an exercise of power. Rebellion broke out among the angels, and the human race in its head, revolted. The rebellion is in the way of being subdued by a warfare between the powers of good and evil under the leadership of the Son of God and Lucifer. But on the earth the good and the evil are not absolutely separated; they are intermingled, and the whole history of the people of God shows the perpetual struggle in its very bosom of the opposing elements. It is the will of God to form His spiritual kingdom out of these imperfect and contending elements, and to make it perfect in the peace of a future state, the celestial Jerusalem.

In the Church Militant there have been dark and disastrous

periods and events which it is painful to contemplate. Saints have been mingled with imperfect Christians, the good and worthy with the unworthy, and with the criminal and vicious. Sins have abounded and disorders have prevailed in the ecclesiastical state. There can be no doubt that the tenth age was a dark and disastrous period, and that in the age sometimes called of Leo X., just preceding the Reformation, there was a crying need of a reform both of discipline and morals. But the relaxation of discipline and morals was caused, not by the influence of Catholic principles, theoretical or practical, but by violation or neglect of the same. Reform was not to be undertaken by revolution in principles, doctrine, organization and discipline, revolt against authority, or any violent means, but by restoration, return to the original and ideal Catholic type, the exercise of legitimate authority in the Church and by the hierarchy.

Declamation against bad, unworthy or worldly and careless prelates, against abuses and moral disorders, is of no force against the Catholic cause, unless these evils can be traced to their origin in the doctrine and polity of the Catholic Church, as their logical and legitimate development. An atheist arguing, from evils in the world, against the theology of Christianity and Theism, is bound to show that this theology makes God the author of sin. An infidel arguing against Christianity from moral evils in Christendom is bound to show that Christianity is responsible for them, and is therefore an immoral and demoralizing religion.

The anti-Catholic plea is merely a kind of inconsistent, incoherent form of the same argument. It has no logical but only a rhetorical force, depending entirely on the ignoring of the true issue by the pleader and the ignorant prejudices of his audience.

The Church is holy because she has always taught a pure and holy doctrine and preserved all the sanctifying means of grace, and has sanctified all who have been docile to her teaching and law in all grades of holiness from the lowest to the highest. She is to be estimated by her genuine and most perfect boughs and fruits, and not by such as are decayed or severed, worm-eaten or rotten.

Whoever is not blind or prejudiced must admit that the papacy and the episcopate have been the great religious and moral powers in the civilized world. Of the 250 popes some 40 have been martyrs or canonized saints; many more have been eminently holy, and of the remainder only a few have been unworthy of their high office. The genuine character and spirit of the papacy are represented and personified in such pontiffs as Clement the First, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Leo IX., Gregory VII., Innocent III., Pius V., Pius IX. and Leo XIII. There have been many thousands of bishops, some millions of priests and hundreds of

millions of the faithful. The true representatives of the episcopate have been such men as Athanasius, Basil, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Patrick, Boniface, Remigius, Fisher, Fenelon, Cheverus, Carroll.

There are names of sinners holding high offices in the catalogue of Catholic prelates. But they are not inscribed in the roll of honor in ecclesiastical history. It contains no such names as those of Timothy Aelurus, Photius, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, or, among princes, George of Saxony, Henry VIII., Elizabeth, Murray. Of those who have deserved honorable mention on the historic page, although there are many who were worthy of canonization, and a much larger number who have resembled more or less closely the saints who have obtained this honor, there are none who have fallen short of the Catholic standard of heroic virtue who have been canonized by ecclesiastical authority, or by the informal verdict of public opinion in the Church. Constantine, Charlemagne, Charles V., Richelieu, those popes and bishops of provincial churches in whom the princely has predominated over the pontifical character, and many others, whether ecclesiastics, statesmen or leaders of thought, who have to a certain extent deserved well of the Church and of human society, have received due credit not unmingled with censure from the judgment of impartial history.

That the effect of the teaching and discipline of the Church has been to produce at all times and everywhere in the midst of the sins and miseries which have only too much abounded in Christendom such abundant fruits of religious and moral virtue as to make the note of sanctity clearly manifest, only the bigoted or the ignorant can dare to deny.

This note is claimed, however, for the Roman Church *exclusively*, and there are many who will readily admit that she has it in common with the sects which are regarded as part of the Christian Church, while vehemently denying that it is her *exclusive mark*.

They contend that religion and virtue flourish within other so-called churches not included in the communion of the Roman Church.

I have no wish to deny or to minimize the existence of the natural virtues, even among Jews, Mohammedans and Pagans. It is, however, out of place here to consider any question in respect to any of these. I am concerned only with the Christian sects. It would be folly to deny that the natural virtues flourish to a great extent among their adherents, and I see no reason why we may not admit that the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and charity subsist in a great number of sincere and religious persons, separated

from the external communion of the Church, but virtually and spiritually united with it.

However, no matter how many members the sects may have who are holy, their holiness is not derived from any sect, but from the Catholic Church. No sect which has separated from the Catholic Church has ever effected anything for the religious and moral welfare of mankind, or possessed either the attribute or the note of sanctity. The Novatians were indeed strict in their moral doctrine and conduct, but their rigorism was injurious to the cause of religion and morality. The swarm of heretical sects in the early ages were infamously immoral and brought disgrace on the Christian name. The mediæval heretics were a nuisance not only to the Church, but to society and the state. The Lutheran reformation, on the showing of its own disciples, produced an outbreak of immorality and caused untold miseries in Europe. The clergy of the schismatical sects in the east and west have certainly been the instruments of much religious and moral good to their people. They have accomplished this good work by means of sacraments, the Bible, the creeds, the doctrinal and moral truths and precepts retained and inherited from the old Catholic traditions.

Their heresy and rebellion are in themselves only noxious and demoralizing, tending to the destruction of Christianity.

The Calvinistic system, the most logical and complete doctrinal system of the Reformation, destroys all foundation of morality, by making God the author of sin. It is the theory of an immoral universe, worse than the chance medley universe of atheism.

Protestantism, by denying the indissolubility of marriage, has subverted one of the principal foundations of social morality.

The very first principles of Protestantism having become liberated and free to develop, are undermining the whole fabric of supernatural religion, whose downfall must cause Christian civilization to tumble into ruin.

The Note of Sanctity as an exclusive mark of the Catholic Church, shines out most brilliantly in the numerous and unbroken series of martyrs and saints, whose heroic sanctity is glorified and attested by a continuous succession of miracles.

There are, indeed, Christian heroes, not formal members of the Roman Church. Some have died, and others, no doubt, have been willing to die for their Christian profession. But they fall short of the highest Catholic ideal, they are scattered single stars and not a galaxy, and the miraculous element is wanting. The diffused sanctity of the multitude of good Christians is a kind of penumbra to the brilliant central light of the saints.

It remains true, at last, that it is not easy to bring the Note of Sanctity vividly before the minds of the majority. It is the unity

and catholicity of the Church which are most strikingly visible and apparent as her exclusive marks. Her apostolic descent is questioned by none of those who claim the same succession. Her sanctity is sufficiently obvious to destroy all prejudice against the evidence for her exclusive claim derived from her manifest and sole possession of the notes of unity and catholicity.

The history of Christendom, like the history of the world since the fall of Adam, is a sad one, brimful of the record of crimes and miseries. The great obstacle to the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of the heathen is the wickedness of Christians. All Christians are involved in the common disgrace of the Christian name and profession. The children of the Reformation, especially those of England and America, have been in the habit of posing as saints, striking an attitude as if they were inspired prophets, and uttering denunciations of the Catholic Church as a society of sinners.

A great change has, however, taken place among the better and more enlightened class of Protestants within the last half-century. A proof of this is furnished by the language lately used by a well-known English writer, Mr. R. W. Hutton, at the unveiling of the statue of Cardinal Newman in Kensington, London, last July:

“I think we may say that we Protestants have learned from him (Newman) a great lesson. This at least is true, that his long life of winning austerity, the tender glow of his piety and the fundamental steadiness of a nature so strangely sympathetic have rendered it absolutely impossible for any one who really knows his writings ever again to speak of the faith of his Church with anything like the stolid and almost brutal contempt so common amongst us sixty years ago.

“To some extent surely he has helped Roman Catholics to understand, perhaps to love, Protestants. To a very great extent he has helped Protestants to understand and love, not only the thinkers, but the popular mind of his own great Church.”—*(London Tablet, July 18.)*

These expressions are of great importance, not as denoting the sentiments of a single individual, but as the testimony of a competent witness to a general fact, otherwise quite patent.

This testimony shows the wonderful power which one saintly prelate has exercised, far more by his holiness than by his genius, to conciliate the respect of non-Catholics to the Catholic Church. And this proves what an influence the Church would gain if her Note of Sanctity could be made to shine out brilliantly by exhibiting the splendid virtues of her saints of all ages. It shows that it is the manifestation of her sanctity which must chiefly give convincing and persuasive force to the preaching of her apostles, and to the evidence that she is the One, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus Christ.

The great mass of the people to whom we preach will look for

this Note of Sanctity, not in the history of past ages and other countries, but in the living, present examples of the prelates, clergy and faithful who are living amongst them. The example of bad and careless Catholics is the greatest stumbling-block in their way. They act on the maxim: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

A great zeal has been awakened for missions to non-Catholics. The great desire and effort of the Holy Father are for the recall of his strayed sheep into the one fold. The same spirit has been awakened throughout the Church, especially in England and America. If our separated brethren respect the clergy as holy men, and recognize in the body of the faithful the religious and moral virtues inculcated by the Catholic religion, their ears and hearts will be open to the truth. Unity and harmony in the hierarchy, discipline, zeal and exemplary life in the clergy, piety and morality in the faithful, will make a more powerful and salutary impression than outward prosperity, splendor of worship, the logic and eloquence of the champions of the faith.

It is the Note of Sanctity which gives lustre and splendor to the other notes of the Church.

When the dark cloud which hides this splendor is scattered, the Church stands as a great fact, present before the mind as the sun is present to vision, exhibiting itself as true by its unity, universality and sanctity. The triumph of Christianity was achieved by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church. It has continued in the Apostolic Succession of the Supreme Pontiffs and the Episcopate, unchangeable until now, and it must continue until the end of the world. Future conquests of the Kingdom of Christ over the Kingdom of Satan can be achieved only by the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, through which were achieved all the conquests of the past.

AUGUSTINE F. HEWIT.

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