

THE IRISH
ECCLESIASTICAL RECORD

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UNDER EPISCOPAL SANCTION.

THIRD SERIES.

VOLUME I.—1880.

“ Ut Christiani ita et Romani sitis.”

“ As you are children of Christ, so be you children of Rome.”

Eæ Didis 8. Patricii, Book of Armagh, fol. 9.

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shrines, sanctuaries. &c., dedicated to her honor both in England and Ireland. This second part is reprinted from the *Mouth ami C thobe*

The whole work is the fruit of much patient and denaual research. "In 1852," the author writes in his preface. "I formed the idea of writing a book of popular devotion to our Lady; . . . in the origin d design it had been intended that England should rciwi special but not exclusive attention, and for many yeais l coninipil to collect materials to illustrate the pojnilar devotion of all l 'hni-iMH m. tiens, ft was only in 1870, at the suggestion of t he learned B<dlandist. Father Viotor de Buck, whose loss we so much deplore, that l demined to set apart for a separate volume my notes on England and English sanctuaries, and from him I accepted the title as it nmr stands."

To Irish readers the chapter on "Our Blessed Eadye's Litanies" (p. l(8. part i.) will be specially interesting. "But the *Irish h.-m* a rely ancient Litany of our Blessed *Ladye, which is preserved in (lie Li-abhar-AIor, now deposited in the Boyal Irish Academy. I'miEw O'Ctriry* believes this Litany to be as old at least as the middle of the eighth centry. No earlier Litany of our Ladye seems to be known; therefore to the Island of Saints is due the glory of having composed the *lly7 Litany of their Immaculate Queen.*" Again, the account given ; (pp. B06-12) of the statues and images of the Blessed Virgin at Dame's Gate, and at St. Marye's Abbey, Dublin, at Dmgluda, Kiicorbain, Limerick, Aliickrnss (formerly Irrelagh). Navan. and Triai, J will serve to show that in ancient as well as in modern t'mes tender and childlike devotion to the Mother of God was a special F: dure of the piety of the Irish people. The most celebrated of the Irisk im t a. was the image of our Ladye of Trim. The author tolls ns that it slrr. ■ tiirfate of the image of our Ladye of VValsingham. This serves to remind ns of the exhaustive account—including the memorable visit of Erasmus in May, 1511—of this most celebrated of the English sanctuaries, which we lind given with many curious particulars in the second part (pp. ET-TO). But where all is so entertaining and so instructive, it is scarcely fair to direct special attention to particular events or to particular passages. AVe strongly recommend the *Ihetu* Mariana Britannica* as a book full both of instruction and of devotion.

*The Miracle of the 1Gth September, 1877, at Lourde**. Translated from the French of M. Henri Lasserre. By A Laue (Dublin: M. IL Gill & Son. 1880.)

Were it not for M. Lasserre's name, this title, page would not prepare us to find here so lively and entertaining a little work. But Henri Lasserre is now widely known, even outside France, as one of the most vigorous and interesting of French writers. Of late years lie seems to have devoted his literary talents to the *service of (Jur* Lady of Lourdes, laying on her altar many offerings, from his niagnificent illustrated folio on the history of the devotion', to miniature tomes like the present which chronicles one of the recent miracles. The circumstances preceding and attending it are very striking, and are charmingly narrated, with a grace of style of which very little is lost in the process of translation. The account of the late. Curé of Lourdes, M. Feyramale, is extremely edifying.

THE IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL RECORD.

APRIL, 1880.

LATITUDINARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

L

“I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament, in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's construction of its letter here or there.”—*Extract from the Will of Charles Dickens, dated Mail M2th, 1869.*

AF the many dangers which have assailed the Church of V Christ during the long centuries of her existence, not one, perhaps, has been more insidious in its action, or more fruitful of disastrous consequences, than the pet heresy of our own times, which, for want of a more expressive name, I must term *Latitudinarian Christianity*. For, the great heresies of the past, mostly, stood out in their true colours, so that they might be easily identified, and could not mislead any, save such as deliberately embraced them; while, on the other hand, this darling error of the nineteenth century¹ assumes a false character, robes itself as an angel of light, and, under the alluring mask of universal charity and benevolence, deceives even the very best natures, gradually, but most effectively leading them to absolute indifference towards all positive forms of religious belief.

The main doctrine of this system is fairly set forth in the extract from the Will of Charles Dickens, which heads this paper, and its spirit breathes in every page written by

¹ By this we do not mean to assert that the system of which we write has sprang up, for the first time, within the present century; we merely wish to draw attention to the fact that the nineteenth century has adopted it in a very special manner, and propagated it to an extent previously unknown.

that most charming and popular author, whose works are otherwise, so justly entitled to the highest commendation. Its adherents indignantly repudiate the suspicious and ambiguous indifference in the widest sense of that, and insist on the necessity of professing some positive religious belief. Nor will they even place all such on a footing of absolute equality. They will not contend that it is a matter of indifference whether one follow Confucius, or Christ. They will not, as was the case with the pro-Turkish organs of the English Press some twenty years ago, speak affectionately of the impure creed of Mahomet as "a sublime form of Enitariism." They will not accord the respect of all men. No: the professors of Latitudinarian Christianity will have none of this. They maintain that to ensure salvation it is necessary to be a Christian: but they interpret to mean nothing more than assent to "general belief in Christ, united to the practice of those moral precepts of the New Testament which affect the relations of man towards society—foremost among these being reckoned the practice of universal benevolence. To all who hold fast by these two points, they would allow the most perfect freedom in accepting or rejecting particular tenets or articles of faith, provided always that such tenets be not pushed so far as to exclude from the terms of salvation Christians of whatsoever denomination, who profess a general belief in the Redemption. "For," say they, "since Charity is the vivifying principle of Christianity, it is impossible to regard as true Christians those who refuse to hold communion with such as differ from them merely in some particular points of belief."

It does not require very deep penetration to see that this system, if carried to its full logical development, must eventually lead to utter infidelity; and, indeed, so thin is the partition which divides them, that we may, without the least unfairness, put into the mouth of a Latitudinarian Christian the doctrine laid down in a recent number of a leading English periodical, by a writer of the Positivist school—"The progress of theology has not consisted in the intellectual discovery of objective theological truth; but, so to speak, in the emotional discovery of subjective moral truth, in the new awakening, age by age, of fresh individual response to the laws of social fellowship?"

That such a system should commend itself to Protestants

¹ See *The Nineteenth Century*, December, 1879, p. 1018.

is nowise surprising, since it is but the natural growth of their doctrine of Private Judgment; but that any Catholics can be found so ignorant, or so heedless of the teachings of their faith, as to show it even the poor courtesy of toleration, seems almost to surpass belief. Yet, unfortunately, the subtle poison has become so widely diffused, that we not unfrequently find the formulae of this creed quoted with approval even by many Catholics. "I believe," says one, "all religions are, equally good in the sight of God, so long as a man lives well."—"I respect all religions alike," is the senseless prattle of another, who fancies he but gives expression to a fine, liberal sentiment, which cannot lead to win respect for himself. These formulae are to be met with every day in the pages of our current literature, in the utterances of our public men, and in the broad-sheets of the penny Press which brings them under the notice of the million. They penetrate even into the sanctuary of our Catholic homes, and find harmonious expression in the drawing-room, where sympathy and applause greet the maudlin sentiment of a well-known melody of Moore, in which we are invited to—

leave points of belief
To simpleton sages and reasoning fools.

We may be told, indeed, that, in the case of Catholics at least, this is but mere *cant*—nothing more than a slight formal homage paid to the fashionable opinions of the hour. Even though it were nothing more than this, it would still be a sufficiently alarming evil; but, unfortunately, it is one of the common results of *cant* that, by dint of repetition, it at length acquires a real and powerful influence over the mind. Freed at an early age upon the attention of many Catholics who affect the reputation of being considered liberal and large-minded, the doctrine of Latitudinarian Christianity finds its practical development in their lives. The laws of the Church regarding fast and abstinence are gradually relaxing their hold on very many belonging to the middle and upper classes. Far from abhorring mixed marriages, not a few have come to regard them with feelings little short of approval, and somehow consider them *respectable*. A strictly Catholic education is supposed by many to make youths bigoted, narrow-minded, and illiberal; and, in consequence, mixed, or purely secular schools are freely patronized. In a word, in a hundred other points we miss the healthy tone of Catholic feeling,

and the sturdy expression of Catholic views which were honourably distinguished our fathers. These are evils which it is impossible to ignore, and the decided tendency of our times is to develop rather than to check their growth.

My object in the present paper is to unmask this idol of the modern world, which Protestants devoutly worship, and to which many weak-minded or indifferent Catholics owe, at the least, the homage of external respect. To effect this, I propose to show that the system of Latitudinarian Christianity is utterly opposed (a) to the teaching of Scripture, and (b) of the early Christian Fathers, as well as (c) to the dictates of common sense. In a future number I shall expose the fallacy of the pleas which its supporters put forward in its defence, and shall glance at the consequences which must follow in the moral order from the diffusion of the pernicious principles of Latitudinarian Christianity.

1. That our Divine Redeemer established *some* church—*some* living, organised body to which He committed the entire deposit of His doctrine, that the same might continue to be taught to men throughout all ages and nations, is a truth which will be disputed by no one who claims the title of Christian. The entire question, then, narrows itself to this: Did Christ leave it optional with men to adopt some and reject some other of His doctrines, as the Latitudinarians pretend? The pages of the New Testament, which our adversaries profess to revere, shall determine this question in a manner which can leave no room for doubt that it is imperative on men, under pain of exclusion from the terms of salvation, to accept not *some* merely, but *all* the doctrines which Christ has confided to His Church.

In the last chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark, we read that the Redeemer, after His Resurrection, appeared to His Apostles, and gave them this injunction: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Belief in the Gospel of Christ, then, is necessary for salvation: nor is the extent or manner of this belief to be regulated by the private judgment of each individual, but it must be in strict conformity with the teaching of the Apostles. So that the Gospel is to be believed as expounded by the divinely commissioned teachers of the Christian flock, and not otherwise.

Conformably with this doctrine, we find the Apostles inveighing in the strongest terms against the early heretics, who by their novel doctrines disturbed the peace of the yet

infant Church; though, be it remarked, if the hypothesis of the Latitudinarians—that every one is free to shape his own faith—were true, *no one could with reason, or be branded as a heretic.* St. Peter calls heretics "blasphemous teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition: and deny the Lord who bought them: bringing upon themselves sudden destruction!" St. Jude denounces them as "wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever." St. John in many places calls them *antichrists* and *seducers* and, therefore, cautioning his disciples against them, he says, "Look to yourselves that you lose not the things which you have wrought, but that you may receive a full reward. Whoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any man come to you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him God speed you; for he that saith unto him God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works." How widely does the doctrine of the Apostle of Patmos differ from that of the Latitudinarians, who would "respect all religions," and make them "equal in the sight of God!"

St. Paul is equally explicit on this point. He does not hesitate to class heresy with murder and adultery (Galat. v. 20, 21). In his Epistle to the Romans he thus solemnly addresses them: "now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrines which you have learnt, and to avoid them." Furthermore, writing to the Galatians, he makes this most emphatic general pronouncement, "Though an angel from Heaven preach a Gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Nor did the great apostle confine such denunciations to those only who erred on many points of doctrine: he regarded as a heretic whosoever erred even on a single point. Thus (1 Cor. xv.) he inveighs against Cerinthus, who merely denied the resurrection of the body. And, again, he thus writes to Timothy of some who held erroneous opinions on the same subject: "Their speech spreadeth like a canker; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus: who have erred from the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already, and have

12 Peter, ii. 1.

13 Jude, i. 13.

14 1 John, ii. 18, 19, et alibi.

15 2 John, 7.

16 2 John, 8-11.

17 Romans, xvi. 17.

18 Gal. i. 8.

subverted the faith of some.¹ Our adversaries would, no doubt, think the question of circumcision of trifling importance, on which each might reasonably be left to follow his own views; yet this is how St. Paul writes to the Galatians: "Behold, I Paul tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (Galat. v, 2.) Clearly, the Apostle of the Gentiles did not share the belief of the Latitudinarians, who pretend that a general faith in Christ is sufficient to ensure salvation in the New Law, no matter how widely men may differ on other points of doctrine.

II. But let us, furthermore, glance at the teaching of the early Christian Church upon this question. Let us see how those who were instructed by the Apostles themselves, and by their immediate successors, understood the extent of the belief required from a professing Christian, to include him within the terms of salvation. We can have no surer guides, for, as Irenaeus observes, if the Apostles had not left us the Scriptures, should we not follow the order of tradition which they handed down to those who succeeded them in the government of their churches;² and as St. Augustine directs, we should seek to discover what Christ has taught, in a special manner from those by whose authority we have been moved to believe that he has taught at all.³

Ignatius the Martyr, Polycarp, and Justin, are venerable names, which carry us back to the dawn of Christianity. Let us see how they regarded the Latitudinarian system, in which, as has been already observed, no one can be justly branded as a heretic, so long as he professes a general belief in Christ, all other dogmas being left open to acceptance or rejection, according to the dictates of each one's private judgment.

Now, St. Ignatius the Martyr, who flourished in the first century, excludes from the terms of salvation not only heretics, but even schismatics, for he writes in one of his epistles, "Do not err my brethren; if any one follows a schismatic, he does not inherit the Kingdom of God present and

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.

² "Quibus autem si neque apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis, nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt illis, quibus committebant ecclesias?" (Contra haeres., lib. iii., cap. iv., n. 1.)

³ "Cui non apud eos potissimum diligentissime requiram, quid Christus praeceperit, quorum auctoritate commotus Christum aliquid praecepisse jam credidi." (De Utilitate Credendi, cap. xiv.)

¹ Ep. ad Philadelph., cap. iii.

in another letter, speaking of the heretics of his time, he does not hesitate to call them, "wūd be-rt m human form" (θηρία ανθρωπόμορφα).¹

Of the venerable Polycarp, Eusebius relates that so great was his horror of heretics, that whenever he came to hear anyone advancing a doctrine opposed to the teaching of the Church, he used to stop his ears, and fly from the spot exclaiming, "Good God upon what tunes hast thou permitted me to fall, that I should hear such things. It would surely have been a strange course of action in the hypothesis of the Latitudinarians.

St. Justin, after mentioning by name several heretical sects which were in existence in his times, calls them members *atheists, false Christs and false Apostles*; he compares them to the false prophets among the Jews, and says that their teachings were inspired by the Devil. And yet we know that all those sects, of which he speaks thus harshly, not only held a general belief in Christ and the Redemption, but did not err altogether on more than one or two points of Catholic faith.

It would be easy to multiply such quotations from the works of the early Fathers, but to do so would be not only wearisome but entirely superfluous.⁴ For, if the system of the Latitudinarians were true, the entire history of the early church would become an inexplicable riddle. It would be impossible to assign a sufficient reason why so many councils were assembled to define the articles of belief, why so many prolonged discussions were held even on single words which were considered tests of orthodoxy, why so many anathemas were hurled against those who held opinions condemned by the church, if it were lawful for each one who professed a *general belief in Christ*, to accept or repudiate other *particular tenets*, under the guidance of his own individual judgment. Before concluding this portion of my paper, however, I shall trouble the reader with yet three extracts, which must carry with them particular weight in this controversy—the first two, inasmuch as they are from the pens of men whom Protestants do especially delight to honour; the last, because it is so singularly

¹ Ep. ad Smyrn., cap. iv.

² Euseb., lib. v., cap. 20.

³ Ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀκαθάρτου πνεύματος διαβόλου ἐμβαλλόμενα ἰσχυροῦς αἰσῶν ἐδίδασκαν, καὶ διδάσκουσα μέχρι νῦν. (Dial. cum Tryph. η. 82.)

⁴ For more copious extracts from the Fathers on this subject, the reader may consult Nicole "Unité de l'Eglise," liv. i., ch. vii.

apposite that it would seem to have been expressly directed against the Latitudinarian system.

In his work on the Unity of the Church, St. Cyprian had:— us these two remarkable sentences:—"whosoever leaving the church cleaves to an adulteress, *cut off from the promise of Christ*:" and elsewhere, "if it were possible for any one to escape that was not in the ark of Noah, it shall likewise be possible for him to escape who is not in the church."

Writing to Donatus, St. Augustine does not hesitate to employ the following most emphatic language:—"Being ent

shouldst be burnt alive for confessing the lullin' of Christ. We cannot conceive stronger language than this: and St. Donatus was, like Augustine, not only a Christian, but a bishop, believing equally with him every dogma of the Christian Faith, and erring only in that he had separated himself from the Communion of the Faithful.

The last authority whom I shall quote is St. Fulgentius, who expressly states that belief in Christ, even though united to benevolence in the highest degree, and witnessed even by martyrdom, will not avail to salvation without communion with the church. "Neither Baptism," he writes, "nor liberal alms, nor death itself for the profession of Christ can avail a man anything!" order to salvation, if he does not hold the unity of the Catholic Church."²

III. Passing from the inspired writings and the Fathers of the Church, let us next try the doctrine of Latitudinarian Christianity at the bar of common sense.

If we glance at the Professions of Faith put forward by the countless sects which arrogate to themselves the title of Christian, we cannot fail to observe that they enunciate contradictory doctrines. Now, since truth is one in its very essence, it is an undisputed and indisputable principle that contradictory statements cannot equally be true. When, therefore, the Latitudinarian asserts that "all religions are regarded with equal favour by God," he asserts, in other terms, that truth and falsehood are equally acceptable with the Most High—a blasphemy from which every Christian must shrink with horror. We cannot, then, be at liberty to embrace indifferently any one of these opposite religions, but are bound, if in doubt, to employ every means in our power to distinguish the true from the false.

¹ Ep. 204 ad Donat.

² Petrum Diaconum, cap. 3ft.

Again, we would ask the Latitudinarians by what right do they enforce the necessity of belief in the Divinity of Christ and the Redemption, while leaving every one free to think as he pleases on other points of doctrine? Surely the New Testament affords no warrant for this arbitrary distinction. The clearest pronouncement contained in those inspired pages on the Divinity of Christ, is, perhaps, the passage (John x. 30) where He Himself says, "and the Father are one." But the Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist is propounded in equally clear, and, all attendant and antecedent circumstances considered, in perhaps clearer terms, when the same Christ said at the last Supper, "This is my Body." If it be free, then, to a Protestant to reject Transubstantiation, why may not a Unitarian, equally exercising his right of private judgment, reject the doctrine of the Divinity of our Lord? It is evident, therefore, that the principle of Latitudinarianism, if pushed to its logical development, must destroy all religion, a result which was foreseen many ages ago by Vincent of Lerins.

Finally, the principles of the Latitudinarians are directly at variance even with the very instincts of humanity. "I respect all religions" says the Latitudinarian. Do we find this principle of toleration extended to contradictory teachings anywhere else in the world outside the domain of religion? Does Mr. Gladstone, for example, respect the political views of Lord Beaconsfield, equally with his own? Do the advocates of Free Trade respect the doctrines of the Protectionists? Who ever found a distinguished mathematician, or philosopher respecting an opinion of the falsehood of which he was convinced? The human mind instinctively recoils from such respect; for it refuses to dethrone itself, by proclaiming the equality of falsehood with truth. And why, we ask, will men be less true to the instincts of their nature when religion—the most vital of all questions—is concerned? By all means let us respect men who conscientiously disagree with us in matters of belief; but, while doing this, it would be a forfeiture of our claim to rank as

"Abdicata qualibet parte Catholicæ dogmatis, alia quoque, atque item alia, ac deinceps alia atque alia, jam quasi ex mme et licito abdicantur. Porro autem singulatim partibus repudiatis, quid aliud ad extremum sequetur, nisi ut totum pariter repudietur?" (Vincent Urinensis commonitor. adv. hæreses, cap. xxi). The attempt recently made in the Protestant Synod in Dublin, to remove from the liturgy of the *soi disant* "Church of Ireland" the *Athanasian Creed*, which contains the very groundwork of Christianity, afford an interesting and significant commentary on the foregoing passage.

rational beings, were we, *through wine feeling* of romantic sentimentalism, to declare that we respected a man, which we *know to be false*.

As opposed to the Latitudinarian system, the doctrine of the Catholic Church is *simplicity itself*, and is in perfect accordance with the teaching of Holy Writ and tradition as well as with the dictates of reason. It is briefly this—the entire doctrine of Christ as proposed by the Council of Trent—accepted by every Christian under pain of exclusion from the terms of salvation: and, consequently, that for those who voluntarily die outside the true church salvation is impossible.

In the next number of *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, I propose to reply to the arguments with which the Latitudinarians attempt to refute this doctrine. I shall, also, briefly review the consequences which follow in the moral order from the principles of Latitudinarian Christianity.

W. H.

NOW AND THEN.

A REVERIE IN A RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

AND JOBSON," I say—at the end of some remarks which do not concern the reader—"I am going to the North to-morrow."

"Going by an early train?" questions Jobson, with a shade of anxiety in his voice, and an accent upon the "early;" for he is one of those confidential servants at an old-fashioned hotel who take a fatherly interest in all the regular frequenters, and so he was naturally anxious about me.

"Oh no," I reply, "ten o'clock will be quite early enough in September."

"You are quite right, sir," says Jobson, with a gentle, relieving sigh, "the day is not properly aired earlier. But now-a-days people travel so early and so late! Times are not what they used to be."

O Jobson, you have much to answer for; you are putting a thought into my mind which will spread itself over several pages; and are supplying me with a text for a lay sermon. But like Sir Isaac Newton's dog, Diamond,

of which we used to read in good books, Jobson "know not the mischief he had done," so he goes on, "I hope you will not travel all night."

I console him with the assurance that I intend to sleep at Edinburgh, where I suppose I shall be able to get a bed.

"Perhaps you may," says he, with a doubtful shake of the head, "a sort of a bed, which may not be damp."

"Why, Jobson, there are large railway hotels everywhere now."

"Yes, of course," adds the incorrigible old grumbler, "railway hotels, indeed, with hundreds of beds, they say, but nothing like what you are accustomed to; and who cares or knows anything about you in such places, what you want, and how you like it?"

"Good night, Jobson," I exclaim, seizing my candlestick, and beginning to fear lest I may "fall in resolution altogether, stop in London, and so remain under the comfortable but somewhat tyrannical sway of the faithful old waiter."

The next morning, before eleven, I find myself at the Great Northern station, my luggage taken possession of by a railway porter, who has a quiet resolution about him, that places me at once under his control; I am sent to secure my ticket, and there is my temporary ruler standing with the door of the carriage open, and my wrappers manoeuvred about the seats, to keep out as many fellow-travellers as possible, and earn a fitting gratuity for the old soldier. A few morning papers are purchased to protect me in my coming state, of siege, to be thrown up against attacks of enemies who may occupy adjacent positions; and with only two fellow-travellers I start for the North.

I bury myself in one of my papers, and glance over it at my companions. The man opposite has his paper also, and he is examining it through a pair of spectacles which makes his face look supernaturally sharp and eager. The *Mark Lane Express*, I think it is, and he is evidently working at it with no light or frivolous mind. He catches my eye for a moment, and down I go behind the *Times*. Up again I come, and he is scowling at some market or quotation or something of that kind, which I invariably pass over in newspapers, and at the use of which I had hitherto wondered, but now I see for whom they are intended; evidently my opponent is a commercial gentleman, not what is commonly called a bagman, but a

imagine. We do not think the famous modern has the advantage here. A price must be paid for the great working of a catastrophe of the kind we speak of. and the supposition of Magic is perhaps the cheapest price. At all events the catastrophe of Dermot's death is one of the highest order; and on the whole we do not hesitate to say that the Irish romance is in our opinion a far finer work than the tragedy of Ernani, is, in a word, a work to be numbered among the grandest compositions of all time.

J. J. O'C.

LATITUDINARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

II.

HAVING proved in the last number of the RECORD that the system of Latitudinarian Christianity is opposed to the teaching of Scripture and tradition, as well as to the dictates of common sense, I stated the Catholic belief on the question at issue in the following terms:—"That the entire doctrine of Christ as proposed by this church must be accepted by every Christian under pain of exclusion from the terms of salvation: and, consequently, that for those who *voluntarily* die outside the true church *salvation is impossible.*" In the present paper I propose to reply to the most popular objections ordinarily urged against this teaching, and shall conclude by directing attention to the consequences which must inevitably follow in the moral order from the principles of the Latitudinarian system.

(a) "The Catholic doctrine of exclusive salvation" (say the Latitudinarians), "is extremely intolerant; yet Catholics repudiate as a foul calumny the charge of intolerance, which is sometimes, and, as it would appear, not unreasonably, alleged against them."

This is, perhaps, the most popular of the many objections put forward against the Catholic teaching, and it is one well calculated to influence generous, but weak-minded and ill-instructed persons, because, unfortunately, the word "intolerance" is linked with some abuses committed in other days by the Civil Power in the name of religion. However, if we study the meaning of the term itself, apart from some lamentable associations connected with it, we

shall find that the prejudices which have arisen on this score against the Catholic doctrine are utterly groundless.

To understand this question fully, we must distinguish three kinds of intolerance—ecclesiastical, civil, and theological. The two first proceed from the will, and affect men's persons; the last is an act of the intellect, and alone is concerned with man's belief.

By *ecclesiastical intolerance* is meant the infliction of certain spiritual penalties, which the church imposes on those who obstinately reject any article of her faith, or violate the ordinances laid down for the guidance of her children. These punishments are designed either to correct the erring, or to remove from the Christian fold the danger of contamination, which might arise from the presence of an unworthy member. Of this kind, for instance, is excommunication, by which the church cuts off such unworthy members from the body of the faithful. That she possesses this power, and is bound in certain cases to exercise it, is conclusively proved from many passages of the New Testament; but even were there no guarantee for it in the inspired pages, yet would it belong to her in virtue of the natural law. For the Church, even, regarded from a mere human standpoint, is a *society of men*, banded together, like every other society, for a common end, and she is, therefore, authorised by *natural law* to admit into her fold those whom she may judge worthy, and to expel such as may violate any of the conditions of the social contract of membership.³

Civil intolerance consists in the *temporal penalties* inflicted on heretics, to prevent them from poisoning others with their pernicious doctrines. In regard to this matter the church has been grossly calumniated by men who have perverted history, confounding her actions with the proceedings of the Civil Powers. It would not be a difficult

³In confirmation of the statement that this power belongs to every society in virtue of the natural law, it may be remarked that sentences of excommunication were pronounced against evil-doers even in pagan times. Thus Sophocles (*Edipus Rex*, 226-232) represents (Edipus as excommunicating the murderer of Laius. A similar passage occurs in *Æschylus* (*Choëphoræ* 28ü seq.); and Caesar thus describes the form of excommunication observed among the Druids in (Latin, "Si quis aut privatus aut publicus eorum decretis non steterit sacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pœna apud eos est, gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum numero impiorum et sceleratorum habentur; iis omnes decedunt; aditum eorum sermonemque defugiunt, ne quid ex contagione incommodi accipiant: neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur." *De Bello Gallico*, lib. vi., c. 12.

task to show that the Catholic church, has never inflicted persecution simply for* errors in faith, although Catholic governments have sometimes resorted to such temporal punishments, not indeed, as a general rule, so much because of the error itself, as because of its consequences to civil society. However, it would be quite foreign to my purpose to enter into this subject here, as in the present controversy with the Latitudinarians *there is absolutely no question concerning either ecclesiastical or civil intolerance.*

There remains, then, *theological intolerance*, which alone concerns us in the present paper, and by which is understood that incompatibility which may be found to exist between two theological propositions, such as, for instance, to assert that the pains of Hell are at once temporary and eternal: that Christ is, and is not, God.

Now in the Catholic church there is a very wide margin granted to freedom of opinion with regard to theological questions. There are some of those questions on which theologians agree as to the conclusion, but differ as to the philosophical method of explaining them. To this class belong those controversies which constitute almost the entire body of scholastic theology, and regarding which each one is at liberty to attach himself to that school which most commends itself to his judgment. Again, there are other questions which are held not to be *clearly* revealed—concerning which the sense of the Scriptures is obscure, tradition doubtful, and the Church has not as yet made any authoritative and definite pronouncement. On all such questions, likewise, Catholics may differ, and the Church allows them the widest latitude of opinion—so much so, indeed, that many a time she has strictly forbidden parties so contending to apply to one another the epithet *heretic*. We grant that history does record instances where conflicting schools of theology have exhibited bitter feelings of intolerance towards each other in questions of this class; but it must be borne in mind that they have done so in open violation of the prohibitions of the Church, and mostly under the influence of secular statesmen and princes. Lastly, there are theological truths which are *dogmas of faith*—the Church holds and teaches to be divinely revealed, and with regard to these the Church is, and of necessity **MUST BE, intolerant**. For she cannot allow that it is optional to admit a proposition which contradicts a truth already proclaimed to be divinely revealed. This follows of necessity from what logicians call the principle of contradiction: since if

a proposition is once proved to be an article of faith, its contradictory proposition must necessarily be heretical. In this sense, then, and in this sense only, the Catholic church is intolerant; but in the same sense every rational man, as has been already shown, must be intolerant in support of known truths in any department of knowledge whatsoever. Tools and dolts are the sole patrons of toleration where there is a question, of antagonism between truth and falsehood.

And here I would remark that, though Protestants are ever ready to fling the charge of intolerance against Catholics because of their belief in the doctrine of exclusive salvation, this doctrine was preached by all the early (so-called) Pvcformers, and is explicitly set forth in all the public professions of Protestant faith. I might quote in support of this assertion the Helvetic Confession (art. xvii.) of 153b; the Saxon Confession (art. xii.) of 1531; the Scottish Confession (art. xvii.) of 1560; and several others to the same effect. I shall, however, content myself with appealing to the two most respectable non-Catholic churches of England and the United States, as being bodies in which we are more deeply interested. The 18th article of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Great Britain declares that “they also are to be accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law.” Moreover, the Athanasian creed is still retained in the Book of Common Prayer, although that creed, in most express and uncompromising terms, consigns to eternal damnation Unitarians, Methodists, and several other sects in the United Kingdom, which are classed under the general appellation of Protestants. Turning to America, we find that in the Profession of Faith published by the Presbyterian Church of the United States in 1821, and printed in Philadelphia by Anthony Finley, the second article, under the heading “of the church,” (y. 125), is formulated in the following terms: “The visible church, which is also Catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of their Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, *out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation*” It is evident, then, that when

Protestants accuse the Catholic church of intolerance in regard to the doctrine of exclusive salvation, they not only utter meaningless words, invented to delude the ignorant and simple-minded, but are themselves guilty of the most glaring inconsistency, and reject the express teachings of their own sects.

(L>) “ *The, Catholic doctrine of exclusive salvation is utterly subversive of all kindly feelings among men; for Catholics hold that all persons will be eternally damned who do not think with themselves.*”

Here we have another popular calumny charged by the Latitudinarians against the Catholic church. We cannot expose it more effectually than by destroying the foundation on which it rests, and setting forth in the (dearest terms what the church really does, and does not believe on this subject of exclusive salvation. It is NOT the belief of Catholics, then, that all men will be eternally damned who do not think with themselves in religious matters: but Catholics do believe that those are in a state of damnation () who wilfully remain outside the communion of that body which they know to be the true Church of Christ: or () who doubting whether they really are members of the true church, to which they believe all men are bound to belong, yet wilfully continue in that state of doubt, without taking due measures to inform themselves which of the various Christian communities possesses the characteristic notes or marks of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Now, we may suppose the case of a man who, because of his early education, life-long associations and deep-seated prejudices, either does not know that there rests upon him a strict obligation of belonging to some one Christian communion to the exclusion of all others; or who knowing this obligation, yet firmly believes his own particular sect to be the true church, so that a suspicion of being in error never crosses his mind—in the case of such a one, the Catholic church *does not hold* that he is outside the terms of salvation, at least by reason of the faith which he professes. The reason is obvious. Membership with the Catholic church is necessary to salvation *solely by virtue of a divine precept* to that effect. Now, since an unknown law cannot be obligatory, invincible ignorance will excuse from the observance of this precept. For there can be no sin without liberty, and there can be no liberty without knowledge, since liberty presupposes deliberation. Therefore, Protestants who feel perfectly secure in their own faith,

so that a doubt or suspicion never enters their minds that they may possibly be outside the pale of the merit. They are by no means excluded from the terms of salvation because of this mere material heresy. This is the opinion of St. Augustine and Suarez expressly states that it is endorsed by all theologians, and by the Fathers of the holy Synod. It is further confirmed by the fact that the Council of Trent condemned the 68th proposition of Bains, which asserts that "purely negative infidelity is a sin in those to whom it has not been preached."³ For though in this proposition the question more immediately concerns infidels, yet the same doctrine must apply to heretics who labour under invincible ignorance, since they are precisely in the same condition as far as assent to error is concerned.

Here, perhaps, a Latitudinarian may remark that the distinction in favour of those who labour under invincible ignorance is practically useless; inasmuch as we cannot determine who those are that may be in this state, and, consequently, must regard with feelings of uncertainty all who do not belong to the Catholic communion.

To this I reply, in the first place, that I cannot determine who may or may not be in a state of invincible ignorance with regard to the true church, nor does the maintenance of social good feeling and charity with my fellow-man at all require that I should do so. I do but enunciate a doctrine taught by the Church, and supported, by Scripture, reason, and tradition: the application of that doctrine to particular individuals is quite another matter, which can be determined by God alone. Who reads the secrets of hearts. This may be illustrated by a parallel

1 "Qui sententiam suam quamvis falsam atque perversam nulla pertinaci animositate defendunt, prorsus, quam maxime audacia in presumptionis pepererant, sed a seductis in errorem lapsis pariter acceperunt, quaerunt autem cauta sollicitudine veritatem, et parati cum invenerint, nequaquam sunt inter haereticos."

Augustinus, Ep. 43, Edit. Maur. (alias 162). Suarez (De Fide, disp. XIX., sect. 3) puts this question: "An sit de ratione haeresis ut voluntarie et eum pertinacia committitur, unum Ptoke replies (n. 1), "In primo puncto hujus articuli ut y'dla est difficultas; certum est enim de ratione haereticorum, et voluntarie tunc. Ita docent omnes theologici." Thomas, yf. n. 1. p. 32, a, 4, et reliqui scholastici. Suarez Slys Primo statuendi n. doctores d« ratione haeresis. In hoc fundamento convi-

re negativa i» M> i» «»»» V**17? B<? ** praedicatus, peccatum est" (prop. lxvto)

case. Every Christian is bound to believe that a person who dies in a state of mortal sin is condemned to Hell for all (eternity). But who will be rash enough to *apply* this doctrine, and take it upon himself to decide that any particular individual has departed from life in that state—a fact of which the Supreme «Judge only can be cognisant! Just, then, as the social relations of a Christian with his fellow-man are not disturbed by the fact of his believing that a vast number of them will perish because of unrepented sin, so neither are the relations of a Catholic with his Protestant neighbour suspended, though he may believe that even the majority of those who are outside the true church, are not excused by invincible ignorance from the crime of heresy.

But I may go still further, and state that (alludes, so far from cherishing unkindly or uncharitable feelings towards their Protestant fellow-countrymen, never cease to think kindly of them, pray that God's light may one day bring them into the true fold, and entertain hopes that, at least in these countries, very many of them are excused from the guilt of heresy by reason of invincible ignorance. Surely it there is one man in the world who knows the state of Protestant feeling in the United Kingdom, and who may at the same time be taken as a learned and orthodox exponent of the doctrine of the Catholic church on a subject which cost himself many years of anxious thought and interior trial, that man is the illustrious Cardinal Newman. My readers, therefore, will, I feel confident, read with pleasure the following passage from one of the great Oratorians works, in which he discusses the question of the extent to which invincible ignorance may be supposed to prevail in the Anglican communion — “I suppose,” writes Cardinal Newman, “as regards this country . . . we may entertain most reasonable hopes that vast multitudes are in a state of invincible ignorance: so that those among them who are living a life really religious and conscientious, may be looked upon with interest and even pleasure, though a mournful pleasure, in the midst of the pain which a Catholic feels at their ignorant prejudices against what he knows to be true. Amongst the most bitter railers against the Church in this country, may be found those who are influenced by divine grace, and are at present travelling towards heaven, whatever be their ultimate destiny. . . . Nay, while such persons think as at present, they are bound to act accordingly, and only so far to connect themselves with us as their conscience

allows. ‘When persons who have been brought up in heresy,’ says a Catholic theologian,¹ ‘are persuaded from their childhood that we are the enemies of God's word, are idolaters, pestilent deceivers, and therefore, as pests, to be avoided, they cannot, while their persuasion lasts, hear us with a safe conscience, and they labour under invincible ignorance, inasmuch as they doubt not that they are in a good way.’

“Nor does it suffice, in order to throw them out of this irresponsible state, and to make them guilty of their ignorance, that there are means actually in their power of getting rid of it. For instance, say they have no conscientious feeling against frequenting Catholic chapels, conversing with Catholics, or reading their books; and say they are thrown into the neighbourhood of the one or the company of the other, and do not avail themselves of their opportunities; still these persons do not become responsible for their present ignorance till such time as they actually feel it, till a doubt crosses them on the subject, and the thought comes upon them that inquiry is a duty’. And thus Protestants may be living in the midst of Catholic light, and labouring under the densest and most stupid prejudices; and yet we may be able to view them with hope, though with anxiety, with the hope that the question has never occurred to them, strange as it may seem, whether we are not right and they wrong. Nay, I will say something farther still; they may be so circumstanced that it is quite certain, that in course of time, this ignorance will be removed, and doubt will be suggested to them, and the necessity of inquiry consequently imposed, and according to our best judgment, fallible of course as it is, we may be quite certain too, that, when that time comes, they will refuse to enquire, and will quench the doubt; yet should it so happen that they are cut off by death before that time has arrived, (I am putting an hypothetical case) we may have as much hope of their salvation as if we had had no such foreboding about, them on our minds; for there is nothing to show that they were not taken away on purpose, in order that their ignorance might be their excuse?*

For the rest, that, the Catholic Church, whilst rigorously adhering to the doctrine of exclusive salvation, commands the members of her communion, not only to live in social

¹ Busebaum, vol. I, p. 54.
- Lectures on the Difficulties of Anglicans, p. 309, seq. (Burns and Oates), 4th ed.
VOL. I.

harmony with those who profess a different faith, but even to love and serve them, is conclusively proved from the words of the very catechisms which she places in the hands of her little ones. For when impressing on them the observance of the Second great Commandment of the New Law—"thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—she takes care to instruct them that by the words "thy neighbour" they are to understand "mankind of every description, even those who injure us, or differ from us in religion."¹

(c) "But," says the Latitudinarian, "the Catholic doctrine of exclusive salvation is cruel in the extreme—guile irreconcilable with our ideas of the mercy and goodness of God."

To this objection, so soothing to our self-love, I would reply in the first place, that the Latitudinarians seek to exalt God's mercy at the expense of His truth. God possesses all perfections equally in an infinite degree, and He is not only infinitely merciful, but is also essential truth. Now, it has been already shown that the system of the Latitudinarians implies the assertion that God is equally indifferent to truth and falsehood. Therefore, the patrons of this system, while seemingly jealous of God's attribute of mercy, would blasphemously deny to him the attribute of essential truth.

Furthermore, if this plea put forward by the Latitudinarians were valid, it would destroy *in toto* the doctrine of future punishment, and the word Hell must be expunged from the vocabulary of Christians. For we are no less obliged to believe every truth which God has revealed, than to perform what He has commanded and to avoid what has been forbidden by Him; since, as St. Paul teaches, "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hob. xi., 6). If, therefore, it be alleged as cruel on God's part to punish *criminal* heresy with eternal damnation, how, we ask, will it not be equally cruel to consign to future punishment those who criminally violate the commandments of God? Nay, of the two, the latter must appear by far more cruel, inasmuch as our corrupt nature feels a strong propensity towards acts which are forbidden to the followers of Christ under pain of eternal exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. If, therefore, the Latitudinarians would appear consistent, they must either admit that there is nothing repugnant to God's mercy in the Catholic doctrine of exclusive salvation, or they must deny altogether the existence of a future state

¹ Butler's Catechism, Lesson xix.

of punishment, and proclaim that God is alike indifferent whether men receive His doctrines or obey His commands.

Nay, I will go still further, and say that this misunderstood and selfish notion of the mercy of God, which the Latitudinarian Christians put forward in opposition to the Catholic doctrine of exclusive salvation, might be retorted by an Atheist as an argument to overthrow belief in the very existence of God. For the Atheist may ask the Latitudinarian, how can you reconcile the existence of moral and physical evil in this world with your idea of an infinitely good and merciful Creator? It would be quite foreign to the purpose of this paper to enter into such a question; but enough, I trust, has been said to show that the objection of the Latitudinarians drawn from the goodness and mercy of God, would, if valid against the Catholic teaching of exclusive salvation, prove equally valid in overthrowing all revealed and natural religion.

(d) "At all events, this doctrine of exclusive salvation, even though we may believe it, is one to be kept in the background as much as possible; for it is directly opposed to the spirit of the times, and grates harshly on the ears of our fellow-men who are outside the pale of the Church."

This objection comes from the Catholic patrons of Latitudinarianism—silly, empty-headed, half-educated men and women, whose vanity prompts them to seek the applause and esteem of the fashionable world, but whose weakness and ignorance draw down upon them instead, its ridicule and well-merited contempt. These are the creatures who, clinging to the skirts of Protestants, will be ashamed to make the sign of the cross when dining in public, affect to make light of the laws regarding fast and abstinence, think that the Pope is much better off without his temporal sovereignty, and declare "United Italy" to be a political necessity of the times; who dearly love the idea of a matrimonial alliance with a Protestant family, send their children to Protestant schools to cultivate the valuable acquaintance of Lord Fitznoodle's sons, or the Hon. Misses Flirtaway, speak slightingly of their parish priest, drawing unfavourable contrasts between him and the elegant and accomplished Anglican rector—the Rev. Horatio Croquet Smalltalk—in a word, who so demean themselves as though they considered it the greatest misfortune of their lives to have been born members of the one true church.

Now, we are very far from thinking that Catholics should be ever needlessly parading their faith, and offen-

sively obtruding it upon their non-Catholic neighbours. Such a course would serve only to alienate them more and more from the Church, and bring her divine doctrines into disesteem and hatred. But there *are* times and circumstances when every Catholic must boldly and unequivocally make manifest the faith that is in him ; when any pandering to the world's erroneous notions, any weak and mean endeavour to effect a compromise between them and tinctets and practices of the Church, is in itself *a species of Apostacy*. The words of the Redeemer upon this point are explicit and emphatic : " Whosoever," says Christ, " shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in Heaven" (Matt, x., 33). And St. Paul declares that " with the heart wo believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Bomans x., 10). Whoever, then, hears Catholic truth assailed, or sees Catholic interests imperilled, is bound both by his duty to God and to his neighbour to come forward boldly in defence of both, as far as it lies in his power to do so. For how can that man be said to love God, who patiently listens to blasphemies against His revealed truths, and to insults directed against His spouse—the Church ? And how can he be said to love his neighbour, who, *when a favourable opportunity offers*, shrinks through timidity or poor human respect from the endeavour to win him back from error and place him within the one true fold, wherein alone salvation can be found ?

" *But the spirit of the times is against this course,*" says the mean-souled, shuffling Catholic. And what of that ! I ask in reply. Did the apostles, the doctors, the fathers of the church, bear witness to her doctrines " with 'bated breath and whisp'ring humbleness," in order to be in harmony with the spirit of *their* times ? Did the countless martyrs, who shed their blood for Christ rather than sacrifice an iota of His doctrine, accommodate themselves to the spirit of the times in which they lived ? Why, if such a principle had been universally adopted in ages past, Christianity would not have survived the apostles ; for never yet was there a creed so thoroughly at variance with the spirit of the age in which it sprung into existence. *The spirit of the times*, indeed ! What ! if the spirit of the times be evil, are we to hold *our* peace, and allow it to pursue its triumphant course without opposition ? If we look outside the domain of religion, we shall find that never yet was there a great reform won, whose advocates had not at first to do violent

battle with the spirit of the times. There is not an earnest worker in the political world whose work is not, in a great measure, a life-long struggle against the spirit of *his* times. We may illustrate this by a reference to the great electoral contest which is just now drawing to a close in these countries. We need scarcely remind our* readers that the spirit of the times in Great Britain in 1874 was very decidedly Conservative. Did Mr. Gladstone and his associates rest satisfied with this condition of affairs, lest they might offend the tender susceptibilities of the Tories? By no means: they employed every agency at their command to correct and reform the spirit of the times. In doing so, they did not shrink from encountering public odium, and on some occasions even public violence; and, as the result of their energy, earnestness, and perseverance, they see the spirit of 1874 utterly undone in 1880, and a new spirit prepared to guide the destinies of the British Empire.

Why, then, should we hear this senseless babblement about accommodating ourselves to the spirit of the times, when the holiest interests of religion and God's Church are at stake? The spirit of the times is never wholly good; it is mostly evil. The spirit of this nineteenth century above all others is pre-eminently materialistic; and the Catholic who seeks to fashion his opinions or his life by its teachings, might as well pass over openly to the Latitudinarian camp, for he is no longer a Catholic save in name.

II. Let us, next, briefly glance at the consequences which must follow in the moral order from the principles of Latitudinarian Christianity. And, first of all, what is the rule of conduct which the Latitudinarians set up for themselves? As in matters of faith, so in questions affecting the ordering of their lives, they profess to be guided solely by the teachings of the New Testament, interpreted according to each one's private judgment. We have already seen this principle put forward in an extract from the will of Charles Dickens, with which we headed our first paper on this subject.¹ It is stated still more explicitly, if possible, in a letter addressed by the same distinguished writer, at an earlier period, to one of his sons, which may be read in the collection of his letters edited within the present year by his sister-in-law and eldest daughter, and published by Chapman and Hall, London.

¹ See *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, April 1880, p. 121.

"You know," writes Dickens, "that you have never been hampered with religious forms of restraint, and that with mere unmeaning forms I have no sympathy. But I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unfailing guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour, as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility."

It is simply incomprehensible how any man familiar with the history of the past, could assert that whosoever shapes his conduct by the teaching of the New Testament, *as interpreted, by his private judgment*, "cannot go very wrong? Why, the most revolting doctrines that have ever shocked Christian sentiment, the most atrocious crimes that have ever disgraced the world, have been justified by men who cited texts from the pages of the New Testament for this purpose. The Father of Latitudinarianism, Luther, sought to undermine the foundation of all morality, by teaching that good works are useless, and that for the true believer in Christ there no longer exists a Decalogue!; that we shall not hereafter have to render an account of the actions done during our lifetime!; that God Himself is the author of sin!; and that the more profligate is a man's life, the more secure does he make his salvation! Similar doctrines were taught, by the other early Reformers, whose words the reader may find quoted in Moehler's "Symbolism." Such teaching met with ready acceptance among thousands; the doctrine of private interpretation was soon reduced to practice; and,

1 "Summa yrs et sapientia Christiana est nescire legem, ignorare opera et totam justitiam votivam; sola fides justificat, et non fides que dilectionem includit. Sola fides necessaria est ut justus simus, cetera omnia libera, neque praecepta amplius neque prohibita." Luther præf. ad cap. 2. in Ep. ad Galatas.

2 "Si Christus specie irati judicis aut legislatoris apparuerit, qui exigit rationem transactæ vitæ, certo sciamus eum furiosum esse diabolum, non Christum." Coram, ad Galatas, fol. 299 (Ed. Wittemberg).

3 "Nam et mala opera in impiis Deus operatur."

4 "Qui anxie laborant in operibus faciunt sibi magnum negotium, ægre enim revocari ad gratiam possunt; animus autem et conscientia dum parat opera, nihil aliud facit quam ut se ad diffidendum Deo exercent, et quo magis laborat eo firmiorem habitum gignit ad diffidendum Deo et fidendum propriis operibus. Hoc numquam facit scortum aliquod. Qui enim in apertis flagitiis vivit, habet animum semper de peccatis saucium. Neque ulla merita aut bona opera habet quibus niti possit. Facilius autem, salvatur quam sanctus aliquis." Tom. III. oper. latin fol. 353. (Ed. Jenæ.)

some six years after Luther had commenced to preach his new Evangel, the Anabaptists arose in Germany, to overthrow the altar and the throne. Under the leadership of Mtmcer, Storck, John of Leyden, and others of less note, they plunged into every excess, and spread devastation over the fairest portions of their fatherland, while human blood deluged Westphalia, Saxony, Pomerania, Bavaria, Alsace, Lorraine, and a portion of Switzerland. At a later period we find Cromwell and the Puritans in England overturning the throne, placing the head of their sovereign on the block, and "bound together by this sacrament of blood," as Macaulay expresses it, executing in every part of the United Kingdom deeds of horror, which they gloried in, and justified by liberal quotations from Sacred Writ. At the present day the Divorce Court, sanctioned in Bible-loving England, is a most fruitful source of immorality, while the greatest plague-spot on the American Continent is Mormonism, whose adherents profess to be guided by the teachings of the New Testament as interpreted by themselves.

We might multiply such instances to almost any extent, but the little that we have written is abundantly sufficient to show that those who set up the New Testament, interpreted by each one's private judgment, as the guide of their moral conduct, may "go very wrong" indeed, and plunge into every crime of which human malice is capable. Nor will this appear at all strange, if we reflect that man in his fallen state feels a very strong propensity to evil. Hence, if his own judgment is to be his sole guide in interpreting the law of Jesus Christ, his self-love will lead him to tone down those passages which tend to exercise a restraining influence over his passions, whereas he will interpret in the widest and most liberal manner possible those texts which seem to favour human liberty. A single glance at the standard of morality established by Latitudinarianism in modern society will convince us of the truth of this remark. What, really, is the highest moral standard to which a Christian is bound to aspire in the non-Catholic world at the present day? It is comprised in this short formula—*"Be an Honest Man."* Do not injure your neighbour in his property or character; pay twenty shillings in the pound; be loyal to the throne and constitution of your country; *discharge your duties towards society*, and thereby you are entitled to rank as a saint in the Latitudinarian calendar. Surely, this is reducing the Ten Commandments within very narrow limits. In the first place, it puts no restraint upon

a man's *thoughts*. With this standard set up before him, one may indulge as much as he pleases in secret thoughts and desires of lust, anger, revenge, pride, and covetousness, and still be "an honest man" for these thoughts and desires, no matter how odious to God, cannot possibly injure *society* so long as they remain confined to one's own heart and are not carried into execution. In the next place, this code leaves out of sight man's duties towards God: it imposes on him no obligation of private prayer, or even of public worship. A man may live a practical Atheist, and yet fulfil all the requirements of the moral code of Latitudinarianism. There are millions of such men in the world now-a-days, who are returned in the census as belonging to some particular sect, yet who never, from year to year, breathe a single prayer to God either in private or in public, and all the while are held in high esteem by their Latitudinarian brethren as "upright, good, honest men," who are certain at death to be summoned from their counting-house or the Stock Exchange to occupy no mean place in the kingdom of Heaven. Again, the Latitudinarian system of morality makes no account whatever of the *counsels* so solemnly inculcated in the Gospel; if it condescends to notice "the Sermon on the Mount," it is to consider it as something rather degrading to the manliness of our nature, and unsuited to the spirit of the times. Above all, the cultivation of the virtue of purity is notoriously regarded as an *impossibility* by those whom the Latitudinarians would style "good, honest men."

That this estimate of the moral tone prevailing under the Latitudinarian system is not exaggerated, might easily be proved by appealing to sources of indisputable authority for evidence of the condition of moral feeling among non-Catholic communions. To do so, however, would unduly extend the limits of this paper; but I cannot refrain from referring the reader who may be curious on this point, to the "Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, D.D.," published by the present Dean of Westminster. Here he will find that in the universities and public schools of England—institutions availed of solely by the most enlightened classes, and nominally conducted under religious control—*vice* is prevalent in its most appalling forms; while the only virtue rigidly enforced is "*manliness*" of character—that *virtue*. "par excellence" of the old Pagan Romans. Nor can I omit quoting to the same purpose the following striking passage from the pen of Cardinal Newman. "There

have been Protestants whose idea of enlightened Christianity has been a strenuous antagonism to what they consider the unmanliness and unreasonableness of Catholic morality, an antipathy to the precepts of patience, meekness, forgiveness of injuries, and chastity. All this they have considered a woman's religion, the ornament of monks, of the sick, the feeble, and the old. Lust, revenge, ambition, courage, pride—these they have fancied make the man, and want of, them the slave. No one could fairly accuse such men of any great change of their convictions, if they were one day found to have taken up the profession of Islam."¹

So long, then, as every man is permitted to shape his own moral code from the pages of the New Testament, he must infallibly fall back upon purely *natural* religion; he can scarce expect to be better than, if even quite so good as, that model old Pagan, Cato the Censor. And it the moral code of Christianity is to be brought down to the level of pure naturalism, what, we ask, has been the use of revelation? To what purpose did Christ come upon earth and found a Church, if He furnished men with no more certain help towards the ordering of their lives than human reason could have supplied? Nay, further still, why did He take His departure from earth without having left His followers *any definite moral code whatsoever* ² since, *practically*, the hypothesis of the Latitudinarians amounts to this. For if it be permitted to men to interpret His words as they please, what the men of one age or country may judge virtuous, the men of another age and another country may pronounce deadly sin. Precepts that may be judged suitable to the temperament of the people of one climate, may be thought too difficult of observance by the dwellers in another zone; and thus the Christian standard of morality will have no *objective reality*, but will depend for its existence on the whims and passions of individuals, and the varying accidental circumstances of life.

Such is the moral code of Latitudinarianism; it has but one commandment—"Be honest, be just and benevolent to your fellow-men." Voltaire epitomised this code a century ago in a single well-known line:—

Qu'on soit juste, il suffit, le reste est arbitraire.

It is still more pointedly set forth by a recent writer in the *seventeenth Century*, with whose words I shall close this paper.—"Morality is the art of making life audits liberties

... i « Grammar of Assent," p- 241.

and gladnesses more complete. Here and there there exists a lot which is, and to its end must remain, without pleasure, comfort, or hope. Such terrible cases it is one end of virtue to cause to cease from among us. Let all that *perpetuates their supply* be called vice, or sin, and cease."¹

From what has been written we may deduce, the three following conclusions :—(a) that the true doctrines of Christianity cannot be ascertained *with certainty* otherwise than from the Church of Christ, which He has constituted His representative upon earth, and sole infallible guide of men in matters appertaining to faith and morals ; (A) that those who know themselves to be outside the pale of the true Church, or who entertain doubts on the subject, are bound to seek admission into her fold under pain of exclusion from the terms of salvation ; (<) that Catholics, who believe that they enjoy the privilege of membership with the only true Church of Christ, are bound to listen to her voice with child-like docility, and to cherish her practices with the most exact fidelity, if they would avoid the danger of being insensibly but effectually drawn into the mazes of Latitudinarian Christianity, and so, ultimately, into utter infidelity.

A QUESTION REGARDING THE HAIL MARY.

THE question has frequently been raised, whether in the Hail Mary we should say "*our* Lord is with thee," or, "*the* Lord is with thee." Usage, I believe, whether among the laity or among the clergy, is by no means uniform. Unquestionably both forms of expression are to be found in authorized prayer books. And moreover—strange as the statement may seem to those who may have been accustomed to regard the English translation of the Bible in ordinary use among the Catholics of these countries, as the Douay or Rhemish version—our ordinary English translation agrees with the Protestant "Authorized" version in translating the words of the Archangel's salutation, "*the* Lord is with thee," while the Douay version has the other form, "*our* Lord is with thee."

¹See *The Nineteenth Century*. December, 1879, p. 1019.

Without undertaking to pronounce with confidence as to the incorrectness of either usage, I will set forth some points of interest that may help in the solution of the question.

Cardinal Wiseman has the following interesting reference to it in his essay on Catholic versions of (Scripture.)¹ Expressing his disapproval of the general character of the alterations made in the Douay version by Dr. Challoner, who is thus to so large an extent the author of the translation now in use among Catholics, the Cardinal wrote :—¹

"To call it any longer the Douay or Rhemish version is a abuse of terms. It has been altered and modified till scarcely any verse remains as it was originally published ; and so far as simplicity and energy of style are concerned, the changes are in general for the worse. For, though Dr. Challoner did well to alter many too decided Latinisms which the old translators had retained," he weakened the language considerably by destroying inversion, where it was congenial, at once, to the genius of our language, and to the construction of the original,³ and by the insertion of particles where they were by no means necessary.⁴ Any chapter of the New Testament will substantiate this remark.⁵

¹ Dublin Retient April, 1837. The Essay is reprinted in the collected Essays of his Eminence. Vol. i., pp. 73-100. London, 1853.]

*It may be interesting to add an example of this. The text, "Beneficentiae autem et communionis nolite oblivisci ; talibus enim hostiis promeretur Deus" (Heb. xiii., 16) stands as follows in the Rhemish version ;—And beneficence and communication do not forget . for with such hosts God is promerited."

Dr. Challoner altered the text thus : " And do not forget to do good and to impart ; for by such sacrifices God's favour is obtained."

The English "Authorized" version is : "But to do good and to communicate forget not . for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

³The position of the words "forget not" in the text just quoted, furnishes a striking illustration of Cardinal Wiseman's remark.

⁴It may be well to set down here the judgment of an eminent living scholar, which, after all, perhaps, is not entirely at variance with the view taken from another standpoint by Cardinal Wiseman. "I have used," says F. Coleridge, in his 'Life of our Life' (vol. i. preface, p. 8), "though not without a very few verbal alterations where the meaning of the original has evidently been missed, the Rhemish translation of the New Testament which is familiar to Catholic readers. That translation has often been decried, but I am persuaded that it is as beautiful and as accurate as any that exists. I have used it in its present state as it is found in the Catholic Bibles in common use."

⁵Somewhat further on in his Essay, Cardinal Wiseman remarks that "it had been well if Dr. Challoner's alterations had given stability to the text, and formed a standard to which subsequent editors had conformed. But far from this being the case, new and often important modifications have been made in every edition which has followed, till at length many may appear rather new versions than revisions of the old."