

Church, or a reformation aiming to amend and improve it, the movement of the sixteenth century is a failure. It is plainly rapidly reaching its logical conclusion,—individualism. It is equally plain to every thoughtful, discriminating mind that if the religion of Christ be the power by which men are to be brought into subjection to a law higher than that of mere self-will and individual opinion, it is through Christianity, not as Protestantism presents it, but through that of which the Catholic Church has been, according to the testimony of history, both secular and sacred, the witness, the teacher, the guardian and preserver, from the days of the Apostles till now.

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#### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ONE of the most common objections to the Catholic religion is that it tends to formalism; that, in fact, the whole system of worship and morals of the Church is a thoroughly perfunctory system, destitute of the life and power of godliness, and totally inadequate to the great purposes of "vital" religion. Indeed, so firmly has this "first principle of the Protestant tradition," as Cardinal Newman calls it, become fixed in the minds of our separated brethren, that, when they meet with a truly devout and earnest Catholic, they will unhesitatingly tell you that he is what he is in spite of his religion, and that he ought to be a Protestant; and when they discover a superior book of Catholic devotion or of practical religion, they will unblushingly use it as if it belonged by good rights to them, and claim it as a good Protestant book, which has undoubtedly been written by some one who was entirely out of place in the Catholic Church, and ought to be numbered in the ranks of her opponents. Indeed, the coolness with which some Protestant writers and publishers, more especially in England, are of late appropriating the lives of our saints and doctors, and holy men and women, is really refreshing. We admit that it is a cheering indication of the revulsion of religious thought and feeling that is going on in the minds of the non-Catholic community, that almost unexceptionable lives of such Catholics as St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis of Sales, Bossuet, Fénelon, Henri Perreyve, Père Besson, Père Lacordaire, Charles de Condren and Madame Louise de France, not to mention others of equal merit, should be published and circulated among them quite as a matter

of course. But it cannot but be amusing to Catholics to note how studiously all allusion is avoided to the fact that these admirable saints and heroes and heroines of charity were *Roman* Catholics, thoroughly loyal and devoted to their faith, and that they were what they were as the legitimate result of the teaching and influence of the Church to which they belonged, and in whose service they gloried to live and die.

Again, take the more common and familiar instance of that most beautiful and precious of mere human compositions, *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis,—that book so full of a divine wisdom and so fraught with comfort, consolation, and encouragement, especially to the weary, heavy-laden toilers in the world's great workshop; that book which George Eliot so beautifully describes in her *Mill on the Floss*, in which she makes her heroine, Maggie Tulliver, accidentally find an old copy of the *Imitation*. "A strange thrill of awe passed through Maggie, while she read as if she had been wakened in the night by a strain of solemn music, telling of beings whose souls had been astir, while hers was in a stupor. . . . Here was a secret of life that would enable her to renounce all other secrets; here was a sublime height to be reached without the help of outward things; here was insight, and strength, and conquest, to be won by means entirely within her own soul, where a Supreme Teacher was waiting to be heard. . . . Maggie was still panting for happiness, and was in ecstasy because she had found the key to it. She knew nothing of doctrines and systems, of mysticism or quietism; but this voice out of the far-off Middle Ages was the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience, and came to Maggie as an unquestioned message."

Alas! that this "voice from the far-off Middle Ages" should not come with equal force and sweetness as an "unquestioned message" to all the restless seekers after truth—the souls longing for rest and peace—as the loving voice of that Holy Mother, towards whom they have learned, from a false Protestant tradition, to indulge such strange, unfilial, and mistaken sentiments and feelings! Thank God! the book is in almost universal use among the more intelligent and devout portion of the non-Catholic community, not, as formerly, in expurgated editions, to accommodate it to Protestant taste and Protestant sentiment, but entire,—fourth book and all,—and without note or comment or gloss. Yet, it is a curious fact, worthy of notice here, that the apparently learned but narrow author of the *Life of Thomas a Kempis* recently published, Rev. Mr. Kettlewell, a clergyman of the Church of England, who labors through two heavy volumes to prove that Thomas a Kempis wrote the *Imitation*, carries the

idea through the whole of his extensive work that this truly devout and holy man, so thoroughly Catholic in all his teaching, his principles, and his spirit, was a member of a religious Order which, though in the Church, somehow was not of it; that the spirit of this Order was entirely foreign to the Church of which they were members, and that they, in fact, were harbingers of the great Protestant "Reformation," and really belonged to the sixteenth rather than the thirteenth century.

Now, how perfectly ridiculous and absurd, and contrary to fact, all this is will appear when we consider that the Catholic Church alone teaches the science of the Saints, and holds out the highest encouragement to saintliness by a system of instruction and discipline the most thorough and complete, and such as is found nowhere else in the world. In this respect it is a most perfect contrast to Protestantism. Indeed, Protestantism may most justly be characterized as a veritable go-as-you-please race for heaven, in which all ideas of rigid "training" have been abandoned; where every man is his own guide, and follows his own notions of what is right and best, and in which the "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" sentiment seems to be predominant. Whereas, the Catholic Church has the most perfect system of ethics—of spiritual training and direction—that the world has ever seen. These principles are embodied in what is called moral theology, and are the result of the reflection and experience of the wisest and best men—the greatest saints—that ever lived. Protestants know little or nothing about the grand science of moral theology which constitutes so important a part of ecclesiastical training in the Catholic Church. On the contrary, they despise it, and ridicule it; and this fact is a good indication of the inner life and spirit of Protestantism. What do they care for cases of conscience? Are they not their own guides? Why should they seek counsel and direction from man in things pertaining to God? They will not be in bondage to any man. The very word casuistry has come to be a term of reproach among them, and designing, bad men, of corrupt mind and heart, take advantage of professional treatises in casuistry to misrepresent and prejudice the minds of the people against the Church, charging it with pandering to the passions of men, and thus tending to corrupt society. What ought to be thought of the man who would deliberately go through the country lecturing, "to gentlemen only," on the more delicate subjects of *Physiology*, and professing to expose the "immoral tendency" of the practice of medicine, by quoting from treatises in which those subjects are discussed, and even exhibiting the illustrating cuts? We may lay it down as a settled, fixed principle, that there can be no true spirituality, no high degree of sanctity,

without spiritual direction. Man is naturally so weak, so partial, so blind to his own faults, so easily seduced to presumption, or tempted to despair, that, without proper guidance, he is sure to err in one or the other direction, and thus come short of the degree of perfection he might otherwise attain. Scruples are sure to arise in the mind of the conscientious Christian out of every relation and circumstance in life. Therefore it is necessary that there should be settled, fixed rules of conduct, so far as possible, for every case that may arise. The absence of spiritual direction is, undoubtedly, one reason why Protestantism has not produced, and never can produce a saint. We do not, of course, deny that there have been some very excellent people among Protestants, as the world goes. Indeed, there were and are excellent people among the pagans. Some of the more favored among them have practised the natural virtues to a very high degree, and it is a well-known fact that there are pagan communities which in point of public morals, are a standing reproach to our boasted Christian civilization. But it should be borne in mind that there is a very great difference between natural virtue and supernatural sanctity. To be convinced of this, one has only to read candidly the life of a Catholic saint. Protestants, as a general thing, have lost faith in the supernatural, and hence, they cannot appreciate the life of a Catholic saint. They not only have no sympathy with such lives, but they are actually scandalized by them. Their detachment from the world, their self-denial and self-abnegation, their severe penances and mortifications seem unnatural and even fanatical, while their heroic acts of charity, especially when they freely offer their lives for others, or suffer martyrdom for the faith with joy, are incomprehensible to them. They admire those heroic acts; they wonder at them, but they cannot rise to a comprehension of the supernatural plane in which alone they are possible. In their view, as man was made for society, the free indulgence of his appetites and passions, at least within reasonable limits, is not only a legitimate privilege, but an essential obligation. The man or woman who voluntarily eschews the pleasures of matrimony, and sacrifices the joys of social and domestic life, deliberately violates the laws of his constitution, and flies in the face of Providence.

As for the miracles and supernatural experiences of the saints,—well, please don't tax their credulity too far. "Legends" they call them, and by that term they mean not things to be read and accepted as true, but mythical stories unworthy of credence. The question, of course, is not whether all the legends of the saints are equally credible, but whether they are, as they claim, all equally mythical. We are not disposed to deny that there are counterfeit miracles, but we believe it is generally admitted that counterfeits

suppose the existence of the genuine. And in objecting to the genuineness of certain more modern miracles, on account of their apparent frivolous character, we must be careful that we do not unwittingly trench upon the ground of Sacred Scripture, and even of common-sense. For who can tell beforehand what God would and what He would not do under certain circumstances? Indeed, is it not expressly said in Holy Writ that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world that He may confound the wise, and weak things of the world that He may confound the mighty? And as for the miracles of the Bible, what could be more apparently frivolous and naturally incredible than that a man should, by a mere word, cause an axe to swim upon the water, that another man should be raised to life by touching the bones of a dead human body, or that multitudes should be healed of diseases by handkerchiefs and aprons carried from one to another, and even that the shadow of a man should be endowed with the supernatural power of healing all upon whom it should fall? Are these not veritable Catholic miracles, such as our friends object to? Cardinal Newman, in his *Apologia*, says, with his usual force, that Protestants, in arguing against modern miracles, "assume as a first principle that what God did once," by the hands of the apostles, "He is *not* likely to do again; while our first principle or presumption is, that what God did once He is likely to do again. They say, 'It cannot be supposed He will work *many* miracles;' we, 'It cannot be supposed He will work *few*.'" And we may add that it would be the most natural thing in the world, indeed the ordinary course of Providence would lead us to expect, that the later miracles would bear the same general characteristics as the elder. But now, if you have any doubt about this whole subject of extraordinary supernatural occurrences in the Church, read, as we said before, the life of some Catholic saint. Take, for instance, that charming *Life of St. Catharine of Siena*, so carefully and conscientiously written by that most interesting writer, Augusta Theodosia Drane. There you will see a feeble woman, by an extraordinary endowment of divine grace, made the most conspicuous figure of her age and country. She counsels Popes, reconciles princes, restores harmony between alienated states and cities. At great personal sacrifice she goes to Avignon, where the Popes had been in exile for more than fifty years, and in spite of the machinations of designing nobles, and the opposition and threats of worldly French ecclesiastics, induces Gregory XI. to return to Rome, the proper seat of St. Peter. She counsels him as if he had been her own son, and he listens to her as an obedient child listens to a revered and beloved mother. And, in fact, says the historian, "her whole life seemed one continued miracle; but

what the servants of God admired most in her was the perpetual, strict union of her soul with God, for, though obliged to converse with different persons on so many different affairs and transact business of the greatest moment, she was always occupied on God and absorbed in Him." She was often in ecstasy, and obtained innumerable extraordinary answers to prayer. And the candid reader will be struck with the manifest perfect authenticity of the original documents from which these facts were derived. They are not lost in a "dim" antiquity. St. Catharine had a numerous following, and the familiar correspondence, as well as the biographical sketches, of the various members of her community, are extant, and these letters, especially her own, amounting to several hundreds, let us into the very secrets of her daily life. Those extraordinary events are alluded to by the various writers in the most familiar, commonplace, matter-of-fact manner. We seem for the time to be living with them, and even to be participating in those deeply interesting and absorbing scenes. Especially do we contemplate with wonder and admiration the grand central figure around whom revolve innumerable satellites, attracted by her extraordinary sanctity, and ready and glad to do her bidding, while she, conscious of her own weakness, always deprecates their praise, and strives, by every means in her power, to avoid notoriety and humble herself as the servant of all. Recognizing fully the hand of God in all the extraordinary events of which she is made such a conspicuous actor, and afraid of the least shadow of an impulse to vainglory, she practices the most extraordinary voluntary humiliations, spends long hours in prayer, and is admitted to the most intimate communion of the beloved of her soul, where, like St. Paul, rapt to the third heaven, she is permitted to see and hear what it is not lawful for man to utter.

It is said, and with perfect truth, that the continued existence and progress of the Church, notwithstanding all the scandals from within, and all the opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil from without, is the greatest of all miracles. So, with equal truth may it be said that the lives of the great saints of the Church, the succession of whom never dies out, are a perpetual miracle, and, therefore, a standing and irrefragable proof of the supernatural character of the Church and of her divine mission. And this, no doubt, is one object and motive of their existence—to teach us by example, by actual, living, practical illustration, that this world is not all, that there is "more beyond," that God has spoken to man, and that He still speaks. He has not withdrawn into infinite space, and left us to work out our destiny in darkness and despair. He continues to communicate with His creatures through His Church. Through her means and instrumentalities He imparts to them

spiritual graces and supernatural strength. He admits them to the secret *penetralia* of His sweet presence and communion; He endows them with extraordinary courage, and, in certain special cases, even with the power of working miracles, in fulfilment of the promise of the Great Head of the Church, "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now, it is a curious fact, that notwithstanding the strong prejudice to which we have alluded in the first part of this article, our Protestant friends, who occasionally stray into our churches, are very much impressed with the solemnity of Catholic worship. It may only be at a Low Mass where there is no preaching, little or no music, and no prayers in the vernacular; only a distant echo of the softly murmuring voice of the officiating Priest, as, with absorbed recollection and in solemn stillness, he offers up the Holy Sacrifice—the Divine Victim—on the Altar; even so, entirely new and strange and unaccustomed as all the services are, and contrary to all their experience and preconceived notions as to what is proper for the worship of Almighty God, and the true service of religion, somehow there is a mysterious awe, an apparent, deeply-felt, all-pervading presence of holiness and devotion manifest in the countenances and deportment of the worshippers, that takes deep hold of their minds and hearts, so that, when they go away, they are ready to exclaim with the patriarch of old, "Surely, God is in this place, and I knew it not." And, notwithstanding the Puritan predilection in favor of what they call the simplicity of devotion, that taste that professes to prefer "the little wooden meeting-house, painted white, with green blinds," and the brief *ex tempore* prayers, though long enough sometimes in all conscience, without form, or ceremony, or external adornment, it is found that when the more candid and thoughtful of our non-Catholic friends enter one of our magnificent churches, especially our grand cathedrals, and participate in the splendid ceremonial accompanying the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, or it may be at Vespers, or only a grand procession, as on *Corpus Christi*, or a festival in honor of some great saint of the Calendar, their faith, or rather their prejudices, become greatly shaken. They cannot help feeling and acknowledging the superior power of accessories, so beautiful, so grand, and so admirably adapted to impress the imagination, to affect the heart, and, in a word, to influence the whole man with the most profound and elevated feelings of devotion. The recent testimony of the distinguished conservative Unitarian minister of Boston, Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., is but the ex-

pression of the feeling of thousands of visitors to our churches, more especially of travellers abroad entering our grand old Cathedrals. "How imposing are these Catholic Churches! What beauty and majesty in their vast proportions and lovely details! One cannot doubt that this atmosphere of worship suits the mood and calms the excitement of great multitudes. As we enter these solemn aisles, a sense of religion enters the soul. We drop our cares, our desires, and for a few moments feel the presence of eternity. Everything looks upward, everything turns to God. . . . While we feel this influence, we forget papal infallibility, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the sacraments, and think of nothing in dispute. The Catholic Church represents the element of worship latent in every soul, and represents and serves it so well that it retains its hold on millions."

As Mr. Clarke is a Unitarian minister, we could not, of course, expect him to entertain, for a moment, the suspicion that perhaps, after all, this old Catholic Church is the true home of the soul, and that her teaching and her discipline, as well as her devotional system, are equally adapted to all. Or, if the suspicion did enter his mind, as we cannot deny, would be most natural, and as, in fact, we fear it too often does enter the minds of unwilling observers, we could hardly expect him to give any intimation of it. It was certainly no small concession on his part to acknowledge so frankly the profound religious impression and the admirably soothing and elevating influence of the devotional system of the Church; and, we must acknowledge, it was with a still greater stretch of liberality that he declared that "when the deeper and larger religion comes it must retain all that is good in this Church." But we confess it is with profound melancholy that we reflect, not only upon the ignorance of such otherwise intelligent men as Mr. Clarke, as to the depth and largeness of the Catholic Church, but also upon that fatuitous blindness that leads them to resist the entrance of light when it shines upon them like the light of the sun in the heavens. Mr. Clarke prays, with apparent sincerity, that the day of the "deeper and larger religion," of which he dreams, "may dawn soon." We cannot but pray with all our hearts that he, and all who think and feel with him, may, in God's good time, be endowed with that heavenly gift of faith which shall open up to them the vision of the "King's daughter who is all glorious within, whose clothing is of wrought gold," and under the folds of whose garments alone they can find that rest and peace, and that high spiritual communion for which they so ardently seek and sigh.

We cannot close without noticing an objection which is most intimately associated with the prejudice against the Church on

account of its supposed tendency to formalism, which we are endeavoring to combat. We refer to the impression, so common among Protestants, that devotion to the saints, and especially devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, has a tendency to deaden true devotion in the hearts of Catholics by drawing them away from the great central source of light and grace, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now it is a remarkable fact that, at the very moment that this objection is made, Protestants almost universally are losing faith in Jesus Christ as the true Son of God and in the efficacy of His atonement, and consequently devotion to Him; while, on the other hand, the Catholic Church is making the most strenuous efforts to revive and increase devotion to Jesus as our only and all-sufficient Saviour, "the chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely." We refer particularly to that most striking development of modern times, the spread of the "Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus," which was established for the express purpose of reviving in the hearts of Catholics a more ardent love and devotion to Jesus. Why devotion to the Sacred *Heart* of Jesus? Because the heart is the seat of the affections, and the originators of the devotion desired to draw out the hearts and affections of the people by an irresistible appeal from the loving Heart of Jesus. It was designed on purpose to impress upon an age when the love of many had waxed cold, what Our Lord Himself so emphatically taught, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." That will is, that we should love His son Jesus Christ, and hence this devotion is particularly designed to interest the heart and engage the affections. Let any of our non-Catholic friends take up the devotions to the Sacred Heart which so greatly abound in the Church, and read them carefully, and he will be surprised to see how completely they disprove all his preconceived notions about the obscurantism of the Church in reference to her supreme devotion to Jesus the Saviour. He will be surprised at the wealth and variety of the devotions, as if pious ingenuity had been on the stretch to invent the most attractive forms, and those most calculated to appeal to the heart and captivate the affections. And when he is told that there is no more popular devotion in the church at the present time; that it has spread throughout the whole world; that Confraternities have been established in almost every known nation on the face of the earth, he will, perhaps, be prepared to believe that devotion to the saints has not quite extinguished devotion to Jesus in the hearts of the Catholic people.

And why should it? Why should devotion to Mary lessen devotion to Jesus? Why should the love of the mother weaken

our attachment to her divine Son? Devotion to Mary is simply the worship of Jesus in the arms of His blessed mother. We love her, indeed, for her own sake, because we believe her to be the fairest of the daughters of men,—nay, immaculate and transcendently beautiful and lovely beyond the power of conception. But we love and reverence her chiefly because she is the mother of Jesus,—the mother of God. Jesus took His body from her immaculate flesh; He is bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh; and we reverence her as the greatest and the purest and the holiest of human beings. But we love her in Jesus and for Jesus, and we love Him in her. In the mind of the devout Catholic the two are inseparably associated by the most tender and endearing ties, and there is not the slightest danger of mistaking the relative position of each. Instead of repressing devotion to Jesus, the love of Mary adds a thousand charms to that devotion. And hence it has always been true in the history of the Church that the greatest saints have been the most devoted to Mary, and that devotion to Mary may be taken as a very good indication of the spiritual condition—the zeal and fervor of Christians—in any part of the Church. Oh! it is sad to think how much our separated brethren lose by their groundless prejudices against devotion to the blessed mother of God, though it is a cheering sign that in the English Church, at least, they have begun to discover the great mistake that was made by their ancestors in discarding this beautiful, attractive, and edifying devotion. The advanced Ritualists have actually established “Confraternities of the Children of St. Mary,” and they have issued a manual of devotion, taken principally from our own Catholic manuals. They recommend the saying of the Angelus thrice daily, after the Franciscan form; the Rosary; the Litany of Loretto (with indulgences of Popes Sixtus V. and Boniface XIII.); the *Salve Regina* and the *Sub tuum præsidium*, as well as various other Catholic prayers “in honor of the immaculate heart of Mary.” Of the consistency and even honesty of introducing such a devotion into the Protestant English Establishment we are not called upon now to speak. But it is certainly a very remarkable indication of the progress of religious thought, and the revulsion from the old Protestant tradition, which seems to be going on everywhere and all around us. These Ritualists are no doubt excellent people. They are said to embrace the most earnest and zealous portion of the English Church. They have, of course, discovered that there is absolutely no incompatibility between devotion to Mary and devotion to Jesus. And we cannot but express the hope that the day is not far distant when this grand discovery will be made by all who are so unhappy as to be outside the true fold, and that they will not be satisfied with vain efforts

to establish the devotion in societies which for the last three hundred years have denounced and protested against it, but be led to cast in their lot with those who have always cherished it, as well as all else that is beautiful and lovely and of good report,—that grand old Church, which is the true Israel of God, and to which “belong the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the service of God and the promises, of whom Christ Jesus is the Head,—God over all, blessed forevermore. Amen!”

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### BOOK NOTICES.

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THE REFORMATION. By *George P. Fisher, D.D.*, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale College. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1883.

The Protestant public, for which this book is intended, cares very little what the Reformation was or was not. The “right of Private Judgment” —which Professor Fisher declares was but “another side” of the doctrine of the “Reformers,” that “Christ spoke in the Scriptures,” and that “the truth He uttered was one of which they (the Reformers) had an immediate spiritual recognition”—has now been so far and so logically carried out by Protestants that, with a few exceptions, they care as little about what the “Reformers” said and wrote as they do about the doctrines of the Church Fathers. They regard the Reformers and worship them simply as the representatives of the principle of “free-thought,” and beyond that they have little concern either as to their opinions, their motives, their real character, or their actions. This same indifference, too, exists as to the real causes, objects, and nature of the so-called “Reformation.” Non-Catholics commonly accept, without investigation or reflection, the Protestant traditional statement that it was a movement which has resulted in the purification and elevation of society, the promotion of civil liberty and of intellectual progress, the general diffusion of knowledge and the advancement of civilization, etc. Accepting this as an historical fact, they are unwilling or intellectually incompetent to go behind it and investigate whether it is supported by proof or not.

For these reasons we think that Professor Fisher's work, when first issued from the press a few years ago, received but little attention, except from persons who were in search of a convenient text-book for non-Catholic academies and colleges, or a work of reference for Protestant ministers. But now it is likely to secure more general attention from its connection with subjects which have been again brought into discussion through the recent celebration, by Protestants and Rationalists, of the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth, followed by a more restricted and less prominent celebration of the same anniversary of the birth of Ulric Zuingli.