

John G. Morris

To Rome and Back Again



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To Rome and Back Again

Or, The Two Proselytes

Adapted From The German By

John G. Morris, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH, BALTIMORE.

Baltimore
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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

JOHN GOTTLIEB MORRIS (1803-1895) attended Princeton and Dickinson Colleges, and Princeton Theological Seminary and was a member of the first class of the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg. Dr. Morris founded the *Lutheran Observer* and was president of both the Maryland and General Synods. Morris was a frequent lecturer before the Smithsonian Institution and author of the *Catalogue of the Described Lepidoptera of North America* (1860), among other scientific and religious publications. He and his nephew founded the Lutheran Historical Society. [Source: William and Mary Special Collections Database.]

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Preface

MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS AGO, the substance of this book was published under another title, when it was highly recommended by many divines of our own and other churches.

Judicious friends have advised me to prepare a new edition, and I have accordingly rewritten a large portion of it, added new characters, and transferred the whole scene of the story to this country.

JOHN GOTTLIEB MORRIS

Baltimore, April 1, 1856.

1. Parentage, Education, And Apostasy Of Charles Werner

CHARLES WERNER was the only son of a respectable Lutheran clergyman in the interior of one of the Midwest[’b3t] States. From his early youth he displayed an extraordinary talent for music. When yet a boy, he performed with exquisite skill and taste on several instruments, and attracted the admiration of all the amateurs of the country around. He was the organist in his father’s church, and even ventured to give lessons in music to the boys and girls of his native village.

[’b3t]: Orig: “one of the Middle States”.

He was carefully instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion by his father, who cherished the secret hope of one day seeing his son succeed him as pastor of the church. Though Charles diligently pursued his religious and scholastic studies, yet he felt no disposition for the ministry; and his prudent father would not compel him to prepare for a profession for which he had neither inclination nor taste. All his time not given to his schoolbooks – and much of it that should have been – was devoted to his favorite and absorbing pursuit of music. The father yielded reluctantly to the son’s determination to adopt it as his profession for life; and to this end after the lapse of a few years, he was sent to Philadelphia to receive instruction from several accomplished and eminent professors of music. His progress was rapid, and having received recommendations from his instructors, behold him launching forth into the world as a teacher himself, though yet not over twenty years of age.

He began his career in a large inland town, in the vicinity of which there was a celebrated Ladies’ Seminary, under the control of the Roman Catholic church. As a stanch Protestant, he, of course, received no patronage there; besides, the school was well provided with a teacher, of the same religious faith. But his acknowledged skill, his high moral character, his flattering recommendations, and, it may be, his handsome person and amiable dispo-

sition, soon procured him as many female pupils from the village as he could teach.

This state of things continued for several years, during which time an extraordinary change took place in this young man's mind. Charles had become a convert to the papacy. The circumstances attending this momentous event shall be related in the course of our narrative.

He had been several years absent from home, but he was now expected at the paternal mansion. His arrival was looked for with the most intense anxiety by his parents and his sister Amelia, who had recently entered into a matrimonial engagement with the young minister of a neighboring parish. But with this feeling of joy at seeing him who had now been absent three years, there was mingled an emotion of deep solicitude, yea, of melancholy foreboding, which diminished in the father's heart, at least, the pleasure of the anticipated meeting.

Charles had communicated the fact of his conversion to his parents only a short time before his arrival. This inconsiderate step deeply pained the strictly Protestant father, who, firmly convinced of the superior advantages of his own church, regarded the Romish communion in a very unfavorable light. He was mortified that his only son had attached himself to a church which, in his view, was corrupt in doctrine and practice.

The family had as yet kept the apostasy of the son a secret; but it was very often the unpleasant subject of their private conversation. Charles had informed them that he had become a Romanist from conviction; he had earnestly entreated them not to consider him as one of those unworthy proselytes who change their faith as they do their garments, for the sake of a benefice, or a pension, or an advantageous marriage. But all this did not mitigate the grief of the father, who painfully felt that now a great partition wall separated him from the affections of his son.

"How can Charles," said he, in deep mortification, "have any confidence in us now? how can he any longer respect us, when, according to the principles of his church, he must look upon us as heretics, as children of the devil, and devoted to eternal destruction? For my part, I know not how I could trust or esteem those of whom I believed that they were full of soul-destroying errors, that they were wholly under the influence of Satan, and that they were devoted by God to everlasting damnation!" – and he vehemently added – "If he has become a Jesuit and cursed father and mother and

teacher, because they educated him in heresy, oh, then I never wish to see my child again!”

“That,” replied the mother, with earnestness, “that, Charles has certainly not done. I know my son too well! What! to curse the mother who bore and nourished him? – that would be too awful! – that my son has not done! He has assuredly not forgotten that passage of Scripture, (‘Prov. 20:20:’) ‘Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.’”

“I can myself scarcely believe any thing so bad of him,” said the father.

“And I,” said Amelia, “cannot believe that the Romish church demands any thing so unchristian of her proselytes.”

“We should really think so,” added the father; “but a church which condemns and curses us all without distinction as heretics, acts at least consistently when she demands of her proselytes not to exempt their relatives and friends from this malediction. Certain it is that the Jesuits, at least, have required this of the proselytes they have made.”

“But all Romanists are not Jesuits.” observed the daughter.

“True.” responded the father, “but the whole Romish system is intolerant and exclusive. It demands of its converts a renunciation of the religious control of their parents as well as of former religious doctrines and church connections. Many instances of the kind have been published. How can Charles have any respect for us, whom he now regards as heretics? – how can he sympathize with us after this? Alas! we have lost our son! – and you, Amelia, have lost your brother – lost him forever!”

The tears of the mother, which now began to flow, and with which Amelia mingled hers, interrupted the conversation, and were, as usual, the beginning of a long but melancholy silence, during which nothing was heard but the sighs of the mother and the footsteps of the deeply-excited father, who, under great agitation, hastily traversed the room. “How was it possible,” he thought to himself, “that Charles, as a well-instructed Protestant Christian, could suffer himself to be blinded by such fallacies? What poison must they have secretly administered to him? By what religious legends must they have deceived him?”

The religious character of Charles had not been firmly established. Though his father was a good man, yet he had not taken sufficient pains to instruct him thoroughly in the essential differences between the Protestant and Romish systems of faith. He lived in a section of the country where Ro-

manism did not prevail, and where there seemed to be no occasion to enlighten the minds of his hearers on the subject. Charles's obligations to his own church were not deeply impressed on his mind, and he was sent into the world completely unfurnished with weapons to resist the allurements of vice or superstition. Fortunately, he avoided the former, but he became entangled in the snares of the latter. He was a sort of dreamy, philosophical Christian; he would sometimes settle down in religious melancholy; his mind was harassed by apprehensions and doubts, and then he would yield himself entirely to the deep emotions waked up by his music and mistake them for the experience of true religion.

It was in this state of mind that he was invited to exercise his art in a different sphere.

2. Romance And Conversion

IT HAS BEEN STATED that the ladies' school in the vicinity was provided with a competent teacher of music. This man died after a few days' illness. What was the president of the institution to do? The instruction could not be interrupted, and some weeks would elapse before another teacher professing the Romish faith could be procured. The young ladies became impatient at the bare suggestion of intermitting music for the remainder of the session, for their tuition-bills had been paid, and, besides, they were anxious to improve in the art. They had seen the handsome young teacher in the village, and some of them remotely hinted at the expediency of employing him in the school until another could be engaged. The president remonstrated. "What!" said he, "a young man! – a handsome young man! – an unmarried, handsome young man in our school? – it will never do! and, worse than all, a Prot –" He here suddenly interrupted himself, for some of his pupils were of the Protestant faith. But this only urged the young ladies to greater importunity, and the good Father had no rest, and was compelled to employ Charles as teacher of music, for a few months at least.

He cheerfully accepted the offer, and entered on his duties with confidence. Various inducements led him to this resolve, not the least of which was the hope of now enjoying the occasional society of a young Italian lady, who was a subordinate teacher of music and of drawing in the seminary, and with whom he had frequently exchanged significant glances on the street, growing out, it is presumed, of similar tastes and pursuits.

On her arrival at the place, a year before, she had stopped for a day at his boarding-house in the village, until her room in the seminary could be prepared. One summer-day Charles was in his own chamber, profoundly absorbed in an abstruse work on music, when his attention was called to another direction. A full, rich soprano voice warbled forth, in enrapturing tones, a favorite Italian song from a neighboring room. Charles's soul was all on fire. An enthusiastic musician alone can appreciate his feelings. He listened to those ravishing strains with ecstasy, which so well accorded with

the emotions of his own heart that, unintentionally, he gave utterance to them in a well-directed and perfectly-conducted tenor. For a few staves this unpremeditated concert was carried on without faltering. Suddenly the invisible soprano ceased; but Charles continued. There was a sympathizing chord struck in her heart, and she resumed her song, though in subdued voice, until it was concluded. Thus these two strangers mingled their feelings in the language of music, without ever having exchanged words.

At the tea-table there was nothing more than the most distant recognition, as the landlady introduced the stranger to the boarders in general. It so happened, however, that Charles was seated opposite to her; and it was remarked by others that he held his teacup much longer to his lips than was necessary to empty it, and that his eyes were elevated considerably above its edge! In his frequent observations across the table, more than once did he encounter a pair of full-orbed, lustrous Italian eyes, which sent a quivering feeling to his heart and made his young blood rush violently through his veins.

That evening yet she transferred her residence to the seminary, and Charles saw her only occasionally on the street, when she came to do her shopping at the village store.

It was probably the hope of seeing this lady occasionally that, above all, prompted him to accept the offer.

Behold him now established in the school. A new world as it were opened to his view. For appearance' sake he attended mass, and on great festival occasions lent the charm of his violin to the music of the choir. It was here too that he encountered the Italian lady. Necessarily, there was some conversation in the arrangement of the pieces, and this soon led to more familiar interchange of words. When she was not engaged in the choir, her devotion among the ordinary worshipers impressed him deeply, and he concluded that the religious system embraced by such a paragon of perfection as he began to conceive her to be, ought to be, if it were not, divine. Every thing he saw affected his mind and strangely attracted extraordinary attention. The gorgeous ceremonies of the church moved him; the priests in splendid vestments – the pictures of saints – the kneeling crowd – the elevation of the host – the devout nuns – the rich music – the glittering altar, – all excited pleasurable feelings, and he thought himself edified by the attractive spectacle. Not to appear singular, and probably also for the purpose of gratifying *Julietta Marchi*, the Italian lady, he also knelt and

kissed the cross, dipped the tip of his finger in the holy water as he entered the church, and submitted to other Romish practices, so that he was no longer distinguished from those around him.

To his astonishment, nothing had been said to him about his faith. But it did not long continue so. The history of the saints and legends in the pictures which he admired was not yet known by him, and he found it necessary to ask for explanations, which were very obligingly and zealously given to him. He thus received the first accurate information of the historical traditions of the Romish church, and of their connection with her doctrines, ceremonies, and organization. Incredible and curious as much of what they said in illustration of their pictures and other works of art appeared to him, and though much, especially in the legends of the saints, was offensive to him, yet he began gradually to regard these things with a less unfavorable eye. The confident assurance with which they related the most incredible stories, as things which no man doubted, did not fail to produce upon him the usual impression. Belief is contagious, like unbelief. When men constantly hear the same thing, and hear it uttered in full confidence, they become inclined to regard it as true and to mistrust their own judgment.

Charles was a creature of imagination and feeling, and he often permitted his fancy to sway his judgment. He yielded to delusions of this kind when his reason secretly reproved his decision. He gradually became better prepared to receive the most wonderful stories as true, for they operated upon a set of feelings which were developing themselves more strongly every day. He began to invest religion with a sort of poetic dress, and to regard it as a matter not of pious practice, but of food for the imagination. He indulged that disposition, for it created emotions of a pleasurable kind; and this, more than any thing else, prepared him for the step he was about to take.

His melancholy and religious sentimentalism did not abandon him, but they were rather nourished by his pursuits. The contests and self-mortifications and temptations of the saints, whose pictures he saw, operated powerfully on his easily-excited feelings. He wished to be a saint, to live in a cell, to practice the deepest self-denial, to be attacked by the great enemy of mankind, to repel his assaults, to be distinguished for piety, and then his name would blazon in the calendar and his person and deeds be recorded on canvas for some artist to study and copy. He ardently longed for some one

to converse with on this subject, – some sentimentalist like himself, who would encourage him in his determination and flatter him into its vigorous prosecution. Full of tender sensibility and what he mistook for genuine religious ardor, he was in a proper frame of mind to be captivated by pompous religious display, to be dazzled by gorgeous ceremonials, and to be deluded into the belief that profound emotion in a magnificent cathedral was religion, and the performance of a splendid church-service, to which music and painting and statuary lent their charms, was piety.

He did not wait long. Father Colbert was the officiating priest of the house. He and Charles soon became friends. The priest had explained to him many of the legends which the pictures illustrated, and it was perfectly natural that he should hold forth the legends of the saints and martyrs as genuine history. Charles could not reasonably take offence. Colbert had not yet even mentioned the Protestant faith; yea, he even pretended not to know that Charles was a Protestant; – only gradually and very cautiously did he mingle religion with his conversation, and, in several expressions which appeared quite incidental, he set forth the most advantageous side of Romanism. Charles, in the beginning, contradicted nothing, because he did not wish to wound the feelings of his friend; but gradually this fear vanished, and he made objections, which were very few, indeed, for he had never been instructed in the differences between the confessions. This contradiction Colbert was waiting for, for now he had an opportunity, without appearing urgent, of making his inexperienced friend intimately acquainted with all the peculiarities of Romanism, and of exhibiting all the grounds which would most powerfully affect his unfurnished mind. The seed did not remain without fruit. Charles felt more and more that his faith would not hold out against the profound arguments of his friend. He gave up one point after another, and it proceeded so far that the thought really occurred to him that here he had first found the true church. The priest soon saw through the undissembling youth, and now first uttered a few words about a change of ecclesiastical confession. It was not hard to convince Charles that a change of confession was a conscientious duty if we have heretofore lived in gross error, and this was the basis on which Colbert continued diligently to build. He now ventured to express his serious apprehensions for his friend, because he was not in connection with the true church, – to let him see the ecstasy which the remotest thought of his return to the true church would cre-

ate within him, – and finally, to express this thought as the most earnest desire of his heart.

Unable as he was to withstand the arguments of the priest in their conversations on the advantages of the Romish church, still a certain something – a secret feeling of the great importance of the step which Colbert urged him to take – restrained him. But this gradually vanished as he reflected on the subject. He at length told his friend that for a long time he had been harassed by doubts about his salvation, and admitted his perplexed state of mind generally.

The wily Jesuit took advantage of the unsuspecting youth, and, instead of aiming at removing his doubts, only magnified them the more.

“Ah!” said he, in an affected tone of sympathy, “it is true. We cannot expect our faith to be always equally strong, and it is a very uncertain thing; for the human mind is not every day the same, and a doubt which a man with the best disposition cannot avoid may destroy all our confidence, and consequently the saving power of faith. But we Catholics,” he added, as though incidentally, “cannot be disturbed by such doubts; in the midst of the most perplexing doubts we are yet perfectly certain of our salvation. But, young man, some penitents are waiting for me in the confessional, and we will resume this subject tomorrow.”

“Oh, sir!” exclaimed Charles, “explain that to me, for it is these doubts of my salvation which now so cruelly torture me!”

“Tomorrow!” added the priest, and retired.

The mind of Charles was disturbed, and he passed the night in a fearful conflict with himself.

The next day Colbert sought the first opportunity to continue the conversation. With the most winning smile, accompanied with a compliment on his performance at a musical soiree the preceding evening, he began by asking, with assumed forgetfulness, what it was that Charles had requested him to explain.

“You said,” replied Charles, “that you Catholics are entirely certain of your salvation, though you may have perplexing doubts. I wish that explained.”

“Oh yes! I had almost forgotten!” he observed. “Well, I shall proceed. We Catholics have every thing good belonging to the Christian religion which you Protestants have. We have, as you, the Bible, which we esteem as the original fountain of all Christian knowledge. You have the ancient

creeds, we also. You have baptism and the Lord's supper, we also. You teach the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God; you believe in original sin, and in the condemnation of all men on account of sin, and in their deliverance from this condemnation by the sufficient sacrifice of the God-man; and all this we also believe. Then, what you have we have also; but we have more than you, and hence you are not certain of your salvation, because you have rejected some things.

"What things?" asked Charles.

"All that we have in addition," said he.

"And that is –" continued Charles.

"Young man," observed the priest, "let me proceed to tell you. The Catholic church, as a benevolent mother of the faithful, and aware of the infirmity of men, has not made the operation of propitiatory exercises dependent on the faith of the laity, (which, as you yourself complain, is so uncertain,) but on the power of the priest and the nature of the propitiation itself, which promotes salvation *ex opere operato*, as we are accustomed to say – that is, of itself, whether the Christian accompanies it with right faith or not. Hence the Catholic need not trouble himself about the question whether he has enough of faith or the right faith in order to obtain justification before God. It is sufficient that the priest absolves him, – that he offers the sacrifice of the mass for him. Upon the same ground, the Catholic church has not connected reconciliation with God with the internal act of faith, but with external actions, which, when they are only properly performed, assure the poor sinner of his justification."

Here Charles could not avoid interrupting him, and observing, though modestly, "I cannot argue these questions with you; but all this is directly contrary to what I learned from Luther's catechism. I there learned, and I think it was proved by Paul, that we are justified by faith without the works of the law."

"Please do not interrupt me now." continued the priest.

"You Protestants have only the Lord's supper, which you celebrate three or four times a year; we have the daily sacrifice of the mass for all sins, the confession and absolution, indulgences, and a whole series of good works, as fasting, the Angelic Salutation, Aves Maria, Pilgrimages, Sacred Places connected with indulgences, and the like. Hence the Catholic Christian lives in happy contentment and security about his eternal salvation. Whatever scruples he may have, whatever sins he may commit, if he only avails him-

self of the confessional, of the mass and indulgence, all his sins will not endanger his salvation. The human heart is weak and wavering in faith and virtue; hence it is necessary for man to ground his salvation on something more firm and unchangeable than internal faith, and to have something which will aid him in his weakness. For this weakness the Protestants have no remedy, but we have.”

Charles felt that this method of salvation was precisely adapted to his mental condition. “I may then throw the responsibility of my salvation on the priest! I need not feel any particular anxiety about it myself, if I only comply with the prescribed ceremonies of the church?” he eagerly inquired.

“Most certainly!” replied Colbert. “The church assumes all that. She has made provision for our infirmities; and herein consists our advantage over you.”

In this way Colbert sought to convince Charles that he would be a very happy and contented man if he would avail himself of the numerous propitiatory means which the Catholic church affords the Christian. After this idea had taken root in Charles’s mind, he proceeded further, and began to show to him that in the Protestant church there is nothing but confusion, uncertainty, infidelity, and error; that it is not a true church; that it has no valid priesthood and no effectual sacraments. It was easy to convince him of this after he had once begun to believe the contrary, – namely, the exclusive truth of the Catholic church. It was only the result of his defective religious education; for, as was before observed, he had never been instructed in the differences between the two churches, and, of course, had not been furnished with arguments against the errors of Rome. He could not withstand the wily priest, who, taking advantage of his ignorance, easily infused into his mind these pernicious tenets.

Finally, convinced that the Romish church was the only true one, and which alone by the efficacy of her sacrifices could assure him of justification before God, a short time before his return home he went over to that communion and uttered his renunciation of Protestantism in the presence of Colbert and a crowd of curious spectators. The Te Deum was sung, and there was great rejoicing over the restoration to the true fold of Christ of this wandering sheep.

3. Return Home – Julietta

CHARLES communicated this immediately, with all the ardor of a new convert, to his father, and hoped he would justify the measure when he had heard his son state the reasons of his conversion. He would have acted more considerately, however, if, before taking so important a step, he had consulted his father or some other intelligent friend. But Colbert earnestly advised him not to do it, and said that it would only excite the opposition of his parents, and that his conversion to the true and only saving church would only thereby be rendered more difficult. Charles suffered himself to be persuaded. He did as many apostates do; he solicited no counsel from a sensible man. He had such great confidence in his own judgment that he thought he stood in no need of the advice of others. The priest had explained the grounds so clearly that he felt confident he could defend them against any opponent, and he even indulged the secret hope of converting his parents also to the true and infallible church.

He flattered himself with this confident expectation the more because his father did not express any disapprobation in his answer. He insisted; however, upon his immediate return, which Colbert earnestly tried to prevent, and even said that disobedience to parents, when salvation is concerned, is a meritorious act. But Charles determined to obey his father's command. Respecting his conversion, his father only said a few words to this amount: – that they would speak of that when he should arrive at home, and that he hoped Charles had not become a Romanist from impure motives. As he was not conscious of that, he commenced his journey homeward full of confidence and joy.

His mind was elated for some hours after his departure, for he had a pleasant traveling companion; but his spirits began to droop more and more the nearer he approached his home. Displeased at himself that his heart now began to fail, especially as he could find no cause of uneasiness in his understanding, (for he was not conscious of having done wrong,) he again went over the whole ground of argument by which Colbert had persuaded

him to become a Romanist, and thereby sought to gain the necessary confidence of conviction by which he might suppress that emotion of heart which harassed and humbled him. This contributed somewhat to his relief, but not enough. His heart began to beat again with unusual violence the nearer he approached home; and he at length found the most effectual source of contentment in the confidence that he was so dearly loved by his parents that, even if he failed in convincing them of the propriety and sincerity of his conversion, yet that they would kindly extend their indulgence to him. But, to be better prepared to meet the objections which he expected would be made, he tarried a few days at a watering-place on the way, and employed this season of rest in writing down the reasons of his conversion, which were only so many accusations against the Protestant faith, that he might study them in their connection and impress them more deeply on his mind.

The arrival of the son was anticipated by the family at home with no very pleasant sensations. They were ashamed of his rash and precipitate act, and they experienced a certain feeling of mistrust against the proselyte and a painful uncertainty whether the internal man had not also changed with his confession of faith, and whether he could now sustain to them the old familiar relation in which they all formerly rejoiced.

In his letters to his sister he had depicted the character, person, abilities, and accomplishments of Julietta in such lively colors, and declared, moreover, that there was such a striking resemblance between the two, that a strong curiosity was awakened in the pastor's family to see this Italian paragon. An invitation followed for her to accompany Charles home at the next vacation, and thus his secret design was accomplished.

The lady had not been long in our country, and had seen little of the interior. At first she hesitated.

“Will it be proper for me to travel with an unmarried man!” she asked herself. In her state of doubt, she referred the matter to her father confessor, who advised her to go, after giving her special instructions, and a private letter to a priest in the vicinity of Charles's home.

An intimacy of rather a delicate character had sprung up between these two young persons. How could it be well avoided? Similar tastes and pursuits, – daily intercourse in giving lessons to the same pupils in music, – frequent consultations about the musical services of the chapel, – besides the manifest encouragement given to this growing intimacy by the president

and other teachers of the school, – all tended to increase the attachment, though neither was aware of the extent it had reached. Charles loaned the lady books out of his own small collection, and she always selected English books, that she might improve herself in the language. He also sent piles of music to her room, that she might select appropriate pieces for her pupils. One day she discovered between two pieces of one of these piles a thin volume which seemed to have lain there, unused, a long time. She opened it, and read, on the title-page. *The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. Her curiosity was awakened. She read it, though with trembling, for she was aware of the interdiction of the Protestant Testament, which she knew this to be. She read more and more, and, quite unaccountably to herself, felt a growing interest in the book. Zealous papist as she was, and abhorring all heresy, yet she was singularly attracted by the simple recitals and solid instructions of the volume.

With respect to religion, Julietta knew no more than her teachers, the priests in Naples, had taught her. As for herself, she had read the Romish catechism and an Italian translation of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and thus, for a private person, was a learned Romanist. Her teachers had done every thing in their way to make her a good Catholic. She believed that no person could be a Christian who did not hear mass, keep the fasts, pray the pater-noster, receive the priest's absolution, and humbly believe every thing which the church commanded one to believe. The priests had particularly excited within her such an utter abhorrence of all heretics, that she was agitated with fear whenever she met one in Italy. The clearest of all truths to her was, that God looks upon heretics with anger and abomination, that they are under the dominion of the devil, and that they are devoted by him to everlasting damnation. Her fancy had pictured a wonderful representation of those heretical countries where, according to her expression, "faith ends and the dominion of the devil begins." Hence, she was at first doubtful whether she should accompany Charles, and only finally determined when she heard that there were also Catholic churches and priests there, who were zealously engaged in the diffusion of the true faith.

They traveled together slowly, and the more frequently they stopped, the more agreeable to both. The slightest excuse was sufficient to induce a halt of a few hours or a day at any country village. Julietta highly extolled the beauty of the country, its prosperous agriculture, substantial buildings, and contented population. Yet, in her girlish inexperience and ignorance of our

country, it appeared strange that in these delightful regions she had thus far seen no monk, and very seldom a priest, while in Rome and Naples they are met at almost every step. She expressed her surprise, and was evidently much confused when she heard that these prosperous farms were the possessions of heretics. Charles was too much occupied with himself to observe the agitation of his friend. As they proceeded on their journey and continued to see finely cultivated fields, a prosperous and moral people, and yet saw no priests, monks, images of saints, or monasteries, the theology of Julietta was not equal to this remarkable circumstance, and she was utterly at a loss what to think of the evident smiles and blessings of Providence upon these heretics. She could not reconcile this apparent contradiction. She at length took courage to open her mind to Charles, and said, "You are a good Catholic, and hence do not doubt that the Catholics alone can be saved and that all heretics will be cursed. For they have not the true faith, no true sacraments, no true worship; their preachers cannot effectually absolve; they reject the vicegerent of God and of Christ, the holy father, and are therefore rebels against Christ and God; they are beset by the devil and are led by him into all error and wickedness; heresy is the mother of all licentiousness. All this is very certain, for the holy church teaches it, and she cannot err. And yet I see these heretical countries abundantly blessed of God, more extensively and beautifully cultivated, more populous, their population better clothed and sheltered, and the houses more numerous and commodious than those of the dominions of the holy father. How can God be so favorable to these accursed reprobates!"

Charles here suddenly interrupted her by directing her attention to a squirrel scampering across the road and then nimbly ascending a neighboring tree until it reached the topmost bough. "Thus." said he, "from earth upward to the highest elevation I *excelsior* let our motto be!"

"Yes." replied the lady, "as far as I have observed, that is the destiny of your country – upward! upward! but, alas! my own beloved Italy, – with its glorious sky, its balmy atmosphere, its luscious fruits, its fertile plains, its world-renowned arts, – how poor, how wretched, in comparison! Here I observe good order, good morals, public security, industry, and general prosperity. Here I scarcely see a single beggar, while with us they besiege every street; here men know nothing of robberies and assassinations, while with us they are very common. Oh, tell me, how is this possible? So much I see, that in this country a false and pernicious faith prevails, but the people are

honest, while with us the true faith prevails, and the people are not remarkably moral. Were I not so good a Catholic, I would be tempted to believe that these people also have religion, and that they cannot be worse than we. Signor, say, how do you account for this?"

Charles gave an evasive answer. He looked on her with astonishment. This speech was quite unexpected, for until then the lady had been reserved in the expression of her opinions on religious subjects. But they related to a point upon which he himself had not meditated, and to which he was unable at the moment to make a reply. "God is also merciful to unbelievers," he finally stammered out, with considerable reluctance, "that they may have time and room for repentance."

But he felt very sensibly how unsatisfactory this reply was; and he was almost alarmed at the thought of what he should reply to his father, were he to ask the same question. He included this question among his present investigations, but found that the more he reflected upon it the less satisfactory was his answer.

Julietta suffered herself to be put off with this reply, but she was not satisfied. This double contradiction constantly revolved in her mind: — heresy is an abomination in the sight of God and all heretics are condemned, and yet God blesses them; they are children of Satan, and yet they are moral, upright, honest, and prosperous."

They passed the Sunday in a small village, and not because either of them had any scruples about traveling on that day; but Charles had some relations there, whom he wished to see; and, besides, frequent stoppings and long delays suited their tastes precisely.

On Sunday morning Julietta heard the sound of the church-bell, and was on the point of falling on her knees, as was her custom at home, but was interrupted by several children rushing boisterously into the room. She had forgotten she was not in a Romish country.

Charles had gone on a country excursion with some acquaintances, and Julietta took a stroll through the village. She passed a church when the bell was ringing for Sunday worship; she took courage to follow the multitude, and, for the first time in her life, she entered a heretical church. It is true that her father confessor had, before her departure from the school, forbidden this as a grievous sin; but her curiosity to see heretics at their worship was too strong to be resisted, and she hoped to be absolved from this at the

next confession, even if she were obliged to undergo some severe penance, for, as a good Catholic, she was determined to confess it.

She entered shyly and timorously, just like one who is about to commit a heinous sin. There was no consecrated water there, that is so effectual in driving away evil spirits from the faithful, and none of those who entered availed themselves of that wonderful preservative from diabolical influence so powerful in the Romish church. “The unhappy people!” thought Julietta, “how can they escape the temptations of Satan without the holy water?” She looked round upon the walls and pillars, but there was no saint, and not even the Virgin Mary, to be seen. “The deluded heretics!” she sighed again, “to whom do they pray? for they have neither saint nor the Mother of God.” It also appeared very strange that none of those who entered bowed down before the altar; but as she approached nearer, she saw that there was no pyx containing the body of God. “Alas, the poor creatures!” she thought again, “how can they receive grace when they have no sacrifice!” She already began to repent that she had mingled with a congregation without holy water, without saints and pyx, for without these it appeared to her to be little better than a heathen assembly. In the mean time the service commenced, and the earnest singing of the whole congregation, which she heard here for the first time, and the simple beauty of the tune, deeply engaged her attention. Of the portion of Scripture read she understood very little; but the next hymn which the congregation sung made a deeper impression on her mind than the tones of the hired singers in the papal chapel, and she could not refuse the friendly offer of a neighbor who handed to her a hymn-book. She read, and the congregation sung:¹

“Mistaken souls, that dream of heaven,
And make their empty boast
Of inward joys and sins forgiven,
While they are slaves to lust!”

“Is this also true?” thought she to herself; “or have the heretics only fancied these things to console themselves, knowing that they have not the true faith!” She was soon to hear more than this. The sermon commenced and treated this very subject: – that without holiness no man can be a true Christian, and can have no claim to salvation, however orthodox and zealous he may be in works of external devotion. She was all ear, and the longer she heard the more attentive she became. The portion of Scripture on which the

preacher grounded his observations impressed her more than the sermon. It was the gospel for the eighth Sunday after Trinity, Matt. 7:15-23: – “Beware of false prophets,” etc. “The words of the wise,” says Solomon, (Eccl. 12:11,) “are as goads and as nails;” and so Julietta felt the words of the text in her heart, and she finally believed to have found here an explanation of the difficulty which lately harassed her, why in the land of heretics the manifest blessing of God and Christian uprightness were so apparent.

The Savior says (for by degrees this became the general course of her thoughts) that sheep’s clothing does not constitute the true prophet, consequently the surplice does not make the true bishop, and the rosary, fasting, and hearing mass, do not complete the true Christian.

The next verse also attracted her attention: – “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles!” In reflecting on it, this embarrassing question suggested itself: – If true priests are known by the good fruits of a Christian life, how much more Christian laymen? Hence from true Christian faith nothing vicious can proceed, and from heresy nothing virtuous can come. And yet how comes it that these heretics are happy, prosperous, and virtuous? She was in a dilemma.

The preacher read another verse: – “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

An unpleasant reminiscence of her early years now came up with terrible force. She was reminded of one of her gay, youthful companions in Naples, who had told her in confidence that she intended to appropriate to herself the jewelry of another companion, and share the proceeds with Julietta, if she kept it a secret. She disdained the offer, and endeavored to dissuade the infatuated girl from the commission of so heinous a crime. “Simpleton!” replied she, reproachfully, “my confessor has already absolved me from the guilt, before I have stolen the jewelry; and if he had not done it some other one would, so that I fear no consequence but detection.”

That appeared to Julietta to be evil fruit which showed that the tree which bare it was evil also. While she was thinking whether a priest had the power to absolve a person from the crime of theft, the preacher recited the words of the nineteenth verse, and they struck her with peculiar force: – “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” “Is not the following exception made,” thought she, “‘unless a priest or a papal indulgence absolves him’?” She thought the exception must be made, but she heard nothing of it. The preacher from this passage insisted

forcibly on the *unconditional* necessity of Christian holiness for the attainment of salvation.

Much more deeply did the following passages impress her: – “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 which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess and say unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

“So,” said Julietta to herself, “it is not enough that we openly profess Jesus to be the Lord and have the Christian confession of faith? not enough to work miracles to be a good Christian? If that is not enough, then it is not enough for the Catholic church to be the true church, that she alone has the true confession of faith, that miracles still continue with her, that her priests can banish evil spirits by holy water and benedictions. If that is not enough, then Lutherans can also get to heaven if they lead Christian lives.”

Her mind was agitated, and the alarming thought came up unbidden, “What if, after all, these people are right?”

The preacher concluded with a warm and forcible appeal to the consciences of his hearers, and exhorted them affectionately to cultivate this personal holiness of character, without which all profession of even an orthodox faith and the most punctilious outward performance of church duties were unavailing to exhibit the Christian life or to secure salvation.

Julietta had never heard such preaching, nor had she ever experienced such feelings. Her mind was singularly affected, and she could not account for the unusual embarrassment she felt. A rigid Romanist she knew herself to be, and yet interested in this Protestant worship! – no crucifix, no burning candles on the altar, no vested priests, no images, no pictures, no holy water: – and yet an unaccountable attraction, a feeling of satisfaction and even of acquiescence: – how was she to explain all this?

She was even more interested in the last hymn than before: –

“So let our lips and lives express
The holy doctrine we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine
To prove the doctrine all divine.”

Though her refined artistic taste was somewhat offended at the discord of some of those singing around her, and though the tune was entirely strange to her at first, yet her cultivated ear soon caught it, and she was absolutely alarmed at hearing herself, involuntarily, as it were, singing with the congregation.

She went home with a disquieted heart. She retired to her chamber and instantly took up her New Testament, to see whether the preacher had left nothing out of the text. Not being familiar with the book, it was some time before she found Matthew 7:15. She thought there must be something there which made fasting, confession and absolution, and the rosary, essential to salvation, and that the indulgence or the wearing the cloak of a penitent monk also protected the sinner from ruin. But she found nothing else but the naked words which the preacher had read.

“Then,” thought she, with a degree of ill-nature, “the heretical preacher is right! but how can that be when the church teaches differently, and she cannot err? But he certainly has the words of the Savior on his side. Which is now more infallible, – his words, or the decision of the church? Can the latter be more infallible, when she receives all her doctrines and infallibility from Christ?”

She was evidently in a dilemma from which she could not extricate herself. She hoped to be able to solve it after she had read more of the New Testament; and she read it more diligently than ever.

It was not long before she had read the whole Testament through twice. It was with her as with Luther when in Erfurt he first read the Bible;– she was astonished at the many new things which she found, and much more at the many old things which the Romish church maintains as essential to Christianity, but of which she found nothing in the Testament. The old and new things were continually revolving in her mind, and often perplexed her not a little. In such moments of perplexity, when the old had the preponderance in her mind, she occasionally murmured to herself, “It is certainly very dangerous for a good Catholic to travel through heretical countries.” At other times, when the new which she had seen and heard and read gained the mastery of her thoughts, she acknowledged, with an emotion of joy, that she could become a quite different spiritual being if she dared trust and surrender herself to the new. She, felt a strong disposition to communicate her thoughts and feelings to Charles; but his moroseness, his short and sometimes severe replies, alarmed her and induced her to hold her peace. But this

also gave her much uneasiness. She saw plainly that some deep anxiety oppressed her friend. She also became affected, and finally asked him, in a tone of sympathy, what it was that made him so unhappy, and kept him so silent, when his near approach to home ought to enliven him. He was silent, and she did not repeat the question.

1. Isaac Watts. Hymn 323 in the Lutheran hymn-book. ↩

4. Charles's Arrival At Home – Dare We Change Our Creed?

CHARLES was only fifteen miles from home as one day at noon he entered a village where his mother and sister met him, and with tears of joy locked him in their arms. This sincere gush of unchanged affection dispelled the gloom which had for some time oppressed him. He felt that they still recognized in him a son and a brother, and that his change of creed had not changed their love.

Julietta was introduced and kindly received. She was overjoyed at the affection displayed for Charles.

He was now inspired with the hope of meeting his father without even a look of displeasure on his part, although he immediately observed that his father had not accompanied them. The apology of the good mother, that pastoral duties had prevented him, was only a pretense. He could no longer be sincerely pleased with his son; he could not altogether suppress his deep mortification; he was determined to let the son feel that he had alienated himself from his father's affections, and hence he did not go out to meet him. He had anticipated something of this; and it became more certain when, after the first gush of joy, a silence and interruption of the conversation occurred between him and his mother, which was very painful to them both. It was evident that there was one point between them which needed explanation, but which each was reluctant to introduce. But genuine affection does not long endure such reserve; they came to an explanation, and Charles consoled his mother with the assurance that he was the same loving and dutiful son, and promised that he would faithfully and honestly lay before his father the whole ground of his conversion, by which he would be convinced that neither a disordered fancy, nor inclination to mysticism, nor any other dishonorable motive, had induced him to embrace Romanism, but grounds reasonable and deeply matured, which the father himself could not but justify. The mother thought that the latter was hardly to be expected, but

consoled the son by saying that much already would be gained if he could convince his father that he had acted honestly. With a lightened heart, he proceeded home with his mother and sister, and fell upon the bosom of his dear father, who received him with friendly composure. The conversation of the first few hours related to the subject of his absence and the changes that had taken place in the vicinity during his absence; but in the evening, when the family was sitting together alone and mutual confidence restored, Charles himself introduced the subject of his conversion; for he felt more courage in the immediate presence of his amiable father than he did at a distance.

“Dear father,” said he, “you will doubtless look upon your son with suspicion because he has gone over to the Romish church; you are perhaps displeased with me, and I cannot complain of that, for I know your principles. I feel it my duty faithfully to state the whole case, and I hope that you will kindly hear me, that on this point there may be a correct understanding between us.”

“I expect such a disclosure from you, my son, and I am pleased that you have commenced the subject, for I should have felt it my duty to demand it of you. I do not deny it,” he said with earnestness, “that your course has erected a partition-wall between you and me which must be broken down before our hearts can be united as formerly.”

“I hope to be able to reconcile you, father, if you only hear me attentively and judge impartially.”

“You can expect both of me, my son, and the more certainly, for we will not speak of this subject unless your mother and sister are present; for they have as good a right as I have to know the grounds of your apostasy; – yes, I am constrained to call it apostasy!” And the distressed father walked hastily up and down the room.

“In the general,” continued Charles, “you would not blame a man for leaving one Christian church and joining another. I well know that it is a principle strongly maintained, that it is not allowable for a person to change his confession of faith; that every one should remain in the church in which he was born and educated, and to which he promised fidelity when he was first received as an adult member. But I never could justify this principle in its full extent. I willingly admit that a man is under the same obligations to the church to which he belongs as to the state in which he was born and brought up. Only unfeeling, unreasonable, and bad men can leave their own

church from mere grounds of selfishness or aggrandizement. But it is not meant that a man under all circumstances is to remain in the church with which he is connected; for we are all sacredly bound to follow the truth, as the Savior says, ‘He that is of the truth heareth my voice!’ Now, if my church has departed from the truth, and I find that another church has been faithful to the truth, then I have good grounds to leave my church and go over to the other.”

“Do you mean to intimate, sir, that the Lutheran church has departed from the truth!” exclaimed the father, in a tone of excitement.

“Father, dear father, hear me patiently!” entreated Charles; and he continued: – “For, however thankful every one should be to his own church for the first instruction he received within her pale, yet it is not to be denied that we do not exercise any choice in our original connection with the church; we feel attachment to it because our parents do, and have no other grounds of preference; and even if persons are admitted to full communion at an early age, they generally do not know why they join that church rather than any other. Is this promise made so young to be forever binding? Even when we see that we were in error, shall we continue to walk in that way which we have discovered to be wrong, merely because we walked in it as children and continued in it to mature age!”

“But suppose,” said the mother, “we have found ourselves happy in this way, – and millions of others walk in it and are happy also? and when we see parents and friends, whose understanding and piety we honor, walking contentedly in this way?”

“You think, dear mother, that I am speaking of the lawfulness of going over from the Protestant to the Catholic church. I am not speaking now of a change of one good church for another, but of the liberty of changing our confession of faith in general, and my remarks will also apply to the Catholic who goes over to the Protestant church.”

“It is so, my dear wife,” observed the father, who had become composed. “In general, the change of one confession for another cannot be regarded as unlawful or immoral, and that position which some maintain, that he who wishes to be an honest man must remain in his own church, is utterly groundless. If it were correct, then Jesus and his apostles could not have abandoned Judaism, the first Christians could not have forsaken heathenism, our German ancestors could not have turned from the worship of Wodan to the service of the true God, and our fathers of three hundred years

ago could not have separated from the Romish church. Abraham went out from his idolatrous country, from his father's house, and in a strange land served God, who made the heavens and the earth. Besides, the truth is so sacred a thing that we should never, at least in religion, sacrifice it to circumstances."

"Your examples, father," interposed Amelia, "with the exception of a single one, relate only to conversion from a religion altogether false, as heathenism was, or from a corrupt one, as Judaism, to true religion or Christianity, and are not applicable, as it appears to me, to an exchange of one Christian church for another. Here we have in each church – I mean the Protestant and Catholic – baptism and the Lord's supper, the same Bible, the same Christ, the same God. If, then, both churches have the essentials of Christianity, the other smaller differences do not appear to justify the leaving of one for the other, but every one should continue in connection with the church to which he belongs."

"Ah! I perceive. Since you are betrothed to the minister, you also have become a lady theologian; but proceed, and we shall see whether you will be able to write sermons for your husband," playfully observed the father.

"Dear father, I will cheerfully submit to your teasing, as it shows a happy heart under these trying circumstances; but allow me to proceed. You yourself have taught me that a wife who does not see all perfection in her husband, or discovers unexpected faults, and observes more amiable qualities in other men, could not be justified in separating from him, but must continue faithful to him, bear with his faults, and only look upon his virtues. I should think that every one bore a relation somewhat similar to his church, as a wife does to her husband. Every church has its imperfections, but also its good qualities. It can demand inviolable fidelity."

"I wish, Amelia, that your intended husband were present," rejoined the father; "he would be pleased with your objection. As respects your comparison, it is not at all applicable to the case, but is lame, like most comparisons. You should have added that the obligations of married persons to bear the faults of their partners have their bounds; for instance, when one party no longer performs the promised duties and no longer fulfills the object of matrimony. So long as your husband keeps his promise, so long you are bound as his wife faithfully to obey him and to observe your vows, even if another man pleases you better. If he commits a fault inadvertently, then you must forgive him, for you also may have faults which will require his

indulgence. If, however, he designedly neglects his duties and outrages all matrimonial obligations and decent propriety, he then himself dissolves the bond which held you to him, and the laws will annul your obligations. It depends upon yourself whether you are resolved to endure his conduct, remain with him, and perform the duties of a wife; you thereby do no injury and commit no fault against a third person, for you are not under obligations to any other man.”

“Father, you say *you, you*; are you delivering this lecture on the law of divorce for my benefit? Do you apprehend that I shall have occasion to take advantage of it!” asked Amelia, with an arch smile.

“You naughty child! I see you are paying me back for my joke with you,” kindly replied he; “but it is too serious a matter to trifle about. Let me proceed. But quite different is your relation to the church. Christianity has a fixed and high object in view, and the church is established for the purpose of accomplishing this object in every individual man. If it is so constituted that it not only does not hinder, but promotes this object, and guides its members to the attainment of it, then it is a good church, for it affords what it promises. Then men must remain faithful to it, even if it has faults and imperfections, – just as you, dear Amelia, are bound to be faithful to your husband, if he performs the duties of a husband, even if he has many imperfections.”

“I hope *my* husband will not have many imperfections. If he has *any*, I have them yet to discover,” said the daughter, with affected gravity.

“You betrothed young ladies can think and speak of nothing but your intended husbands, I verily believe!” responded the father.

“Dearest father! did you not start the subject?” she retorted.

“Yes, but I did not intend that it should never stop. Well, then, I hold,” he continued, “if a church is so constituted that it does not promote the object of Christianity in individuals, and, moreover, if it has doctrines, customs, and an organization, which oppose this object and prevent its attainment in the minds of its members, then you are not at liberty to remain in connection with it, as you are at liberty to continue with your husband from whom you could be lawfully separated. You are much rather bound to dissolve your connection with such a church, for here you have duties to perform toward a third person, who has commanded you to do this.”

“Who is this third person?” asked Charles.

“There is more than one.” he replied. “The first is *God*, who in Christ has sent you a guide to perfection, whom you are bound to hear. You are not allowed to be satisfied with any thing less than perfection. The husband at the altar does not bind himself to exhibit all the perfections which the imagination of his bride may demand of a man. For how could he know what wonderful picture of masculine perfection the tender heart of a sentimental girl has created? But here you know that we are to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. You dare not be satisfied with any thing short of it; the church dare not substitute any thing else in place of it; but it should be ‘a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.’ Eph. 5:27. Then you dare not retain your connection with a corrupt church, as a wife may continue with a bad husband.”

“Charles,” said the mother, “do you feel the force of your father’s argument?”

The young man nodded reluctantly, but said not a word.

The father looked on his apostate son with an eye of compassion, and continued: – “The third person toward whom you have duties to perform is your *Savior* himself: the church is his property, and that the church might accomplish the object in view he sacrificed his life. He is the invisible Lord, the supreme head of his church, and he cannot acknowledge any communion, as his church and a true church, whose doctrines and rites oppose the design for which he was sent of God, even if that communion does call him Lord.”

The father paused a moment, and no one else uttered a word. He took a turn or two around the room, and proceeded: – “But again: this third person is *yourself*. For in a corrupt church you can hardly be a true Christian, well pleasing to the Savior; and if from your superior illumination you might possibly be, yet it is immoral to expose yourself continually to the dangerous and corrupting influence of such doctrines and rites, which may lead you from the path of true Christianity. You are morally bound to flee from such temptations, and to inform and strengthen your better judgment; so for your own sake you are bound to leave the corrupt church and unite yourself with the purer.”

Charles betrayed some excitement at these words, and was waiting with evident impatience to speak; but he did not interrupt his father.

“That third person,” continued he, “is, finally, *your fellow Christian*. While you remain connected with a church which opposes the design of Christianity, you encourage others to persevere who know not how to resist its evil influence; you contribute to the support of a pernicious system; you prevent the spiritual prosperity of your brethren, and commit treason against true Christianity.”

Here he ceased, and took a seat. Charles rose, with a confident air of triumph, and, advancing toward his father, said, “Dear father, you have expressed my sentiments precisely! Oh, how I am cheered by these words! I hope to be able to prove to you that the Roman Catholic is the true church, which promotes the object of Christianity; but the Protestant church opposes it. At least, this is my firm conviction, supported on substantial grounds. And when I have laid them before you, and you are brought to acknowledge their force, oh! then, dearest father —”

Interrupting him sternly, the father said, “I must follow you, and also become a Catholic?”

Charles was silent. He felt that the inference was natural, but, not daring to confirm it, only remarked that he hoped to receive forgiveness of his father.

The father did not let him off so lightly; he rather gave a direction to the subject which made the young man tremble. “If you,” he said solemnly, “are an honest man and a Christian, and we prove to you that the Romish church opposes the design of Christianity, you must abandon her communion and return to ours!”

Charles was reluctantly silent.

“Promise me.” – continued the father, extending his hand, – “promise me that you will do it, if I am to believe in the sincerity of your Catholicism and not to regard you as a hypocrite.”

Charles took courage. He grasped his father’s hand and solemnly promised. He was certain of his opinions; he was a Romanist from conviction. Why should he be apprehensive?

“With this agreement,” said the mother, “let us close the conversation on this subject, and devote the remainder of the evening to amusement.” Father and son willingly expressed their consent, – the former only upon the condition that Charles would prepare himself to bring forward his arguments for his church against Protestantism the next evening. The numerous visits,

however, which he received and paid, prevented the fulfillment of his promise until the third evening.

During this conversation, Julietta was silent, but was deeply interested. Several important questions occurred to her, but she did not venture to ask them.

5. Going To Church – The Latin Liturgy

IT WAS SUNDAY MORNING, and the parents and Amelia were preparing to go to church. Politeness led them to invite Julietta to accompany them, and they were surprised and delighted to see her readiness to go. Charles also made preparations, and the mother secretly rejoiced at it. It was not so with the father. He was silent, but his stern countenance too plainly discovered that his mind was deeply disturbed. Finally, as they were about to depart, and Charles reached after his hat, the father asked, “Do you intend to accompany us? to go with us to church?”

“Yes!” said he; “I hope that you will not disapprove of it.”

“I think it exceedingly strange, my son. You regarded us as so grossly erroneous in our religious opinions that you separated from us, and yet you will go with us to church? So you will do a thing which you know to be wrong? And is it not directly against the principles of your church to enter a heretical place of worship? Is it not forbidden by your priests?”

“That prohibition,” said Charles, with great confidence, “does not affect me, for I have received a dispensation, and have permission not only to go to Protestant churches, but also to celebrate the Lord’s supper with them, and to observe all their church rites.”

“Silence, sir!” cried out the father, with great violence; “silence, and stay back! You cannot, you dare not, enter our church so long as you hold us as cursed heretics and our worship as cursed heresy. No man can give you authority to act the hypocrite and deceiver, and none but a paltry fellow would make use of such permission.”

Charles stood confused, ashamed. He remained behind. The mother wept.

The devotion of the day was lost to the father. The abominable examples of secret Catholics, who, with the papal permission, for so many years played the part of Evangelical Christians, occurred to him. He thought of

King Charles the Second of England, who repeatedly and publicly vowed fidelity to the English church, and yet, after his death in 1685, it was made evident that for a long time he had been a Romanist. He thought of the Saxon crown-prince Frederick Augustus, the son of Augustus the Strong, whom they secretly made a Catholic in Italy and gave him permission to conceal it from 1712 until 1717; he thought of the permission given to Frederick, the crown-prince of Hesse-Cassel, to conceal his conversion from 1749 to 1754. He remembered how the Duke Moritz William of Saxony, administrator of the Protestant institute Zeitz, was secretly converted to Romanism, in 1715, by the Jesuit Schmeltzer, who insinuated himself into his favor under the title of a secretary of legation, and how he concealed it, even from his wife, and continued to manage the institution for two years. How could he have forgotten more recent examples of this kind? For instance, that of the Duke of Stolberg, who, as late as 1798, appeared a zealous Protestant in a pamphlet which he wrote, and yet, in 1800, publicly avowed that he had been a Romanist for seven years? And that of the court-preacher Stark, of Darmstadt, who performed the duties of an Evangelical minister until his death, but during his life secretly published a defense of the Romish church and an attack against the Protestant, and after his death was buried in the Romish graveyard? And that of Mr. Von Haller, who, in a letter to his family, himself acknowledges that, in 1820, he was secretly admitted into the Romish church by a Romish bishop in a private country-house, but that a dispensation was granted him to continue externally a Protestant Christian, and a member of the council of his native town, which is sworn to maintain the Evangelical faith? This same Mr. Von Haller confessed in that letter that the apostate Duke Adolphus of Mecklenburg-Schwerin assured him that there are many secret Romanists in Germany and other countries, who are allowed the liberty of concealing it from the people.

To find Charles in the society of such men, whose conduct he regarded as contemptible hypocrisy or at least as unpardonable weakness, was exceedingly painful to him, although it was nothing more than what he might have expected, since he knew so many instances of the kind. He was so much excited that he could pay little attention to the services of the church – for on that day a stranger occupied his pulpit. His dark and troubled eye was steadfastly fixed on the floor; only once he looked up toward the congregation, and he observed Julietta listening most attentively to the sermon.

This gave his mind another direction. "Perhaps," thought he, "the seed of truth will be sown in the heart of this young lady, which will produce good fruit!" and he could not conceal it from himself that it would have been much better if he had permitted his son to accompany them to church. He recollected how Amelia had apologized for the conduct of her brother, by maintaining that he never would have been unfaithful to his church, if he had remained in the bosom of his family and had enjoyed the privileges of Protestant worship. He felt the force of this observation so strongly, that he regretted his vehemency, and with a tranquil mind he returned to his son.

"Charles," said he, "I was wrong in forbidding you to attend our church. The sick man must not be prevented from going to the physician. I have nothing against your being present at our worship; I rather wish it. But do not mention the dispensation again. To worship God in a proper manner and to hear his word cannot be authorized by any man, because no man has a right to forbid it. He who believes that such permission is necessary plainly shows that, instead of being a servant of God, he has become the slave of men. What is the object of your pope's dispensation? Either it is right and good that you worship God with us, then you need no permission; or it is improper and injurious, then the bishop or pope has no right to give it to you, and, if he had, you have no right to make use of it."

Charles rejoiced that the tranquility of his father's mind was restored, and, in apology, only remarked that he regarded the prohibition to visit any other than Catholic churches only as a disciplinary regulation; that the Catholic church only thus cautions her members not to expose their faith to danger, and that a dispensation from this did not appear to him improper. The father thought that Charles's opinion of this subject was utterly erroneous, and that, according to the principles of the Romish church respecting heresy, such a permission could only be compared to that which a general gives to his spies, – occasionally to wear the uniform of the enemy and to mingle with them as friends, but only for the purpose of deceiving and ensnaring them. But still he thought, though his son was in error, yet he acted from the purest motives.

The mother, who had been deeply pained at the vehemence of her husband, was now the more gratified at the reconciliation. Desirous of changing the subject of conversation, she asked Julietta, who just then entered the room, how she was pleased with the Protestant worship? " Oh!" she exclaimed, with Neapolitan ardor, "I was exceedingly well pleased."

“And why?”

“Because I could understand it,” said she.

“And that is because you have learned the language of our country?” she asked.

“I do not mean that, but because here the worship is not performed in Latin, as with us, but in the language of the country,” replied the lady.

“You are certainly joking, dear miss! How could worship be edifying to the people if it was performed in a language which they did not understand?”

“Julietta speaks the truth, mother,” said Charles. “In the sacred services, particularly the mass, the church retains the Latin language, partly because it is rendered sacred by the high antiquity of the ritual, and partly because it is better suited to the holy mysteries. The people would only be disturbed in their devotion if the ritual were celebrated in the language of the country, and they would have less reverence for the holy mysteries, which though they do not *understand*, yet they can *feel* their sanctifying power. Hence, the church does not allow the worship to be conducted in any other than the Latin language.”

“What language, my son, did the Savior and the apostles use, when they taught and instituted the mysteries?” asked the father.

“Certainly the language of their country: – that of Palestine, or perhaps the Greek, which was very commonly spoken by the people,” replied he.

“And in what language did the Christians of the early centuries celebrate their religious service!”

“I cannot deny,” replied Charles, “that every congregation, used the language of the country in which it was located: – the Greeks the Greek, the Latins the Latin, the Syrians the Syriac.”

“You see, dear Charles,” continued the father, “that Christians had a right to hold their worship and celebrate the sacraments in their mother tongue. This right we also have. That the Western Christians employed the Latin in their worship was right, for it was the language of the country; but that the Germans, English, and French also use the Latin in worship is a manifest perversion and gross impropriety. If ignorance of the language promotes devotion, or if any importance is to be attached to its antiquity, and men attach a sort of sacredness to it, then the language of Palestine, or, at any rate, the Greek, in which the New Testament was written and the mysteries first celebrated, should be employed rather than the Latin. Why

do they adhere so pertinaciously to the Latin ritual? Does it not appear as though they were afraid that it should be understood by the laity?"

"For my part," remarked Amelia, "I would not consent to be married out of a Latin ritual, for I would not know whether the priest was marrying or divorcing me. I should think that that which is unintelligible cannot awaken devotion. Would a person ignorant of English be more deeply moved if he saw an English representation of Hamlet and Macbeth than if he witnessed the performance of those masterpieces in a language which he understood?"

In the mean time, Julietta, who had suddenly left the room, entered with a book, in which she was hastily turning over the leaves. It was the New Testament. Charles was startled at the sight of it, for he recognized it as his. "I have here," said she to Charles, "I have here found a passage which makes me doubtful whether our priests do right in holding their worship in Latin. Paul writes to the Christians in Corinth, in his first epistle, (ch. 14:2,) 'For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; however, in the spirit he speaketh mysteries; but he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.' (v. 6.) 'Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?' (v. 9.) 'So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? *For ye shall speak into the air.*' (v. 13.) 'Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray *that he may interpret,*' (v. 19.) 'Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than *ten thousand* words in an unknown tongue.' The apostle, dear sir, certainly understood the matter well, and I know well that he was right; for the English worship edified me much more than the Latin mass, which I do not understand."

Charles was taken by surprise. They all asked her where and how she had procured that book. Julietta related the whole story of finding it among a pile of music loaned her by Charles at the seminary. The parents' particularly the father, were pleased with the sound understanding of the young lady, and exhorted her to read the word of God diligently.

6. A Family Discussion

THE EVENING gave occasion to recommence the conversation on the subject of the change of Charles's religious principles. The father reminded them that they had agreed to proceed at once to the main point, and discuss the question in what relation the Evangelical as well as the Romish church stood to the design of Christianity. They seated themselves socially at the table, and, before the conversation began, the mother secured the son against any probable ebullition of the father's passion. "Look upon your son," said she, "not as an apostate from our church, but as a Romanist from his birth, whom you desire to convert; to the Evangelical church." This idea, the father also thought, would create tenderness and patience in his heart, which was already well disposed, and at the same time it awakened the hope, as he expressed it, that Charles would again find in his father's house that understanding which he had lost in the seminary.

They all soon agreed that the object of Jesus was to be the *Savior* of men; for this his very name – 'Jesus – implies. They also agreed that he became a Savior of men in redeeming and delivering them from sin. For thus they read, in Matt. 1:21: – "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." But when they discussed the question *how* Jesus became a Savior, and *what* must take place in the hearts of men to secure this salvation, then they differed. After a long conversation, they agreed to adhere to the declaration of the apostle Paul, for he certainly must have known what effect Christianity was intended to have on the heathen to whom he preached it, and in what manner Jesus was to become to them a Savior. He thus writes, (Tit. 2:11-14:) – "The grace of God (in Christ) that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniq-

uity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort.”

The parties agreed that here the apostle represents Jesus as a Savior not only from the *punishment* of sin, but that he *reforms* men, and redeems them from the *service* of sin; and that his object – consequently the object of Christianity – was to lead men to a knowledge of God and his law, to excite them to the obedience of that law, or to virtue, and to secure for them, as thus *reformed*, the grace of God and eternal life.

“This is,” said Charles, “precisely the doctrine of the Catholic church, and thus far it agrees with that of the Evangelical church. But I maintain that, in order to accomplish this object in the case of individual Christians, just such an institution as the Catholic church is necessary, and that, on the other hand, this object cannot be fulfilled by means of such an organization as the Protestant church presents. The peculiarities of the Catholic church, which determine this matter, and in which she principally differs from the Evangelical, are the following: – In her alone redemption can be found, for she was instituted by Christ and the apostles, and, consequently, is the true church; she alone possesses the means of an infallibly correct knowledge of Christian doctrine, – a legitimate and valid priesthood, and therefore regularly consecrated and lawfully appointed to teach and administer the sacraments; a legitimate arbiter of church government, (the pope;) and means of grace not dependent on the state of the mind in order to secure to believers the forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. Hence, she alone can fulfill the object of Christianity, and redeem men from sin.”

“You say a great deal at once, dear Charles,” said the father. “We will consider it hereafter. I grant that your church has very many means to release men from the *punishment* of sin, but I maintain, that, for this very reason, she is altogether incompetent to deliver them from the *dominion* of sin. As she is continually absolving men from punishment, she does not wean them from sin, but rather encourages them in immorality.”

“But the Catholic church demands penance and contrition of all who desire to receive the benefit of her means of grace.” observed Charles.

“I know that well enough,” said the father; “but men are not yet thereby reformed. If a sinner does not perform the promised penance, but continues to sin on, can he again be absolved if he goes to confession?”

“Certainly, if he again promises penance,” replied Charles; “for the holy Council of Trent teaches, very expressly, (in the 14th session,) ‘Sinners can

be absolved by the priest not only once, but as often as they penitently go to him.””

“But if he does not reform, and, although often absolved by the priest, sins on until his death, will his last confession on his death-bed, and the last absolution, or extreme unction, secure salvation for him?” asked his father.

“Undoubtedly. Herein consists the extent of priestly power: – that they, so long as body and soul are not separated, can yet bring the sinner into a state of grace,” said the young man.

“Then you grant, my son, that your priests absolve the *unreformed*. Then, if a man, though often promising reformation, yet never reforms, can be assured of the pardon of God and eternal life, through the repeated absolution of the priest, until his dying hour, it follows that reformation is not necessary to eternal life, but only occasional advice on the subject. In my view, this is precisely as if the masters of a trade would certify that a certain man was a traveled journeyman who ten times pretended to set out on his tour but always turned back at the gate of the city.”

“But, dear father, God also forgives as often as the sinner reforms, and the example of the thief on the cross shows that sinners can receive pardon even on a dying bed, if they feel sincere contrition. So the Catholic priest only forgives those who truly repent, for the Council of Trent says expressly (14th session) that the penitent must exhibit ‘a proper state of mind.’”

“The sincere penitent, according to the Scriptures, will certainly never find the way of grace closed against him,” said his father. “But the difference is this: that we direct him to the infallible God, the searcher of hearts, and tell him that sorrow for sin which proceeds merely from fear of punishment is not true and evangelical repentance, and cannot be acceptable to God, but that alone which arises from an internal hatred of sin, exhibited in abandoning sin, is well pleasing in his sight; but you direct the sinner to a fallible priest, who cannot see the heart or know whether that ‘proper state of mind’ exists, or at least can only be assured by the word and behavior of the penitent, and yet absolves, which, as you think, is so powerful that it will be always valid before God. Protestant ministers do not pretend to forgive their sins, but only declare to them the *divine promise* of pardon, console them by the assurances of the grace of God, only upon the condition, however, of sincere repentance. But, with you, the efficacy of absolution, as well as of all the sacraments, depends not on the moral character of the

Christian, but on the power of the priest; and the service operates, as you say, *ex opere operato*, – that is, if it is only performed.”

“That is a great advantage of Catholic absolution: – that its efficacy depends on the priest and his service, and not on the moral character and disposition of the penitent. The priest demands the external evidences of repentance. If he sees these, he absolves, and, if he absolves, then it is efficacious,” said Charles.

“You perfectly establish what I said.” replied the father. " In order to be saved, you require nothing more than a mere verbal acknowledgment of sin, or the ‘external evidences’ of ‘a proper state of mind,’ upon which this efficacious absolution always follows. The journeyman need not even buckle on his knapsack nor go beyond the city gate, but only repeatedly promise that he will travel, and it is just as good as if he had traveled. This is very convenient for persons of high and low degree, who indeed wish to die happy, but also wish to spend their whole lives in dissipation. In what sense, then, does your Catholic church redeem men *from sin*? She forgives your sins without end, and falsely secures you from the *punishment* of them in eternity, without it being at all necessary that you should be delivered from the *dominion* of sin. You can tranquilly indulge your lusts and desires all your days; the priest who carries the keys of heaven will without fail unlock the gates for you in your dying hour. Do you not see that thus the genuine reformation of men is really superfluous, and that your church does not promote the object of Christianity, which is, first to reform men and make them new creatures in Christ Jesus, *and then only to promise* them forgiveness and eternal life? Is it not plain that the Romish church is an institution which delivers men not from the dominion of sin, but rather lulls the consciences of sinners to sleep, and yet, after all, by the power of the priest, conveys the most depraved to heaven? Do you think there is any thing great and efficacious in this priestly power? No, no, my son; it is destructive of all morality!"

“I must freely grant that the Catholic doctrine of the efficacy of priestly absolution and the sacraments may greatly tend to encourage the sinner in transgression; but yet we also insist strongly on Christian reformation,” said he.

“But all that will be fruitless,” continued the father, “if the sinner believes that the priest can at any time forgive him all, and that his absolution must be acknowledged as valid by God. Thus most manifestly you make

God submissive to the priests, whose declarations He must obey, even when they absolve men whom God's righteousness could not absolve, or when they refuse absolution to men whom the grace of God would certainly forgive. It is truly foolish, and shocking at the same time, that in your church men teach and believe that God has surrendered his judgment into the hands of fallible priests, who have to contend with their own passions, and yet who, according to their own contracted views and the ever-changing emotions of the human mind, can bestow grace or invoke wrath, and, consequently, eternal salvation or everlasting misery, upon their brethren. Forgiveness is a transaction between the divine love and the heart of the sinner. The sinful priest dare not interfere between them, and prescribe to the love of God whose sins should be forgiven and whose should be retained. This is superstition, in which God is made an idol, which draws away the heart of the sinner from God and fixes it upon man, the priest."

"In this your father is perfectly right, dear son," said the mother. "Oh, listen not to the voice of a priesthood which would prescribe rules and usages to the divine righteousness, but hear the voice of the Savior and his apostles, who promise no man admission into the kingdom of heaven who is not truly reformed and leads a pious life. Does not your Savior say, (John 3:3,) 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'? and does being 'born again' mean confessing to the priest or undergoing penance? Hear how the apostle Paul explains this new birth. He says, (Eph. 4:21, etc.,) 'If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The apostle Peter also, whose successor the pope pretends to be, demands of Christians the reformation of their whole life, and is not satisfied with contrition and penances. 'As obedient children,' he writes, (1 Pet. 1:14,) 'not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which calleth you is holy, so be ye holy in *all manner* of conversation.'"

"But, dear mother," answered he, "the Catholic church insists equally as much as the Protestant on true holiness of life. She only maintains that Christ gave to the priesthood the power of absolving sinners so soon as they manifest contrition. For the word of the Lord, (John 20:23,) which he spake to his disciples, certainly empowers the priesthood, who are the successors

of the apostles, to forgive or to retain sins. ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.’ Or is it not plain enough when the Savior says, (Matt. 18:18,) ‘Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?’ Here there is no escape; here you must unavoidably acknowledge that the priesthood has the power of unlocking heaven and delivering men from the punishment of sin.”

“You are altogether wrong, my son,” said the father. “As it respects the latter passage, the sense is plain enough from its connection with the two preceding verses, 15-17, in which the apostles are instructed how they shall act, not when they hear confession, for that they did not do, but when they had contentious and troublesome persons in the church. They were first to admonish such privately, and then in the presence of several witnesses. ‘And if he neglect to hear thee,’ (he says in 5:17,) ‘tell it unto the church; let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, etc.’ Here, my son, you see plainly that the Savior only says that it will be valid before him and his Heavenly Father when the church excludes from her communion an unworthy and persevering sinner, or again receives him. There is no reference at all to forgiveness of sins before God, or to release from punishment in eternity, but only to exclusion from or restoration to the Christian communion.”

“I see plainly that the connection of the words perfectly justifies your explanation of this passage. But how is it with the other? In that *forgiveness of sins* is expressly mentioned.” he remarked.

“That is true, but it proves nothing for the absolution of the priesthood. Even if this ‘forgiving sins’ is to be understood of pardon before God, it still proves nothing for priestly absolution in confession.” replied his father. “Where does Jesus say in this passage that absolution can be received *more than once*? – that it can be repeated at every confession? He does not even at all say that forgiveness of sins is such an *external* act, which can be repeated at the pleasure of the priest. Without forcing a meaning, the words can be thus interpreted: – Whomever ye pardon for what they have done against me and the kingdom of God, and re-admit into my church, them will I also pardon. At any rate, the passage affords not the least ground to justify the *repeated* absolution of sinful men. For 1 John 3:5, 6, expects and demands of Christians that they sin no more habitually, and of course need no

absolution: – ‘ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin; whoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.’ But the same apostle directs Christians, if they sin, not to priestly absolution, but to Christ. He thus writes, (1 John 1:9:) ‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;’ (ch. 2:1,) ‘And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.’ Finally, dear son, you must certainly acknowledge that in both the passages under discussion the Savior is speaking *to his apostles only*, and that, consequently, the power which he bestows upon them, whatever be its nature, is only *personal*. That they could confer this power on others – -yea, that it is at all communicable – is not established by a single word.”

“But the words of the Savior to his apostles at the last supper, – ‘This do in remembrance of me,’” – said Charles, “the Evangelical church considers as a command to all Christians in every age; why then should not the power of forgiving sins also be extended to the successors of the apostles?”

“Your conclusion is very singular’ my son. It is this: – if *one* command given to the apostles is binding on *all* Christians, then all the other commands are equally binding on all Christians. If that were so, why is it that your priests alone forgive the sins of the laity? Then each layman could forgive another, and a layman could also forgive the sins of a priest. These words, ‘This do in remembrance of me,’ merely because they were addressed to the apostles, would not of themselves afford us any ground for the celebration of the Lord’s supper. But they do constitute a ground, not only because it is the duty of every Christian gratefully to commemorate the death of Jesus and thus follow the example of the apostles, but also on this account: – because we see from the New Testament that the apostles established that ordinance at the same time for all other Christians, and that immediately after the death of Jesus, by their direction, it was introduced into the churches. But the power of forgiving sins, if it were really conferred on the apostles, was in its nature not capable of being communicated to all Christians, or any portion of them. We read not a single word that the apostles conferred it on others; and, often as the rights and privileges of elders or bishops are extensively mentioned in the New Testament, not the slightest intimation is given that they had the power, and should exercise it, of forgiving sins. We know, moreover, from ecclesiastical history, that confession

and absolution had their origin in the *church penitence*, which those who had been excommunicated were obliged to submit to.”

“And what was that?” asked Charles.

“Those whose lives were irregular,” replied he, “and gave offence to the church, were excluded, and were obliged, if they wished to be restored, not only to confess their sins *publicly* before the whole congregation, but submit to certain penances or exhibit external signs of the sincerity of their repentance. Thus it was in the early centuries. But as the churches were multiplied, especially when, by the conversion of the emperors, Christianity spread through the whole Roman empire at the beginning of the fourth century, this public confession and penitence was gradually changed for a private one before the bishop and his ministers, and absolution, as well as remittance of the penances, followed from these alone. In the progress of time your auricular confession grew out of this, and this extended to all sins, even the most secret. Absolution no longer referred to the pardon of the church, but to the forgiveness of sins before God and release from punishment in eternity. This is the origin of your confession and absolution; and what the Romish church still maintains concerning the valid authority of priestly absolution is altogether an abuse and a wretched imposition.”

“Pardon me, dear father, if I call into question this account of the origin of the sacrament of penance. The holy Council of Trent expressly says, (14th session, ch. v. of Penance,) ‘As secret sacramental confession is recommended with great unanimity by the holiest and most ancient fathers of the church, and was practiced by the holy church *from the beginning*, it is a calumny when men are not afraid to aver that it has no divine authority, but is only a human invention, and was first established by the Lateran Council.’”

“In this matter the holy council is undoubtedly in error,” replied the father. “I will leave you to read through the writings of the holiest and most ancient fathers of the church, such as Hermes, Ignatius, Clemens of Rome, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, and even the Apostolical Constitutions,¹ and wait to see whether you can find a single passage which confirms the Romish auricular confession. They all treat merely of the penitence which the *lapsed* and the excommunicated were obliged to show before the bishop and the other ministers, and refer the words, ‘whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall also be bound in heaven,’ etc., exclusively to the right of excommunicating unworthy members from the church, and of restoring penitents.

But they say not a word in favor of the doctrine of your church that the priest has power to release sinners from the punishment of the future world.”

“Very well, dear father; I will read those works, and will give you notice of the result.”

“That will be of great benefit to you.” observed the father; “for you will find that in this point, as well as in many others, the oft-repeated confident assertion of the Romish theologians, that the ancient church taught the doctrines of the present Romish church, is altogether without foundation.”

The mother here ventured to express an opinion, which will be found sensible and appropriate.

“As respects myself,” said she, “I do not care about your learned discussions, but adhere in all simplicity to the declarations of the Savior and his apostles. In them I have never yet read a word about sacramental confession and priestly absolution. According to the Scriptures, the justification of a sinner is a much more simple affair. I nowhere find that God, who, as the searcher of hearts, alone can perform the office of an Almighty Judge, has surrendered it to sinful men, who might spare him the trouble of judging and forgiving. The prodigal son (Luke 15:12) simply returns to his father a poor, contrite sinner, and prays for forgiveness; and the father receives him with open arms, without first having him absolved by the priest. And where the Lord describes the judgment (Matt. 25:31, etc.) which he himself will hold, and will surrender to no priest, he only asks ‘whether they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked,’ but not whether they were absolved and anointed with oil before they died. On this word of my Lord I rely more securely than upon all the indulgences and absolutions of men.”

“Your mother has come to the point, my son. It is certainly clear that God cannot resign his office as judge to sinful men, who themselves need grace and cannot see the heart; and that, as respects the ‘binding and loosing’ of the priesthood, it refers only to the excommunication and restoration of church members, – that is, to their pardon before men. But it is equally clear that the Savior is not satisfied ‘that a man at confession should be in a proper state of mind, and be absolved,’ but that he demands the *whole* life devoted to piety; but nothing more.”

“I confess that I am at a loss how to answer you,” said Charles. “ But do not crowd too much upon me at once. Give me time to think of the matter

more thoroughly; perhaps it will become clearer to me."

"With great pleasure, my son; only seek the truth honestly."

1. "The eight books of the Apostolical Constitutions are the work of some austere and melancholy author, who, having taken it into his head to reform the Christian worship, which he looked upon as degenerated from its original purity, made no scruple to prefix to his rules the names of the apostles, that thus they might be more speedily and favorably received," – Mosheim, cent. i. ch. ii. sec. 19. [Ed.]↩

7. Mixed Marriage – The Condemnation Of Heretics What Is Demanded To Obtain Eternal Life

THE NEXT EVENING Charles acknowledged that he had not yet found an answer to the arguments of yesterday, and begged that they might, in the mean time, proceed to some other subject. The father observed that it would be well if Amelia's intended husband (who lived in the vicinity) also took part in these discussions; especially that he might afford his aid in those parts which related to church history and Biblical interpretation. Charles had no objections, but still observed that then the parties would be unequal, for he had no one on his side. The father remarked that Charles also possessed the advantages of a knowledge of the ancient languages, of history, and philosophy. At the same time, he promised that the young minister would only be appealed to when he and the mother found it necessary. Charles was satisfied; and the father sportively asked whether Amelia had any thing against it.

"I shall be much pleased," she replied, "to have an opportunity now of forming some idea of the extent of Bernhard's learning, for our conversations have not been of the scholastic order. I will only beg, however, that Charles is not to make a Romanist of him; for then, much as I love him, I would most certainly not marry him."

"Oh, what intemperate zeal! Cannot, then, a Catholic be an amiable man, and worthy of your affections?" asked her brother. "Does love inquire about confessions of faith? You do not marry the confession of a man, but himself."

"Yes, but, dear brother," she remarked, "because I wish to have the whole man, soul and body, his confession of faith is to me a very important

matter. Whether men can explain what love is, that the philosophers may settle. I know it not. Bernhard told me that an old philosopher was of opinion that the soul originally was divided into two halves, which sought each other in life, and, when they found each other, united into one. This explanation does not appear to me to be wrong, for there is such an elective affinity of souls in true love, in which not only the hand and ring are given, but also the heart. But a Romanist and a Protestant soul, if each is faithful to its creed, must repel each other; for the former regards the latter as sunk in ruinous error, and the latter holds the former as obscured by narrow prejudices and filled with a superstitious fear of the power of the priesthood. How shall they be one? Either they repel each other, or the one draws the other over to its faith.”

“You contradict all experience, dear sister. In countries of promiscuous faith, you also find promiscuous marriages very numerous, and they agree happily.”

“That may be,” said she. “I am only speaking my own sentiments, according to which such a marriage can only be agreeable in case one party or both are either irreligious, or indifferent, or unfeeling, and the marriage only regarded as a civil contract, or entered into for the sake of fortune and place, or – and this may often be the case – if the Romish party does not believe all that the priests have established as articles of faith, and is in heart a Protestant.”

“But why cannot the faith of both churches be endured in matrimony? Cannot one party leave the other in the undisturbed enjoyment of his faith?” asked he.

“The Protestant can well think so, but not the Romanist,” replied Amelia. “The latter, because your church declares all heretics as eternally cursed, cannot cease trying to convert his or her Protestant partner to the Romish faith, and must be sadly troubled if this is not accomplished. How can the Romanist be one heart and one soul with another devoted to eternal misery!”

“I agree perfectly with Amelia,” said the mother, “especially as it respects the education of children. Each party will wish to have the children brought up to his or her confession, and must wish it if they are true to the faith of their church. It will be intolerable to the Protestant party, and an everlasting thorn in the heart, if the children are brought up to a blind faith, to convictions which are regarded as erroneous, and to practices which must

be considered as superstitious. Equally intolerable must it be to the Romish party if the children are instructed in soul-destroying error and led directly down to the bottomless pit. There can be no peace there.”

“You will not take it ill, Charles,” added the father, “if I also utter precisely the same sentiments. It would be intolerable to me if I had a wife who, with superstitious anxiety, would run away to mass when she should attend to her children at home; who would pray to the saints when she should be thinking of God; who would conscientiously tattle to the confessor all the secrets of matrimony; who would mortify herself by fasting and penance; who would regard me as a miserable and accursed heretic; whom, as the secret confederate of proselyting priests, I would always have to watch, lest the children might be seduced to Romanism; with whom, on the Lord’s day, I could not go to the same church; by whom, finally, I would always be secretly tormented about taking care of my soul’s salvation, according to her opinion, and becoming a Romanist.”

“Oh, dear father,” said Charles, “how black you paint this affair! I do not believe that experience would establish your positions.”

“That you only say because you as yet have no experience,” replied he. “Only read the Romish writings, and you will everywhere find proof that your priests enforce it as a conscientious duty on the Catholic party, in marriage, to bring up all the children in the Catholic faith. They absolve no man or woman at confession if they do not promise to exert themselves to the utmost to lead their children to the Romish church. And this is not only done by a few of the most zealous, but by all; they are so instructed, they must do it, agreeably to the directions of the pope.”

“You are certainly wrong in this matter, dear father. In that case the father of the Christian world, the pope, must regard Protestants not as Christians, though they are his children, yet straying, but as heathen, and, as it were, infected with the plague.”

“My poor son, how little you know of your own church! Hear the following, on page 158, from a circular of the former pope, dated Feb. 27, 1809, to the French priesthood. ‘Several among you have prayed me to bestow upon you the power of granting liberty to such persons to marry, one of whom acknowledges the Catholic faith and the other holds to a *heretical doctrine*. But I believe it is known to you that the true Catholic church has always disapproved of marriages with heretics; for the church *abhors* them, as my predecessor. Pope Clemens XI.’ said, on account of the great sin and

the no *small danger of the soul* which they occasion; and almost on the same grounds that she has forbidden the marriage of Christians with *unbelievers* has she also discouraged Catholics from marrying heretics, – because it is *not a pious act*. Hence it is very much to be regretted that there should be among Catholics any who are so led away by *shameful* passion as not to be *shocked* at such marriages, *so highly to be disapproved of*, which the holy mother, the church, has always reprobated and forbidden. For, besides the great danger of a *perverted mind* which the Catholic party is exposed to, and that *the child which is to be brought up cannot under these circumstances be well enough attended to*, it is also very difficult to live together in domestic concord without being united in faith. ’ Now, my son, what do you think of that?”

“Very strangely indeed, if it is genuine,” said Charles.

“Certainly it is: no well-read man can doubt it. What the pope here says of the discord which is created by these intermarriages is very true; and it should determine a prudent Protestant not to marry a person of the Catholic faith, because the principles of the Catholic party would prevent every thing like domestic harmony. You also see from this, my son, that your church abhors such marriages, and that the apprehension that the Catholic party and the children could not be sufficiently guarded against the influence of Protestant principles, induces Catholic priests to exert all their efforts in the conversion of the Protestant party, or, at least, the children: hence, they are at liberty to solemnize such a marriage only upon the condition that the children (*yet to be born*) be brought up to the Catholic church. This you may learn from a proclamation of the King of Prussia, dated March 2, 1819, in which he declared that the conduct of the Romish clergy, (in the Rhine provinces,) in requiring a promise that Catholic persons who wish to marry Protestants should bring up the children of both sexes to the Catholic religion, is not to be allowed.”

“Is all this really so?” asked Charles, in evident trepidation.

“I’ll prove it to you,” said the father, and took from the book case an authenticated copy of the document. Charles was convinced, and showed evidences of shame.

The father proceeded: –

“This is proof sufficient that, in such a marriage, the Protestant party can have no peace. You also see that the father of the Christian world, as you call the pope, regards us as nothing better than heathen, and infected with a

plague, in whose company a good Catholic must be ‘shocked’ because of our daring impiety, and among whom he exposes his ‘soul to no small danger.’ And what is it that makes us such abominable beings? Do we deny Christ? Do we allow or connive at licentiousness? Do we refuse obedience to the government? Nothing of all these! we only do not believe in the pope, nor in the power of the priests, nor in the seven sacraments, nor in the mass and the efficacy of holy water. Is this sufficient ground to regard good Christians, who strive after the example of Christ to be perfect in love, as worthy of abhorrence, as destroyers of souls, as nothing better than heathen? But all this proceeds from your uncharitable principles, which irretrievably condemn all to everlasting death who do not believe in the pope and the priesthood; and this principle your clergy have established only because in it they find the surest support of their power.”

“I must confess,” said Charles, “that this rigor of their principles on mixed marriages was unknown to me, and that I do not feel inclined to justify them. But as respects the sentence of condemnation which the Catholic church declares against all Protestants, that is certainly true: she excludes them all from eternal salvation, and absolutely recognizes no grace for them. It was this severe condemnation which particularly brought me to a stand when I first adopted the Catholic faith: my heart thought of *you*. It was equally as impossible for me to condemn you as to regard you as condemned.”

“Oh, my son! why did you not then think, above all, of the instructions I gave you, of the prayers I offered for you when you and I knelt down together before God? Why did you not think of the blessed Savior who died for you – of the church he has established – of —”

“Father! father!” exclaimed the young man, with emotion, “spare me! distress not my mind with those youthful reminiscences. Let me proceed. After a long conversation with my friend Colbert on this subject, he at length solved the difficulty which harassed me, and my mind was restored to peace. The Catholic church, said he, as the only true church, – the only one instituted by Christ, – must hold every other church-establishment as false; and, as the Scriptures teach that only those who belong to the kingdom of Christ, or to the church, will be saved, she must consequently declare all who are not Catholics as damned. But in doing this she only maintains her dignity and value. Still, she does not deny that God, according to his grace, may also bestow eternal salvation upon individual Christians of

other church communions, who are particularly pious and zealous in doing good. But yet she cannot determine this, nor establish it as an article of faith, for it is dependent on the extraordinary grace of God. The church does not know what God will do; she only knows that, agreeably to the way of salvation which God has published, he who is out of the church is also out of salvation, and this she acknowledges; the *secret* counsel of God respecting the salvation of men who are out of the church she commits to the divine grace, and avoids a positive declaration about it, partly because she knows nothing about it, and partly because such a declaration would only tend to confirm men in their folly and error.”

“Your objection to the position does honor to your heart,” rejoined the father; “but your acquiescence finally in this distinction speaks but little for the soundness of your head. Where has your church granted liberty for such a private opinion? Whatever your church, or rather the priests, as the lords and tutors of the church teach, that you as a layman must believe, consequently you must believe that we are all damned; for this your church teaches most expressly. She does not allow any private opinion; for that is heresy when a person maintains any opinion which is different from the unalterably-established doctrines of the church. Your friend Colbert deceived you. He never would have dared to declare publicly what he told you privately. If private opinion is allowed in one, must it not be allowed in others? Could you entertain a different opinion from the church on the sacraments, the power of the priests, or purgatory, without being a heretic?”

“It is true.” answered Charles, “that liberty of opinion does not extend so far.”

“Then you see that the *professed* liberty of thinking what you please about the damnation of heretics is only a *pretended* one, which your church condemns and must condemn. The Romish catechism says expressly, ‘As this is a church (the Romish) which cannot err, because she is guided by the Holy Ghost, *then it follows that all other professed churches are guided by the spirit of the devil, and maintain the most corrupting errors both of faith and practice.*’”

The mother could now no longer restrain her feelings, and succeeded at last in getting an opportunity to relieve her mind.

“Can you really believe, dear Charles,” said she, “that God will condemn a man because he rather trusts Christ and his declarations than the pope, the apostles rather than bishops, the doctrines of the New Testament rather than

the decrees of your councils? Only read how simply our Savior declares what is necessary for eternal life. He says, (John 17:3,) ‘And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ Further, (John 3:36,) ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.’ And (in ch. 5:24,) ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.’ See, my dearest son, how consoling this simple word of the Lord is to the Christian. He demands nothing else than faith in the true God, in himself, as the messenger of God, and obedience to his moral commandments. He nowhere demands faith in the artificial doctrines which councils and popes have established, and which the unlearned, and perhaps also the learned, cannot understand. It has always thrilled me to read (in Acts 16:25, etc.) about the jailor that came trembling to Paul and fell at his feet, asking, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ who immediately answered, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.’ Either Paul deceived him, or faith in the pope, the priesthood, the mass, purgatory, and other things, are not necessary to salvation, and your priests condemn us with most uncharitable injustice.”

“Just so, precisely,” continued the father. “For we believe, as you do, in one true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. Both these doctrines are founded in the Apostolical, the Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; and these our church has also adopted, so that in these points we have your doctrine precisely. If Jesus (in John 17:3) distinguishes these two points as those which men must believe in order to be saved, then you make Christ a deceiver, when you would eternally condemn us on account of other doctrines which your priests have established. Verily we do not need your affected sympathy, when you say that God may perhaps save a few of us by his unrevealed and uncovenanted grace. We know certainly that we will be saved if we believe in Christ.”

“I must acknowledge the force of that declaration of Christ,” said the son. “But there is something still which prevents me from agreeing with you entirely. It impressed me deeply when Colbert introduced it. It is this: there can be but *one* true church; that this is the Roman Catholic church, and that, consequently, salvation can be found in her communion alone.”

“That subject,” observed his father, “we will discuss when we meet again, and invite the presence of Bernhard. In the mean time, my son, believe this firmly: that your church doesnot thereby serve the object of Christianity, which in general is to make men moral, when she without respect to their moral character condemns all who do not believe her doctrines, and thus makes salvation depend merely on opinions and the observance of certain outward practices.”

8. Julietta – Matt. 19:16, 19 – Influence Of The Catholic Sacraments In Comforting The Mind

THE NEXT MORNING Julietta and Charles spent an hour, as usual, in musical practice, after which she gradually led the conversation to the subject of the Bible, and finally asked him whether he had ever read the New Testament. When he replied that he had been acquainted with it from his youth, she expressed her great joy, and added that she hoped he would now answer several questions which, for some time, had been revolving in her mind. “No religious scruples, I hope!” asked he, with a degree of impatience quite unusual. “Yes, they are,” answered she. “I find not a word about so many things which from my youth up I have been taught to consider as essential to Christianity, that I really am very doubtful whether every thing is true, whoever may have introduced it. You would very much oblige me by giving me some information on these points, which you, as a gentleman of education, and certainly well-instructed in your youth, are so well qualified to do.”

“You ask too much of me, Julietta. I was educated in my youth for the Lutheran church, and have not long been a member of the Orthodox Roman church. I am myself but a young convert; I am yet learning, and I cannot solve your difficulties on all these points.”

“I well know that you became a Catholic only some months ago.” said Julietta. “You then made a real leap of it. I have all the trouble in the world to continue a Catholic, and I wish that you would help me. That you must certainly be able to do, inasmuch as all that now disturbs me must have occurred to your mind, but which you so easily overcame.”

“Go, Julietta, drive these things from your mind, and adhere in pious simplicity to your original faith.”

“Pardon me, sir; this good advice you did not follow yourself.”

“There you are certainly right. But I had studied, and was therefore well acquainted with the learned controversies of the theologians. But you have not had these advantages.”

“Ah! since I have several times read the New Testament, I do not appear to myself to be as ignorant as formerly,” observed the lady. “True, I find some things in it which I do not understand, because I am not learned; but the discourses of Jesus I understand very well, and I perceive that it is not at all hard to learn from the Scriptures what is to be believed and done in order to be a true Christian and assured of eternal life. I do not at all see why among us the reading of the Bible is forbidden to the people.”

“But how many a one has become heterodox by the reading of the Scriptures! Take good care that you do not fill your head with foolish notions!” observed he.

“Heterodox! does that mean to be foolish in our notions of faith?” she asked.

“Not exactly that, but it means to believe differently from the general doctrine of the church.”

“Then, truly, that has already happened to me. I am heterodox, as you call it, and for that very reason I want you to clear the matter up. But give yourself no uneasiness about my foolish notions. I can assure you that the doubts which have occurred to me by reading the New Testament do not trouble me, but rather that which I have learned from it makes me happier, and, as I think, a better woman. At least, since that time I am always in good humor. Have you not observed it!”

“Well, what have you learned that makes you so happy?” he asked.

“But perhaps you will laugh at me.”

“Then, for once, you were foolish in your faith.”

“Well, if you will have it, then listen! It is the passage here in Matt. 19:16-19: – ‘ And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him. Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him. Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother, and. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ This passage, sir, has made me very happy. Hear how it came: –

"It was about two years ago when in Naples we were celebrating the Holy Week and Good Friday. My mind was quite full of the sufferings and death of the Lord, and I was so distressed and melancholy that I could no longer remain in the streets of the city, but went out in a southern direction toward St. Elmo, where an extensive prospect of Naples and the sea is presented. There I sat down under a tree. All was silent around me; the sun was sinking in glorious majesty beneath the distant waves of the sea, and the blue canopy of the high heavens every moment became darker above me. 'There,' thought I, 'is the Redeemer in his splendor, and no earthworm, Pharisees, or Jewish priests, can again obscure his glory or mar his happiness. But where is the heaven which received the Savior after his sufferings, and whither I shall also go to eternal joy and everlasting rest?' I looked up, as far as my eye could reach, but there were no limits; my vision stretched farther and still farther, my thoughts penetrated farther still; but immensity was there.

"I could imagine nothing. My thoughts fled from me. Only an unutterable longing after the life of the blessed remained as a deep-fixed sorrow in my soul. The father of light, the sun, had gone down; the crimson clouds and sky began to grow pale: gray night approached from the east; the evening star soon glittered in the west, brighter, and still brighter, until, like a pure, consecrated lamp, it burned in silvery brightness on the face of heaven. 'May not heaven,' I thought in my ignorance, 'be located in this beautiful star? The paradise of the blessed may well be displayed in such pure, undimmed glory.' In spirit I elevated myself from the earth to this enchanting paradise, and wandered under its trees with angels and saints and my beloved parents. How happy I felt! I plucked fruit from the tree of knowledge, and ignorance and folly fell like scales from my eyes. I ate of the tree of life, and felt that henceforth I would not grow old; that sickness and death would have no more dominion over me; that I would flourish in immortal youth. I was fanned by heavenly breezes. I drank of the fountains of salvation. I was blessed indeed; – I forgot the world. It was the happiest hour of my life! But the coolness of the night-dew awakened me from my dream and brought me back again to the earth. Then it appeared to me as though I had lost paradise forever. I was Eve, as she was driven out of the garden of happiness. To return – to return – was the ardent longing of my soul. But which way leads thither? Who will give me security that I will find it? 'Ah!' I cried out, in agony, 'if thou, Redeemer, didst yet wander on

earth, or if I had lived in the days of thy earthly pilgrimage, that I might have asked *thee*, that I might have heard from thy lips, what I must do to obtain eternal life!’ That was, indeed, an inconsiderate desire. I said to myself it was foolish. But it clung to my soul, and it was awakened very often afterward at the sight of the evening star, just as a longing for home at the remembrance of our native land. But see! in the days when the Savior wandered among mortals, a young man felt the same longing that I did, and he approached the Lord with the question, ‘What shall I do that I may have eternal life!’ Oh, how I bless the holy evangelist, that he recorded the answer which the Savior gave! Now I also have asked him, and he has also directed me: hence it is that I am so happy.”

Charles listened with rapt attention to this glowing speech. His heart was fired with intense admiration of the fair speaker. Usually animated and interesting in her conversation, yet he had never heard her express herself in such exalted strains. She seemed to be wholly absorbed in her theme, and uttered her thoughts with true Italian animation and elegance.

He was deeply moved, and thoughtfully replied, “Julietta, I also once looked upon the evening star and felt the same longing. Why was I not able to find the answer which you have found? I was directed to the church.”

She became still more excited. Advancing nearer to him, and throwing her whole soul into her words, she said, “To the church, to Rome, you need not betake yourself. Believe, sir, that Heaven will not continue silent if the heart sincerely asks. When I on that evening looked up to the high vault of heaven, which encompasses sea and land and stretches into immensity, Italy and holy Rome were to me only a miserable clod of earth, St. Peter’s Church a molehill, and the sacrificing priest a poor creature like myself, equally distant from the evening star and equally infirm. From him, from him, who came from heaven and again ascended to heaven, did I desire to hear how I also might reach that abode of bliss.”

“But why,” he asked, “had you no confidence in the church, which prefigures and visibly represents the invisible church of heaven, and to which the Savior delegated the power of securing paradise to the faithful by means of the sacraments?”

Julietta all of a sudden seemed to have acquired new energy and courage, and she thus proceeded: – “I knew and now well know all that the church teaches and promises. But since that time her consolations have appeared to me very melancholy, richly fraught with fear and alarm. Therefore

they could never cheer me, but I only became more distressed and perplexed. Ah, sir, to the sincere Catholic, who desires to save his soul, it is a work of anguish and misery. For only see: – According to the Catholic faith, Satan retains us in his power until the priest delivers us from him at baptism through the influence of exorcism. Ah, how great is the advantage I have with my Savior! He called little children to him, who were yet unbaptized, kissed and blessed them, and said, ‘The kingdom of heaven is theirs; and all who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven must become as innocent children. But even baptism does not yet secure me against the wiles of the devil. The sacrament of confirmation must be added, of which the Romish catechism says: – ‘It fortifies us against the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil.’ I believe, indeed, that confirmation is good, because the church has established it; but I find in my New Testament not a word that Jesus and the apostles confirmed the baptized in the same manner that the Roman priests do. But still this protection is not sufficient to secure the grace of God and eternal life. The sacrament of holy confession must now be used at least once a year. The Holy Council of Trent says that at confession the priests are ‘judges of sinners and their sins, and in the stead of God and Christ.’”

“And pray, miss,” said Charles, interrupting her not very politely, and artfully endeavoring to divert her from the subject, “pray, are the ladies of Italy taught the decrees of councils?”

“Yes, sir,” said she; “much more carefully than they are taught the Scriptures.”

Charles was fairly caught, and attempted no reply, but merely said, “Proceed!”

“Well, as I was remarking,” she continued, “The priests can absolve or refuse, and to whom they refuse it, upon him sin and its punishment rest, to him the gate of heaven is closed, and baptism and confirmation are of no avail. Ah, dear sir! confession often distressed me exceedingly. I thought, in my simplicity, ‘Why has the Almighty God set up a man as judge between me and Him? and that, too, in a matter in which I offended only Him the Almighty’ and not the priest? why dare He not forgive me if the priest should please to refuse me absolution? He is certainly merciful, but only when the priest declares He shall be merciful!’ Here I was brought to a stand, and I was always very sorry to think that the great God held us poor lay-people in such low esteem as not to receive our confession nor to judge

and absolve us himself. But since I have read what our Savior says of the prodigal son – how the father received and forgave him – all my apprehensions have been quieted. But the misery is not yet at an end. For if the priest does absolve me, and I begin a new and Christian life, the church still commands me to do works of penance in order to appease the divine wrath, such as fasting, giving alms, saying prayers, and many other such things.”

“Really, signora,” observed Charles, “I begin to suspect you have received instruction from some Protestant minister. What has created these doubts in your mind?”

“I have never conversed with a Protestant minister, until I came into your father’s house,” she replied. “No, sir; it was no human teacher!” and then, with emphasis, added: – “It was this New Testament, – this book, which fell into my hands in so remarkable a way.”

“But proceed with your speech.” said Charles, with a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone.

“I will do so, with your permission; and allow me to observe that, from your tone of voice, it is rather your politeness that prompts the request than your desire to hear me.”

This was uttered with considerable excitement, but she effected her object, and Charles blushed.

“I was about to remark,” she continued, “that even if I have diligently performed all those works of penance, and, besides all this, lived a Christian life, yet I still need the last sacrament, or extreme unction. This has the efficacy of expiating minor sins and of driving away the devil in the hour of death, as the church teaches. This doctrine, sir, always alarmed me very much. What a miserable being man is, that even baptism, confirmation, absolution, penance, and a pious life, cannot so far secure him against Satan as to prevent him from dragging away the soul even on a dying bed, unless the helping hand of the priest is present with his holy oil! Truly, the merciful God has not made it an easy thing for the sincere Catholic to obtain mercy from him!

“But, notwithstanding this, the terrors are still not at an end. Our catechism and the church teach, there is also a purgatory in which the souls of the pious will be tormented for a fixed period and be thereby atoned for, that an entrance into eternal happiness may be opened for them, into which nothing unclean can come.’ Of what avail will it be to me if, from my birth to my death, I have conscientiously submitted to all the sacraments? The

priest must now read masses for souls, through the efficacy of which he will deliver me from purgatory, so that, if my soul has already departed from the world, it is not yet delivered over to the mercy of God alone, but it needs the sacrifice of the priest, which moves that mercy! Hence, I think that the soul of a sincere Catholic is indeed to be pitied. In life and in death it is not in the hands of God, but in the hands of the priest.”

“But, Julietta, do you not see,” he asked, “that it is particularly consoling to us, when oppressed by a sense of sin, to know that the church has so many means of grace, which accompany us all through life? Who need be dismayed, since the church so securely shelters him, when even the departed soul is not left to itself, but is conducted to the gates of paradise by the holy sacrifice of the mass?”

“But it is exactly this painful system of fortifying and securing my soul,” she rejoined, “that creates in me the feeling as though it were like a besieged town, in which breaches were continually made, the enemy pouring in here and there, and reluctantly driven back by the garrison. By all this I feel myself cut off from God, just as a besieged city from the governor of the country, and just as dependent on the power of the protecting priests as such a town is on the goodwill of the garrison. There is no certain security there. I must be in constant dread.”

“Not at all! not at all!” said he; “the power of the church is so infallible that her sacraments afford the strongest security against all the attacks and maneuvers of the enemy of the soul, so that you can be in perfect peace, and may compare yourself not to a besieged city, but to one that is delivered and is ringing with the shout of victory.”

“Pardon me, sir; this jubilee can only come when I, redeemed from purgatory, enter the gates of paradise. Until then there is danger and strife,” was her answer.

“For that reason,” he continued, “the church leads you that far by her sacraments, and affords you by means of their infallible efficacy an invincible protection. That is the great advantage of our orthodox church over the Protestant: – that she makes the attainment of salvation dependent on the performance of the sacramental services themselves, and not, as the Protestant church, on faith or the firm conviction of the necessity of the grace of God for the sinner. The Protestant Christian cannot know whether his faith is firm enough; he must always be afraid that his faith may waver; he must, then, always be full of dread and anxiety about his salvation.”

“I do not think so,” she again said. “I have an unshaken confidence in the truth of the reply which Jesus gave to the question, ‘What must I do that I may have eternal life?’ and to all eternity I will believe in the grace of the father who received the prodigal son as he returned repenting. The matter is very simple, in my view. If I believe in God, I must also believe that he is merciful in Christ; if he is merciful, he will forgive the penitent without the mediation of the priest. So soon as I deny that I also deny God, and then of course I no longer need the sacraments.”

“But I should still think,” remarked Charles, “that the saving power of the church was more to be relied on than the saving power of your confidence in the grace of God.”

“I think not.” said she. “If I have not yet a strong confidence and faith in the grace of God, then I can have no confidence that the sacraments will be effectual in procuring for me the grace of God. If God in general would not forgive the sinner, the sacraments would possess no efficacy so then we would have to believe that they operate like magic and force the Almighty to dispense his grace. I must also then, in the Catholic church, have confidence in God’s grace, or no sacrament will quiet my conscience.”

“It may quiet your conscience or not,” he replied; “you may have faith or not; it will still be of great advantage to you. That is the most comfortable part of it: – that it helps him who has no confidence in it, just as a medicine heals a sick man who hopes nothing from it.”

“That would surely be very agreeable,” she continued, “if we could only be assured of it, and if the efficacy of the sacrament were not made to depend on the faith of another, of which I cannot be certain, – that is, on the faith of the priest who administers the sacrament. You know that the church teaches that every sacrament is only effectual to the faithful when the priest who administers it has the *intention* of administering a sacrament. I cannot clearly express myself in your language.”

“I understand; you mean he must have the *will*, the *disposition of mind*, to administer a sacrament.”

“Yes, that is it,” she observed. “The necessity of this *intention* the holy council maintains very strongly, when it says, (Canon II. Sess. 7,) ‘If any one maintains that *intention* is not necessary to the priest to do what the church does when he administers the sacraments, *let him be accursed.*’ That is a very doubtful affair to me. I can be certain of my *own* faith, for I can surely know what is in my mind; but how can I be certain of the *intention* of

the priest? If his mind had been disturbed or occupied by any thing else when he baptized, confirmed, absolved, and even gave me extreme unction, then I am as good as not baptized, confirmed, absolved, or anointed. Who will assure me that the priest has the right intention? You well know how men are, and how, through mere habit, they at length thoughtlessly perform what they are called upon to do daily. But it is still worse when the priest himself does not believe in the efficacy of the sacrament. Since, then, I have no means in the world of being assured that the priest had the right intention, I must be forever uncertain whether the sacraments were of any benefit to me, and it can very easily happen that after all I may be deceived, although I may have received the sacraments devoutly. It is very hard indeed, dear sir, that we cannot receive our salvation immediately from God, but that the priest must conclude the contract with God for us, and that the whole contract may be void if the priest commits some error in the formalities.”

“Julietta,” said he, rather sharply, “your prattle disturbs my mind! I became a Catholic chiefly because I believed that I could be more certain of my salvation in the Catholic church than in the Protestant, in which I was taught to depend on my own faith. But I now see that it is more dangerous to be obliged to rely on the faith of another, of which we cannot at all be certain. Do you not hear? my sister is calling you! I wish to be alone!”

She sorrowfully remarked, “I communicated to you my joy upon the answer which I found after a long inquiry, and hoped to gladden your heart. Why, then, cannot you rejoice with me? The word of the Savior is also applicable to you, – ‘Keep the commandments and thou shalt enter into life;’ and this is summed up in this: – ‘Believe in Christ.’ Cling to this word, and dismiss every thing else from your mind. I thought that you could place as much – ’yea, even more – confidence in the word of the Savior himself, than in the declarations of his vicegerent in Rome.”

“You are right, my friend,” he replied, “I will do it. Now leave me!”

She left him. He felt his faith considerably shaken by this conversation. We know in what disposition of mind he was led to the Romish church. He had hoped there to be quite certain of his salvation, as it no longer depended on his own faith. He felt that in this respect his condition was not meliorated, but rendered worse, and with that there was connected the painful experience that he had deceived himself in the whole object of his conversion. He well knew that Julietta had no other teacher than the New Testament,

and could not avoid the thought that her sound understanding was leading her in a way which he regretted he had not himself sooner entered. Julietta, as she read the New Testament as a Catholic, interpreted every word in reference to her own church, and hence very quickly observed that which a Protestant unacquainted with Catholicism easily overlooks, and which for that reason does not afterward immediately occur to him when an attempt is made to alienate him from his church. He regretted that, while pursuing his musical studies with so much zeal, he had almost totally neglected the New Testament, and he silently resolved to begin the work anew, hoping that the simple word of the gospel would afford a guide which would extricate him from the labyrinth of theological and philosophical subtleties. At the same time he again took up the paper which he had written, in which all the grounds of his conversion were fully developed. He found that much which he had written down as undoubted certainty had vanished into nothing; but he also yet found much which seemed to him irrefutable, and which gave him fresh courage. Particularly, that appeared to him to be removed beyond all doubt which was to be the subject of the next evening's conversation, – namely, that the Roman Catholic is the only true apostolic church.

9. The Only True Church And Her Popes

THE NEXT EVENING the family assembled for their usual sociable conversation, at which, according to the agreement, Bernhard was also present, yet on the condition that he was to take part only when particularly requested, with which he was perfectly satisfied. He had been convinced, from his short acquaintance with Charles, that he had become a Romanist merely from having misapprehended the nature of his religious wants, and that from this a sincere conviction followed. Hence he believed that Charles deserved forbearance, and should not be violently assaulted, if he were again to be won back to the church from which he had separated. He flattered himself with the hope that he might again be won, since he had become a Romanist not from impure motives, but from conviction. In his opinion, that time was misspent which was devoted to disputing with those who had become proselytes from mere selfishness, politics, or indifference to all religion. The assembled friends now challenged Charles to communicate his reasons *why he held the Roman Catholic to be the only apostolic church*.

“You will grant,” he began, “that Jesus, or, at least, his apostles, founded a church – that is, an external society of Christians, bound together by the same faith, the same government, and the same rites. Of this church Jesus says (Matt. 16:18) that the gates or power of hell shall not prevail against it. The church founded by the apostles cannot then have been destroyed; it must yet exist; and it also can be the only true church of Christ. The question now is. Where is it to be found? Not in the Protestant churches, for they have only existed for three hundred years; we know their founders, namely, Luther in Saxony, and Zwingli in Switzerland. But we do not know an uninspired founder of the Catholic church. Her origin, and the succession of bishops in her, extend to the apostles themselves. She is then the church founded by the apostles personally, therefore quite certainly the true church, to which alone all the promises and privileges which Jesus gave to his

church refer. She, and she only, is in possession of true Christianity, of the lawful priesthood, the proper church government, and the true means of salvation. All those, such as Lutherans and others, who separate from her, depart from the true church of Christ, and must hence be regarded as heretics. These positions appear to me so true, and withal so connected, that I know nothing that can be said against them. And now, my friends, I will wait and hear your objections.”

“You have brought forward two very different propositions, as though they were one and the same, and you include both in your idea of *the church*,” began his father. “When you say that Jesus founded a church which can never have been destroyed, you speak of the great Christian communion, which comprehends in it the Romish, Evangelical, Greek, and other churches and sects *as its parts*. Christianity, or the church of all churches, was surely founded by Jesus and the apostles, because it can have no other origin. That is the church which cannot be destroyed. In the course of time the churches’ – that is, the Romish, Evangelical, etc. – sprung from it. When, then, you speak of the truth of the church, and refer this expression to the *origin of Christianity*, then Christianity only was instituted by Christ; but not the Catholic, Evangelical, and Greek divisions into which Christianity was subsequently divided. In this sense an *untrue* church would be equivalent to an *unchristian* church, as, for example, Mohammedanism, Judaism, etc. In respect to origin from Jesus and the apostles, *Christianity* is the true church.”

“I do not mean it in that sense,” said Charles; “but I hold the Roman Catholic to be the true church, because she was founded by Jesus and the apostles personally. By the word church I did not mean Christianity or the great communion of Christians; but the Roman Catholic church, which is subject to the pope.”

“Then you were going wrong in starting out with the idea of Christianity in general,” replied his father, “and yet, in the progress of your reasoning, confining your use of the word church to the Romish communion. You know that all reasoning is false in the course of which a different sense is attached to the principal idea.”

“That is unquestionable, agreeably to the rules of logic. I will then state my position thus,” continued Charles. “That can be the only true church among all existing churches, which, as the oldest, was founded by Jesus and

the apostles personally, and from which all others first separated themselves.”

“You have now stated your position correctly,” his father conceded, “but yet it is to no purpose. You lay much stress upon the assumption that the Romish church was founded by the apostles personally. If this is to be the mark of the true church, then only the churches of those cities and countries in which the apostles themselves lived and taught could constitute the true church, and the Romish church in Germany, Ireland, Poland, and all America, would not belong to the true church, because these churches were not founded by the apostles personally, but by other Christian teachers.”

“But yet they are apostolical, for they have received the apostolical instruction from other persons of the true church.” declared Charles.

“Then you acknowledge that it is the same thing,” said the father, “whether the apostles founded a congregation by their *personal oral* instruction, or by their *personal written* instruction; and that the other persons who impart to it the instruction of the apostles do not take away from it the character of apostolical. It is not they, properly, but the gospel, which establishes the new church. Thus it was in the establishment of the Protestant church. She was also a branch which proceeded from the Romish church, and received from her the Holy Scriptures, the three general confessions, and some other things, and only rejected that which was opposed to the written instructions of the apostles. It was not the Reformers who founded our church, but the gospel, after it had been brought out of its concealment by them. They were only the means – the missionaries of the gospel, and hence, with great propriety, we call ourselves an evangelical or gospel church. That church, founded by the written instruction of the evangelists and apostles, is more safely a true church than one founded by oral instruction, because written doctrine is more certain and secure than oral doctrine which has passed through the heads of so many other teachers. The former proceeded immediately from the spirit of the apostles, and was reduced to writing, which cannot be changed; but the latter has been subjected to constant change through many centuries; and it is not to be doubted but that every one who imparted it shaped it according to his own peculiar views.”

“The difference, dear father, consists in this: that those churches founded by the Catholic church also assumed her organization and whole character, and thus became one with her; but other churches – the evangelical, for in-

stance – changed many things. In judging of the genuineness of a church, every thing depends on its character.”

“Then you see, my son, that when we speak of the true church, we must not inquire about its apostolical origin, but whether it possesses the true *character*; so that the question, Which among all existing churches is the true church? can have no other meaning than this: *Which is the best?* that is, *Which most perfectly answers the design which a Christian church should generally have in view? What was the object of Christianity in your opinion?*”

“We have already agreed,” said Charles, “that the object was to deliver men from the punishment of sin. The church is the means of accomplishing it.”

“Good,” replied the father; “so, then, that church is the only true one which serves that purpose, – that is; is capable not only of *quieting the apprehensions* of men about the punishment of sin, but also of delivering them from the *dominion or service of sin*. We have not, then, to ask which is the *oldest* church, but which is the best, – that is, best adapted to fulfill the object of Christianity. Consequently, our Augsburg Confession is very right in saying, ‘The true church exists where the gospel is properly taught and the sacraments are administered according to the directions of Christ.’ If it should now be found that the evangelical church better answers the designs of Christianity, then she would also be the truest or the best church; but the Roman Catholic would be either less true or altogether a false church, if she answered this purpose in a less degree or really opposed it.”

“It is not possible, dear father, that the Roman Catholic church, as the oldest, could ever be a corrupt church; for she has the Spirit of God, is infallible, and hence, among all other churches, is the only one protected against the errors of faith and practice.”

“Experience contradicts that,” observed the father. “Jesus himself says that false teachers will arise in his church. The apostles had experience of that; and no century has elapsed in which the church has not been disturbed by controversies about doctrine and practice. The councils decided many points, but they were not always unanimous: many things remained undecided. The early church herself adopted some measures which were afterward abandoned: for instance, the love-feast and the administration of the Lord’s supper to children. You see then that it is possible for the church founded by the apostles to be in some degree corrupted in the course of

time. But if such corruptions exist, – if, for instance, the church introduces so many means of reconciliation that it is no longer necessary for men to abandon sin, but sufficient to declare it their intention to do so, – if, in public worship, she regards instruction and edification as matters of minor importance, and the ceremonies as the principal thing, – if she introduces superstitious rites and considers them as essential, as, for instance, the adoration of saints and relics, – if the organization is so shaped that the church is no longer serviceable to Christianity, but only to the priesthood, – if every thing is so perverted that, instead of Christ, a pope is set up, in the place of apostles, bishops, and, in the room of the church, a priesthood, – then the church is different from what she originally was, and no longer answers the design of religion, but the purposes of the priesthood."

"Do you intend to assume all this of the Catholic church, father?" asked Charles.

"Are you beginning to make the application already? If so, it is sooner than I intended," dryly replied the venerable man.

"But you have interrupted me. I was saying that, under these circumstances, it is the *right*, yea, the *duty* of Christian congregations to reform the church and to abolish the abuses that have crept in. I would designate this as the *right of reformation*. This right was exercised about three hundred years ago by many congregations of the West, and thus was established the Protestant church. After emperors and kings had often – but always in vain – insisted upon a reformation in the 'head and members,' as they expressed it, – that is, in the pope and priesthood, (but the popes had baffled these attempts, as well as the exertions of the two great Councils of Constance and Basel in the fifteenth century,) – *that* finally occurred to which the church had a natural right: she reformed herself, and followed Luther, Zwingli, and other pious men, who showed, from the writings of the evangelists and apostles, how the church should be constituted. As the popes, instead of encouraging the reformation, proscribed and excommunicated the reformers and all their followers, they were perfectly right, since unjustly excommunicated, in joining together in a Christian communion or church, which they called evangelical because it was founded on the gospel. From the right of reforming the church necessarily follows the legitimacy of the origin or constitution of the Protestant church. Another person as reformer would not have been necessary if the popes had been more solicitous about the honor of Christ than about their earthly dominion. It is then beyond controversy

that the Protestant church is a Christian and apostolical church and that she, as one reformed according to the gospel, is also a true church, and at least possesses more of the character of the true church than the Romish, which retains and perpetuates all the deficiencies and abuses which rendered the Reformation necessary. Now, my son, what can you say!”

“Even if I grant all this,” replied he, “yet there still remains the objection that she is not a *catholic* church, and has declared herself off from the *first church* founded by the apostles, which is united under the bishop of Rome as the head.”

The father now thought it proper to allow Bernhard to speak, who had been thus far a silent but interested listener. But, before he began, Charles claimed the privilege of defining the word *catholic*, for he evidently built high hopes upon it. He thus proceeded: –

“*Catholic* is a Greek word, and signifies *general*. The expression was commonly used in the second and third centuries by the church, and was occasioned by certain teachers of false doctrine, to whom it was objected that all the other Christian congregations believed differently from them, and that hence their doctrine, as opposed to the *general* belief, could not possibly be true.”

“That is correct,” said Bernhard; “but it is to be observed, in addition, that by the expression *catholic church* was meant the congregations in the Roman empire, *the imperial church*, and not all Christian congregations in the world. The word *οιχοθμενη*, which expresses the same as *catholic*, frequently signifies the Roman empire; hence, also, an *ecumenical* council did not comprehend all Christian teachers, for instance, from Ethiopia, Persia, India, Arabia, etc., but only the *bishops of the empire*. Only under these circumstances was it possible that the Roman emperors, as Constantine and Theodosius the Great, could call together *general* or *ecumenical* – viz., *imperial* – *councils*, and give the sanction of law to their decrees. The title also of *ecumenical bishop*, (which I will mention here,) which the bishops of Rome arrogated to themselves, and which was finally granted to them, meant nothing more than *first or chief bishop of the Roman empire*, and by no means, as was subsequently maintained, general or sole bishop of the whole Christian world.”

“But tell us distinctly, what do you understand by the word *Catholic*, now?” asked Charles, impatiently.

“Be calm, dear sir. Questions like these require cool consideration, and a question of a few words may call for a long answer,” replied Bernhard. “But I will proceed to say that the phrase *Catholic church*, originally, then, meant nothing more than the *imperial church* – the church of the Roman empire. When the Roman empire was divided into two great parts, the Western and Eastern, or the Latin and the Greek, then there naturally arose *two Catholic churches*, that is, two imperial churches, the Western and the Eastern. The latter or the Greek church, after her separation from the Western, continued to call herself a Catholic, that is, an imperial church, and the Latin church never disputed the title. It was only after the dismemberment of the Latin empire that men, in the ignorance of the Middle Ages, began in the West to use the expression ‘Catholic church’ in the sense of *general*, consequently, *only true*, church, although, after the destruction of the Roman empire, there could not properly any longer be a Catholic or imperial church. *Roman Catholic church*, then, properly designates the Christian church of the Latin-Roman empire, and thus has a correct meaning. But if Catholic, as men now wish to use it, is to designate the general church in all places of the world, then *Roman Catholic* is as great a contradiction of terms as ‘*wooden iron*,’ inasmuch as, besides the Eastern church, the Evangelical church has arisen, and *Roman* now, since the dissolution of the Roman empire, only yet extends to that *particular church* which acknowledges the *bishop of Rome* as its head. At the present day Roman Catholic signifies the *Romish Particular General Church*, which is a sad contradiction.”

“I never viewed it in that light.” said Charles, “and readily confess that no importance can be attached to the title *Catholic*; yea, that, on account of the totally-changed political relations of the empire, it no longer has any meaning. But even if I do regard the Romish church as a particular church, yet you must grant that she is the oldest, and that she was founded immediately by the apostles. And this is certainly an advantage. The Evangelical churches are all new, instituted only three hundred years ago; and surely the promise of Christ, that his Spirit should guide the church, does not refer to them.”

The father now remarked: – “What you say about the advantage of antiquity and the modern organization of the Evangelical church, that is already refuted by what was said before. There are old errors and new truths; so that, in the investigation of every subject, the question should not be, ‘Is

it old!" but, 'Is it true!" Christianity was also once new, and so was every truth which is now old to us."

"But is it no advantage at all to the Romish church that she is the oldest?" asked Charles.

"She is by no means the oldest," replied his father. "Only read your New Testament, and you will have a more correct idea of the establishment of the *Christian church*, for the *Roman papal church* is altogether out of the question. That the church was established in the Roman empire was not the choice of the apostles, but it necessarily occurred because they lived in that empire. They founded individual congregations wherever they could, especially in Asia Minor and Greece, of course in districts which do not belong to the present Romish church, but to the Eastern church. If, then, any church in the world could claim immediate descent from the apostles, it would be the Eastern or Greek church, for in her provinces – in Egypt, Syria, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, Galatia, – in Greece, Thrace, Macedonia, – the first congregations were founded, and by the apostles themselves. If, then, the truth and genuineness of a church depended on her antiquity, the Eastern or Greek church would be the true one, and the Roman a spurious one."

Charles manifested great astonishment as well as perplexity at these remarks, which did not escape the notice of his father, who thus continued to press the argument still more closely: –

"Perhaps not a single one of the Latin churches can show that it was founded by an apostle. It is true that, during the life of the apostles, a congregation was founded at Rome, as we learn from the epistle which Paul wrote to them; but it was established before an apostle went there. The congregations scattered throughout the whole Roman empire were the first churches; they may have been founded by the apostles themselves or by others. But they had not yet an external bond of union. They governed themselves and managed their own affairs, but they had yet no church government common to them all. This, and the external form of a united society, they first received in the fourth century, when they were publicly acknowledged in the empire as a church, at the time that Constantine the Great became a Christian, and called together the bishops to an imperial synod or diet, and shaped the church government according to the political divisions of the empire. But that, my son, was not the Romish church, that is, the one subject to *the pope*, but the *imperial church*, which embraced all the congregations in the empire, and at whose head the *emperors* stood, and

not the *bishops*. The bishop of Rome then first became a patriarch, and enjoyed equal rights with the patriarchs of Constantineple, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, and only afterward received the precedence over them. But he was subject to the emperor as well as the other bishops.”

“Then the Roman bishops at that time were not popes, and did not rule the church!” asked Charles.

Bernhard respectfully asked permission to speak, and thus replied to the question: – " What you have said agrees perfectly with history. The bishops of Rome were, at an early day, very highly distinguished and influential, because they were the bishops of the great capital of that immense empire. The splendor of the city also cast its broad beams over them. But they were not lords of the church, and only stood on an equality with other great bishops. Every bishop was called *papa, pope*, – i. e. father, – particularly the patriarchs of Alexandria; and every church founded by an apostle called itself *sedes apostolica*, apostolical seat. The *precedence* was allowed to the Roman bishop only because he was the bishop of the capital of the kingdom, but no superior power or authority was bestowed upon him. It was the Christian emperors, Constantine and his successors, who established ecclesiastical law, who appointed bishops and deposed them, who called general church councils and confirmed their decisions, by which alone they received the authority of law. And when Charlemagne at the beginning of the ninth century again restored the Western Imperial dignity, he also exercised supreme authority over the bishops of Rome, and summoned church councils. It was only in the eleventh century that popery was established by the Roman bishop Gregory VII., and with it the *Romish* church; and he was the man who first arrogated to himself exclusively the title *papa*, (pope,) notwithstanding that the Eastern bishops never recognized this assumption. The *Romish* church, then, in the present sense of the word, where it designates those congregations which acknowledge the Roman bishops as pope or as supreme head of the church, was first established in the middle of the eleventh century under the Roman bishop Gregory VII., after the Eastern Christians publicly and solemnly separated from the Western in 1053, because they would not recognize the supreme authority which the Roman bishops began to assume. Hence the *Roman-papal* church was first established only one thousand years after Christ. When, then, in the sixteenth century the Evangelical Christians separated from the Roman church, they

did not leave an old, but a new church, which had been instituted but about five centuries before, and returned again to the old church."

Charles here asked, "But did not Jesus appoint the apostle Peter the supreme head of his church? and did not Peter, when he was bishop at Rome, bequeath this supremacy to the Roman bishops as his successors? Has not this official preeminence of the Roman bishops always been acknowledged in the church? Had not then the Roman bishops the right, from the very beginning, of being popes?"

"This error has been so often and so conclusively refuted," replied the father, "that it is almost idle to say any thing more about it. You found your pretension on the words of Christ, Matt. 16:18: – 'And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (v. 19:) And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' The words of the nineteenth verse, which speak of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we will not now consider. For we have already (ch. vi.) discussed that subject; and again, they do not bestow any prerogative upon Peter, for the Savior (Matt. 17:18; John 20:23) addresses the same words to all the apostles. The eighteenth verse then remains to be considered. Jesus here, according to the custom of antiquity, gave Peter, who was properly called Simon, another name, just as Paul was first called Saul and the apostle Matthew's first name was Levi. The internal character of Peter, namely, his courage and stability, (for which reason our Lord compared him to a *rock*, gave occasion to Jesus to change his name, which was very common at that day. Thus David calls God his rock, upon which he trusts. Hence the Savior means, 'Upon this your courage and stability, unshaken as a rock' (which will not yield to the Pharisees and Scribes, and will not be moved by any persecution,) I build the hope of establishing a perpetual church;' or, 'You, by your courage and activity, will be distinguished above all in the establishing of my church.' But our Savior says not a single word about Peter being the lord of the church, or even the chief of the apostles. What Jesus said was only an evidence of what he hoped from the character and courage of the apostle, and nothing more. It was neither a commission nor a charge; and we would act just as unreasonably as if we would conclude from that other address of Jesus to Peter, (Matt. 16:23,) that he had forever excluded Peter from his church: – 'But he turned and said unto Pe-

ter, Get thee behind me, Satan, (deceiver;) thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not of the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

"I grant," said Charles, " that in those words Jesus gave no commission and bestowed no supreme power on Peter; but they only show what Jesus hoped from Peter. But yet it still cannot be denied that Jesus at another place gave Peter paramount authority over the church, or the chief episcopal office. For we read that after his resurrection he said three times to Peter, 'Feed my lambs.' (John 21:15-17.)"

"But," replied his father, "he does not say, 'You *alone* shall feed my lambs;' he does not thereby exclude the other apostles. This whole commission rather shows that Peter should thereby be stimulated to devote himself anew to the performance of his apostolical duties. He had denied Jesus, and the intention of the threefold question of the Redeemer, 'Simon, lovest thou me?' must have been well understood by him. After the death of Jesus he betook himself again to the Sea of Tiberias, and devoted himself to his former occupation – that of a fisherman; and so he well needed the renewed encouragement, 'Feed my sheep, – that is, 'Abandon your business and devote yourself to the work of an apostle.' For the words of Jesus by no means embrace the idea, 'You shall be chief of the apostles, and the only bishop of all future Christians.'"

"But, according to the records of the acts of the apostles," observed Charles, "did not the other apostles always yield the preeminence to him, and did he not always stand at their head?"

"A distinguished apostle he most certainly was," answered he, "because he had talents and energy; but that he exercised authority over his fellow-apostles, or the whole church, is not true. You find no evidence of it, but plain proof of the contrary. Paul (Gal. 2:9) says that James, Peter, and John 'seemed to be pillars of the church,' and thus attributes *equal* influence and authority to them all. Paul was chosen by Jesus to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and, according to Gal. 2:9, the other apostles acknowledged him as such, and declared that they would confine themselves exclusively to the Gentiles. Now, if we reasoned as the Romanists do, we could maintain that Peter was only the supreme head of the Jewish Christians, but Paul the supreme head of the Gentile Christians.

"But if Peter had no supremacy over the other apostles and the church, then he could not have transferred it to the bishops of Rome."

“And that was never done. If Jesus had really (Matt. 16:18) bestowed any prerogative on him, yet he would have received it merely on account of his personal qualities of firmness and solidity, for which reason he was compared to a rock. But since personal qualities cannot be bequeathed to others, so this prerogative of Peter could not be transferred to others. Of course, then, it must have become extinct at his death, or it would certainly sooner have been bestowed upon the apostle John, who survived Peter, if upon any one, than upon the then bishop of Rome.”

The mother here observed, “I cannot but believe that the Savior would have spoken much more explicitly if he had wished to make Peter the supreme ruler of the church. Rights so important, and exerting such an unspeakable influence on Christianity, are not bestowed on any one in a short figurative expression, ‘Thou art a rock, and upon it will I build my church.’ I should think that the Lord could without any difficulty have said, ‘You shall be the head of my church, and at your death you shall bequeath this right to the bishops of Rome.’ Why would not the Lord have said that, if he had even remotely thought of it? But in the discourses of Jesus and in the writings of the apostles we read of only one head of the church, and that is Christ himself. Your position, dear Charles, that you Romanists alone can be true Christians, because you”adhere to the pope and claim descent from the first church, reminds me of the Jews, (John 8:37; 45,) who maintained that they alone were the true children of God, because they descended from Abraham. The Lord tells them that they only then shall be the children of Abraham when they do the works of Abraham – be as pious as Abraham. Thus he will acknowledge only those as true Christians who ‘have the same spirit, the same mind’ with him, whether they are papists or not. I would suppose, dear Charles, that the matter might be settled in this manner: we might dispense with all learned investigations, whether in the first church the bishops of Rome were recognized as supreme rulers of the Christian world or not.”

“Yes, it may be so,” said Charles. “Neither can I deny that this acknowledgment cannot be proved. I have read the writings of the fathers, and confess that I found nothing which establishes a recognition of the Romish pontiff. Although I have seen that the church in Rome was regarded as one of the oldest and most distinguished, yet I could not find that any *jurisdiction* over the church was ascribed to her bishop.”

“Your observations are very correct and impartial, dear friend,” observed Bernhard. “There is a great difference between highly venerating a church and inquiring about her confessions of faith because she is one of the oldest and most distinguished, and venerating her because her bishop is supreme head of the church.”

“But even if the supremacy of the popes cannot be established by the New Testament,” said Charles, “and was not recognized in the early centuries, as I now myself grant, yet it is so necessary to the church to have a pope that one would have to be appointed, if we had none already, so that it is highly improper to reject him. For, first, there must be one point of union in the church, to bind all things together and keep them in connection, if the whole is not to fall to pieces. There must also be a unity of church government, a central point of faith, in fine, all that we have in the pope.”

“You here combine several things together, which we must separate.” remarked his father. “What do you mean by a point of union in the church respecting its faith?”

“One that can pronounce a decisive judgment upon all doctrinal controversies, and thus maintain peace in the church, or restore it when it is disturbed.” replied Charles.

“Have your popes been able to do that?”

“Not altogether, it is true; but in most instances they have maintained the unity of the faith.”

“They could not prevent – they rather occasioned – the separation of the whole Eastern from the Western church,” continued the father; “they could not prevent it that, since they founded their kingdom in the eleventh century, there have been Waldenses, Wicklifites, and Hussites; and that Dominicans, Franciscans; and Jesuits, conducted the most violent controversies among themselves about the immaculate conception of Mary, and original and sanctifying grace, which remain undecided to this day. They could neither prevent the commencement, nor afterward arrest the progress, of Quietism and the Jansenist controversies in the French church; it was thus with the great fundamental principle established by the Councils of Constance and Basel, – that the pope is subject to a general council; it was thus also with the great and powerful reformation in which nearly half of the West declared itself free from Rome. Of what avail, then, was your point of union in faith to you?”

“A great deal; for it was the popes alone who, amid the storm of parties, bound the greater part of the church in unity, and by their influence held it together. If it had not been for the popes, the whole church would have been divided into sects.”

“Rather say, if it had not been for the popes, the reformation would have been general, and the *whole* Western church would have been converted into an evangelical communion. You say you have a point of union, – *the pope*, to whose decrees all must subject themselves; but we also have a point of union, – *the gospel*, whose instructions every evangelical Christian follows.”

“But we are better off than the evangelical Christians, for among them every one explains the gospel as he pleases, but the decrees of the popes are not subject to the interpretation of every one. Hence, among you there is diversity of opinion, among us there is unity.”

“The difference is rather this.” said the father: – ‘that we follow the divine revealed word, but the Romanists obey a fallible man, and are forced to confess as true and good whatever pleases, the Roman bishops. And it has pleased them to establish, as an article of faith above all others, that they are the unlimited lords of the church and the whole Christian world, and that it is a most heinous sin not to believe and obey them. The difference is, further, that the gospel contains a sum of truths unalterably fixed, but the faith of the Romanist can always receive a new and often an unwelcome addition from the pope. The difference is, again, that, among us, the variety of religious opinions can be made uniform only through the influence of the truth, but in the Romish church uniformity of ’sentiment is produced by violence and excommunication. For what means did the popes employ to maintain the unity of the faith? Think of the fearful and terrible wars of extermination which they waged against the Albigenses and Waldenses, – of the Crusades, by which many towns were utterly destroyed, – of that monster, the Inquisition, which, according to the authentic report of the unfortunate Llorente, burned alive in Spain alone, from the year 1481 to 1808, 32,382 persons, and imprisoned and robbed of their property 291,450, – of the abominations which were allowed in England under the bigoted Mary, at the introduction of popery, – of the horrible massacre on St. Bartholomew’s day at Paris, for joy at which the pope instituted spiritual festivals, – of the Thirty Years’ war in Germany, which was instigated by the Jesuits, – of the dreadful violence by which the Reformation was sup-

pressed in Austria and Bohemia, and of all those streams of blood which pollute your church, and condemn her before God as guilty of the most dreadful murders, – and then yet boast to me that the pope maintains union and peace in the church. A pretty point of union, indeed, whose only means of operation are fire and sword!"

"You set too much to the account of the popes that was owing only to the inconsiderate zeal of the princes," observed Charles.

"Now, you know very well," continued his father, "that the popes inflamed the wars against the Waldenses and the Protestants; that in the Seven Years' war a consecrated hat and sword were presented by the pope to the Austrian field-marshal Daun, that with it he might annihilate the heretical king of Prussia; that the popes established the Inquisition; that Pope Innocent IV. augmented its severity; and that they commanded and promoted its general introduction. And only hear what 'the father of the Christian world' wrote to the King of France in 1712, when he sent the bull *unigenitus*, 'The kingdom of heaven – that is, *the Catholic church* – receives this advantage from the civil power, that those who act contrary to the confession of faith and order of the church are *destroyed* by the *rigor* of the civil princes, and the punishments which *the church herself– the pope – may not wish to inflict* are laid upon the necks of the obstinate by the civil authority.'"

"You believe, then, that the unity of the faith could be maintained without a pope?"

"I believe it; and that it is very possible I see in the example of the Greek church, which has no pope."

"But who is to decide in religious controversies?"

"Let it be as was done in the Christian world for nearly a thousand years before there was a pope," answered his father; let the people of the country convene a synod to settle the dispute. In this manner were the greatest controversies of the ancient church settled for the space of nine hundred years. But it is still better to leave these different opinions correct themselves, for the truth will most infallibly appear in the end; it will always triumph. This agrees with what the Savior said. He compares the church to a field, (Matt. 13:24, 30,) in which a man sowed the good seed of truth, but among which the enemy scattered the tares of error. The servants wished to pluck up the tares, just as the pope desires to exterminate heretics and heresy; but the householder said, 'Let both grow together until the harvest.' We are then

taught to endure the erring until the last day, if they cannot be brought to the truth by instruction."

"But there must at least be unity in the *church government*, and this cannot be well maintained otherwise than by a common supreme head," remarked Charles.

"Before there were popes," continued the father, "the Roman emperors governed the church. A system of church government that is to extend over all Christians in all quarters of the world is not possible, and exceedingly expensive and oppressive."

"I confine myself to the apostle Paul," said the mother; "who proposes another point of unity – not the pope, but Christ. He writes thus to the Ephesians, (ch. 2:20, etc.): 'Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the *chief corner-stone*, (point of unity.) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' In the fourth chapter, in which he maintains the unity of the church, the apostle does not even mention the pope or the vicegerent of Christ, but in the eleventh verse he recites the ecclesiastical offices thus, 'And he gave some, *apostles*; and some, *prophets*; and some, *evangelists*; and some, *pastors* and *teachers*; but he does not say that Christ ordained one to be the supreme head of all.'"

"That is true, dear mother," said Charles; "but it is still certainly of great advantage to the church to have a spiritual chief who is equal in rank and dignity to kings and emperors, or elevated above them, who by the independent possession of an extensive country belongs to the rulers of this world, and who blazes in all the brilliancy of a sovereign prince. It is of great advantage for those who are placed near him – the cardinals and archbishops – to hold the rank of princes, and that bishops subscribe themselves, like princes, 'by the grace of God.' This exalted hierarchy constitutes an indissoluble chain, which reaches from the lowest hut to the most elevated throne, connects every thing together, and secures to the church her glory, her independence on the authority of kings, and her great influence upon the minds of the people. The rank of this exalted body of ecclesiastics everywhere secures them a place among the great of the earth; they sit among kings and princes. The ears, the hearts, of the powerful are open to them; they learn and make proper use of their infirmities. Is it at all to be wondered at, that since the Reformation so many princes, dukes, and lords have become Catholics? Assuredly posterity will yet see all the princes of Europe

and other nations join the Catholic church. The advantages which the church gains from the grandeur of the pope and clergy are certainly very great. What cares the pope, who is himself a great independent prince, about the opposition of another king? If this king desires to have any thing from the pope relating to ecclesiastical affairs, he must send an ambassador to him as to another king, and the supreme head of the church treats with him as an equal, as one political power with another. If any thing is asked which is prejudicial to the church, the matter is rejected without further discussion, and the submission in the end is on the part of the princes. In what exalted dignity did not the supreme head of the church appear, when, after the Congress of Vienna, several German princes sent an embassy to Rome to negotiate a concordat for their Catholic subjects! The embassy was obliged to wait eight weeks before they could even lay their propositions before Cardinal Gonsalvi, at that time secretary of state. He immediately returned their papers, after having marked with his pencil the alterations which must be made before the matter could be submitted to the holy father. It finally progressed so far that their business was proposed to the pope, who was in no hurry about his reply, and at last, when the embassy insisted upon an answer, told them that he could do nothing in the matter, and with this decision the embassy left Rome. How is it, on the other hand, in Protestant countries, when the ruler desires to have any thing? He commands, and men must obey, however unwillingly the clergy may do it. No; only grant that the Protestant church is subject to the arbitrary authority of every prince, but the Catholic church is free and independent in the world, because she has a pope. I still am right when I say that a pope would have to be appointed if we had none already.”

“No, sir,” rejoined the father; “your inference is not correct. He who desires to be the only bishop of all Christendom certainly must have so much to do in performing the duties of his office, that he need not besides burden himself with the weight of a worldly government. Your pope is only thereby involved in the strife of politics, and often wavers between the interests of the church and the advantage of his political kingdom. He and his cardinals are always more of politicians than clergymen, more of jurists than theologians, more learned in worldly affairs than in the things of the kingdom of God. Only read the history of the popes, and you will find that they were involved in political transactions without end, and that in truth they did not always act an honorable part. Nor does it become those who wish to represent

the apostles to be ministers of state and commanders of armies, as Richelieu and Mazarin in France, as Cardinal Sourdis, who commanded the fleet, and as Cardinal La Valette, who commanded an army of the King of France in the Thirty Years' war."

"We do not need history," remarked the mother. "The testimony of Jesus himself condemns every thing you have said about the glory of a pope. He says expressly, (John 18:36,) 'My kingdom is not of this world.' And also in the passage. Matt. 6:24, he condemns the pope, who is at the same time a vicegerent of God and a worldly king: – 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and serve the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' The devil showed the Savior (Luke 4:5) all the kingdoms of the world in order to excite his ambition for an earthly kingdom; but the Lord said, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' What the Master did not wish, and would not do, does not become the servants. The disciples had certainly a desire for a political government. But what did Jesus say to them when he observed it? 'Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you; hut whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*' Matt. 20:25; Mark 10:35.

"It really appears as though the Lord had foreseen that one of the successors of the apostles would make himself a pope."

"The result, then, of this evening's conversation is this," concluded the father: – 'that Christ did not intend that there should be a pope in his church; that there was no pope and no Romish church until the eleventh century; that the pope, as a worldly prince, is not suited to the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ; and that it is a groundless position that the Roman Catholic church was founded immediately by Christ, and to draw the inference that, therefore, she is the only true church, and that the Evangelical is a false church, is totally illogical."

"I will take the liberty of adding but one observation," said Bernhard. "What were adopted by the church in the first five centuries, as public articles of faith, are all contained in the three general Christian confessions – the Apostolical, the Nicene, and the Athanasian. These confessions, the Evangelical church has adopted, and, consequently, she agrees with the church of the first five centuries. When, then, she rejects the doctrine of the

pope, the mass, the seven sacraments, the adoration of saints, and other innovations, she only rejects what was introduced into the church at a later period without any scriptural ground whatever. For those three confessions contain not a particle of these doctrines. As false, then, as is the position that the Roman Catholic church, as she is at present, is the church of the first centuries, so false is also the accusation that the Evangelical communion has seceded from the old church. She has rather *returned* to her, and the Romish church has apostatized.”

10. Julietta – Matt. 23. – The Acknowledgment

THE FATHER was absent for eight days from home, and the discussions were in the mean time suspended. Charles found time to think over the subjects that had been debated. But he came to no other conclusion than that he felt that his strongest arguments, by which he expected to justify his apostasy, were utterly untenable. He began to acknowledge secretly to himself that he had acted precipitately.

In this state of mind, he one morning entered the parlor, and found Julietta earnestly reading. “Ah, signora! what book is that in which you seem so profoundly absorbed?” he asked.

She held up the little volume and replied, “It is my treasury of wisdom!”

“Ah, your New Testament again?” he remarked, half sneeringly. “Have you found any thing remarkable in it?”

“Yes, something very remarkable; and I only wonder I did not find it at the first reading. Say, can you tell me why it is that, while I get tired of all other books after the first or second reading, I can read this over and over again without weariness – ’yea, I may say, with increasing interest?”

This was a question Charles did not understand, or evaded, and hurriedly said, “What is that remarkable thing you have found?”

“It is the twenty-third chapter of Matthew. Here; only read it.”

After he had looked over it, “Nothing more?” he asked.

“Is not that enough, and more than enough? It is a description of Rome, of the pope, of the clergy.”

“You are foolish. Who ever found any such thing in it?”

“I have found it.” said she; “and Christ’s description of the pharisees and scribes, in all respects, suits the pope and the clergy. But what was blamed in the Jewish priests as wrong, that must also be wrong in Christian priests, for Jesus warns against it.”

“In that you are perfectly right. But what similarity is there between the Jewish and the Roman priests?”

“If you will patiently listen to me, I will give you an explanation of the whole chapter, which will be so plain in its reference to the Romish clergy that you will have to agree with me. It is as though Jesus spoke of Rome, only in other words. Let us take up one point after another, and permit me to explain each in reference to the circumstances of our own times.”

“Verily, it is a good joke to hear you explain the Scriptures!” said Charles, laughing. “Of the merits of an opera, or a picture, you could speak sensibly; but of the New Testament – oh, signora! it is a rich joke.” And he shrugged his shoulders significantly.

“Grant all that: I feel my inability; but may not a child rejoice in the splendor of a noonday sun? May not a half-blind person speak of the influence of light on his eyes? May not a convalescent patient express his feelings when he begins to feel returning health? Hear me, sir, and then judge. Read this verse.”

Charles was amazed at the earnestness of the lady, and, mechanically taking the book, read the following verses: – “Verses 2-4. ’ The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, (according to the law of Moses,) that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.’”

He then asked, “What has all this to do with the matter? what is its meaning?”

“This I would interpret thus.” said she: “The pope, the cardinals, the bishops, – in one word, the priests, – sit on Christ’s seat; all, therefore, which they bid you observe, according to the law of Christ, that do ye, – that is, follow them, when they teach you these words of Christ: – ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; judge not, that ye be not judged; blessed are the meek, the peacemakers; love your enemies, bless those that curse you, bless, and curse not. But do not ye after their works, for they themselves do not what Jesus says. Jesus says, ’Judge not; do not curse your neighbor, not even your enemy, but bless and do him good.’ But in the confessional they judge all sinners and all who differ from them in faith; they curse all heretics and heresy most solemnly; they have an Inquisition, in which they imprison and torture those who doubt what they say. The Christian high-priests have in many of their bulls frequently cursed those who do not obey them. The celebrated bull of Green Thursday, which is annually

read in Rome on that day, contains nothing but curses, of which there are seventeen. It begins with the horrible words, ‘We excommunicate and curse in the name of the Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and in the name of the apostles Peter and Paul and our own, all Hussites, Wicklifites, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Huguenots, Anabaptists, and apostates from the Christian faith, as well as all other heretics, whatever they may call themselves, and also those who believe them, receive them, patronize and defend them, all those who read their books without our permission, or keep, print, and defend them, for whatever reason it may be, publicly or privately, whatever the pretext or design may be; also all schismatics, and those who, through obstinacy, withdraw their allegiance from us and from the Roman pope now on the throne.’”

“Why, really, Julietta,” remarked Charles, in a very serious tone, “your interpretation does not seem much forced. I am surprised at your application of the passage.”

“I have not concluded yet;” and she thus continued, while her countenance became more animated and her eyes sparkled with increased luster: – “Now, in opposition to all this, I listen to the apostle Peter, in whose name this bull utters such fearful curses, (1 Pet. 2:15:) ‘For so is the will of God, that, with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,’ and, (ch. 3:8:) ‘Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful; be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing; in doing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.’ And what says the apostle Paul, in whose name the bull also utters its maledictions against the unfaithful? (Rom. 14:1:) ‘Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, hut not to doubtful disputations,’ – that is, not to judge his doubtful thoughts and views.’ (v. 4:) ‘Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.” (v. 10:) ‘But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ, (v. 13:) ‘Let us not therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother’s way.’ That, dear sir, is language that we might expect from an apostle of the benevolent Savior, who cursed none of his bitter enemies, but prayed for them on the cross, and who (according to Luke 9:51-56) severely reproved the disciples, when they wished to bring fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village because the people there would not receive

the Savior. On the other hand, I have read something in that book,” pointing to an Italian work in Charles’s bookcase, on the Council of Trent, “which made me shudder. The holy bishops assembled at Trent closed that great Catholic synod by a general acclamation, which was done at the suggestion of the presiding officer. Cardinal de Lothringen. Toward the close, the cardinal cried out, ‘Curse all heretics!’ and all the reverend bishops, these followers of Christ and the apostles, responded as with one voice” Curse, curse, curse!’ Oh, then an angel should have thundered among them the words of Paul, ‘Judge not another’s doubtful thoughts; bless, and curse not!’ But hear more of our text, (v. 4:) ’For they bind heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

Charles contemplated his friend with increasing admiration, and he was about to speak; but she continued: – “I have recently heard this explained in reference to oppressive doctrines, which the later teachers of the law introduced in addition to the law of Moses, and with which they oppressed the people. It then occurred to me that our ecclesiastics had also bound a burden on the laity, for instance, that all the laity must confess their sins and smallest infirmities to the priests; that, though men repent of their sins, yet they must do works of penance, pray paternosters, but, especially, bestow offerings to churches, monasteries, and priests; that, for forty days, no flesh must be eaten; that mass must be read for the dead; that the indulgence of the church must be purchased; and that all that the priests say must be unhesitatingly believed.”

“Stop, Julietta; there you say what is not true. Such a blind faith our priests do not demand.”

“What!” she exclaimed; “will you not believe the holy Council of Trent!”

“Did the Council establish that?” asked Charles.

“Does it not curse in all the canons all those who teach differently from the bishops of that Council?”

“Yes, that is true.”

“Permit me, please to read here what the Council says in the thirteenth session: – ‘The Holy Synod, in establishing the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, hereafter forbids all faithful Christians from believing, teaching, and preaching any thing else than is here determined.’ Precisely this rule is found in the twenty-first session. But let us further hear what our Savior

says: –"Verse 5. 'But all their works they do to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries; and enlarge the borders of their garments.'

"The Jewish rabbis or teachers of the law, and the priests,, wore strips of parchment with portions of the law inscribed upon them, bound round their wrists and their foreheads, or attached to the borders of their garments, that they might appear very zealous for the law before the people. Now, our priests do not exactly this. It would look very singular, indeed, if the priests of the Inquisition, who know no mercy, would wear this passage on their foreheads, – 'Blessed are the merciful;' or if the pope, the cardinals, and other priests, would wear on Green Thursday, when the bull of seventeen curses is read, this passage, – 'Bless and curse not; But our priests are rich in splendid mass-vestments, in palls, in robes, violet garments, red hats, and all possible gorgeous apparel that can be imagined; and the pope has a triple crown towering on his head, by which we are easily reminded of the pictures representing the tower of Babel. And how much is there not in the church service, which seems to be intended merely to show off the priest before the people! Take the mass, for example. Does it not glorify the power of the priest, who, through the act of consecration, creates the body of the God-man, locks it in the pyx, and carries it about, much more than the power of Christ, who subjects his body to the declaration of the priest, and more than the power of God, who obeys the declaration of the priest? And the holy sacrament of confession: – does it not much more establish the power of the priest, who can forgive and retain sins, open and shut the kingdom of heaven, than the mercy of God, who is gracious or not, according to the command and judgment of the priest?"

"Julietta, cease; you are becoming a heretic!"

"Not exactly; I am only translating the words of our Savior into the language of our times. He says further, (v. 6, 7:) 'They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.' This suits our times. The holy father, as vicegerent of God and Christ, claims a higher rank than all emperors and kings; his legates desire to have the preference above the ambassadors of all other princes; in the councils they look for the chief seats! I remember perfectly well with what triumph the good fathers in Naples, who brought me up, used to tell me that the mighty emperor Frederic Barbarossa in Venice held the stirrup while the pope mounted his horse, and that another emperor, Henry IV., stood three nights as a penitent in the open air,

before Pope Gregory VII., at the castle of Canusium. At that time I rejoiced at this not a little. But hear now what the Savior says to his disciples and apostles, (v. 8-10:) ‘But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.’

“I cannot but be convinced that Christ here spoke in prophetic spirit of the pope; for every word suits him, just as if it had been lately written. Tell me, what is the proper meaning of Rabbi?”

“Rabbi,” said Charles, “was an honorary title of the Jewish teachers, and literally means exalted, most excellent.”

“You see, it suits the cardinals,” continued she, “who bear the title of eminence, which precisely means exalted, most excellent. But when the Savior says that they shall call no man father upon earth, because God alone is worthy of that distinguished name, he certainly forbids us to call the pope ‘holy father.’ If none of the apostles were permitted to bear that title, what authorizes their successors to bear it? That epithet holy, is also offensive to me. When the Savior was addressed by one as ‘good master,’ he reproved him, (Matt. 19:16-17,) and said, ‘There is none good but one, that is, God.’ ‘Good master’ is about equivalent to our present expression ‘holy father.’ With this phrase, ‘holy father,’ Jesus prayed to God, (John 17:11,) and hence I maintain that it is wrong to apply it to a man. I will never again call the pope ‘holy father’. Neither should he be called the supreme head of the Christian world’ for it is said, ‘One is your master, or supreme head, even Christ. But hear further, (v. 13:) ‘But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. This I translate in a twofold way. First, our priests shut up from the laity the writings of the evangelists and apostles, which show the way to the kingdom of Christ, – yea, they are the very doors of it. They declare it as ruinous to the soul, if a layman wishes to read for himself what his Savior and the apostles said for all, and not only for the priests. They themselves do not read it, but rather the breviary and the papal bulls, the canonists and the fathers of the church, and thus neither do they go in; for of the kingdom of heaven they have made an earthly kingdom with great treasures, many subjects, and royal splendor, in comparison to which the kingdom of heaven may appear to many a very poor thing. Secondly, they shut the kingdom of heaven, be-

cause they do not zealously exhort the people to a Christian life, but so prominently hold forth the hearing of mass, fasting, a blind faith in the instructions of the priests, praying the paternoster, and other such holy works, that Christian virtue is overlooked. For what is the most shocking of our sins when we confess to a priest? That we are passionate, envious, unfaithful, – that we lied, cheated, were unchaste, took unrighteous gain; it is true the priest does not justify all these, but we are absolved from them on easy penance. But tell him that you ate meat on a fast-day, – that you read a heretical book, – that you laughed at a priest, – that you doubted the efficacy of the holy water or the picture of a virgin, – then you may be certain of not getting through without a severe penance, and you may take care lest you fall into the hands of the holy office.”

“Julietta-, I pray you, cease! Your talk disturbs my mind,” said Charles, pensively.

“Perhaps you might with more propriety say your conscience,” archly replied she. “I’ll put your politeness to the test, and you must hear me. Pray, good sir, do me the favor to read the fourteenth verse!”

He could not refuse, and, reluctantly taking the book, he read, in a mumbling, indistinct voice: – “Verse 14. ‘Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees; for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.’”

He then asked, “And what has this to do with it?”

“I will tell you,” said she. “This verse reminds me of the incalculable treasures which our priesthood possess in most countries, and which they have received from pious souls, to pray for them that they might be delivered from purgatory, to give them indulgence, and secure heaven for them. A Spaniard, belonging to the embassy to Rome, once said that the priesthood in Spain had twice more income than the king. How it is in Italy I know well enough. I have also heard of not a few instances of rich widows, who disinherited their poor relations and bequeathed all their property to an order, monastery, or church, which is the same as to the priesthood.

“Since you are such a capital reader of the Scriptures,” said she, smiling, “suppose you read another verse.”

He could not help smiling himself, well discerning her irony, and, this time, with a little more confidence, read verse 15: – “Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one prose-

lyte, and, when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

He then remarked, “Surely you will not disapprove of men attempting to convert errorists to the true faith?”

“Not in the least,” replied she. “Neither does Jesus mean that. The missionary societies for the heathen have always been much admired by me. What Jesus condemns is, partly that the Jewish teachers sought to make a heathen not only a Jew, but a Pharisee, and the latter was more important to them than the former; partly, that they compassed sea and land not to make him a good man, but a Pharisee. In this respect it suits our priesthood. Their zeal is not directed toward making Christians, but Catholics. If a Protestant Christian comes to Rome, immediately the net is cast around him on all sides, just as if he were yet a heathen. To make a Catholic of him is so great a triumph, that the most degraded and dissolute subjects are not slighted, who, as Catholics, are not a whit better than they were before, but often worse and more daring in iniquity, because now they hope by absolutions, indulgences, and penances, to be delivered from all guilt, which they did not believe before. ‘To compass sea and land’ also signifies to employ all means, good or bad, to make a Catholic. Money, or a promise, or a marriage, or a pension, or protection, or an office, or any thing else, is used as a means of making Catholics out of Christians, – that is, to induce them to hear mass, to fast, to pray the rosary, to adore the saints and Mary, and to regard all heretics as damned. For often the whole change of a man consists in nothing more than in the adoption of these external signs of Catholicism.

“As you have the book in your hand, do favor me with a few more verses.” she begged.

“Indeed, signora, this is a new office for me to be reading the Scriptures while a lady interprets them. How long will your preaching endure? I never liked long sermons.”

“Paul says, ‘Let your women keep silence in the churches;’ but, as I am not in a church, I can preach, and you have too much politeness to retire or fall asleep: so read my text.”

He read verse 16: – “Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!” Verse 18. “And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.”

“This,” said the female expounder, “reminds me of the Jesuits, who constitute such a considerable and now so highly esteemed a portion of our priesthood, and teach, as did the pharisees, that a false oath is nothing, ‘if only something else is thought of at the time’ or something else added in thought. For example: if a man swear that he had not done something, (although he had done it,) he must only think at the same time, ‘not from my youth up – not at another time.’ The popes also occur to me, who often absolved subjects free from the oath of fidelity to their monarchs, or monarchs from the oath sworn to their subjects, and generally claim the right of annulling an oath sworn before God. Pope Clemens VI. gave authority to the confessor of the King of France to absolve this king, his wife, and all his successors, in consideration of some works of penance, from all oaths the observance of which would be unpleasant, only with the exception of the oaths and vows relating to religious affairs. This the good fathers in Naples related to me as a proof of the great power of the pope, and I admired it very much at that time. But now I think, when one has sworn by the Almighty, it is a most heinous sin if a man undertakes to absolve him from it, and that such a man thereby insolently elevates himself above God. The good fathers also told me, for the purpose of inspiring me with reverence for the saints, that Louis XI., King of France, believed himself bound by no oath but one sworn by the relics of the holy Lupus, and they maintained that an oath was much more holy and binding if taken by the relics of a saint or martyr. Pray, read verse 23.”

Charles was now fairly entrapped, and he could not avoid it. Besides, he was beginning to be deeply interested himself, and especially did he admire the aptness and clearness of her interpretations. It was an application of Scripture he had never heard before. He read verse 23: – “Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites I for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!”

When he had read it, she remarked, “Please to read also the note written on the margin of the book.”

Ho complied, and read, “Of trifles you make a great deal; of important things nothing.”

“Julietta’ did you insert that note? it is in your handwriting.” he asked.

The lady smiled, and, without giving a positive answer, said, "In the view of our priesthood, it is a greater sin to neglect hearing mass than the voice of justice and philanthropy; to refuse obedience to the priests than to deny fidelity to God and man; to eat flesh during a fast than to be unchaste.

"Now, the 25th verse, if you please."

He read verse 25: – "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess."

"This relates," she continued, "to the great importance which our priests attach to fasting and other mere external works of penance, which do not reform the internal man, but leave him full of all moral uncleanness. And the matter becomes still worse; for fasting is ranked among those exercises by which men can atone for sin and remove its punishment, – that is, punishment for uncleanness of heart."

"But Jesus himself fasted," said he, "and so did the apostles. Shall not, then, fine Christians do it? Have you not read that the Savior once fasted forty days; and do you not know that on this the great quadragesimal fast was founded?"

"I know that very well," she replied; "but there is still a great difference. First, Christ and the apostles did it voluntarily; hence, every Christian should be left free. Again, Christ did it on an extraordinary occasion, when, by severe examination, he prepared himself for the hardships which he was to endure from man. Further, Jesus and the apostles did not practice it as something meritorious, as atoning for sin or removing punishment. Finally, they fasted so that they became hungry. But in our fasting we are satisfied, yea, crammed full. For our fasting is abstinence from *flesh* just as if that prevented devotion, for it oppresses no stomach, and is easy of digestion. On the other hand, we eat all kind of indigestible food made of flour, and other victuals prepared in all the refinements of cookery, which only oppress the stomach and stupefy the mind. Is not this rank folly? And who can persuade himself that the flesh of fish, which the Catholic fast allows, is not flesh? I should like to know how our church came to the singular fancy of declaring that the flesh of fish is not flesh?"

"It was believed justifiable to except fish in the prohibition of eating flesh," said he, "because Jesus in the wilderness, according to Matt. 14:19, where he probably fasted, had bread and fish with him; and because, after his resurrection, according to John 21:10, 13, he also ate bread and fish.

Reference was also made to what Paul says, (1 Cor. 15:39:) ‘All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.’”

“Let us examine these passages of Scripture a little more closely,” she observed. “Where is it recorded, in Matt. 14:19, that Jesus then fasted? There is not a single trace of it in the text, and the conjecture is altogether gratuitous. But that he had fishes was not his mere choice, but the consequence of his being with the apostles at the Sea of Gennesaret, as the 13th and 22nd verses clearly show. The same may be said of John 21:10, 13, where the Redeemer ate fish with the apostles for this reason: – because they had just caught some in the sea. As it respects the passage, 1 Cor. 15:39, it is almost ridiculous to apply it to this subject. The apostle wishes to show that the future body at the resurrection will not be formed like the present body, and illustrated it by examples, namely, that already in the form of earthly bodies there is a great difference. He does not seek this difference in the flesh of four-footed beasts, fishes, and birds, but in the difference of the form and the parts of their body. But this you must acknowledge: – that the apostle ascribes a body to fishes; consequently it is absolutely ridiculous to conclude, from that, that the body of fishes is not flesh.”

“But do you not consider it an exercise well pleasing to God, and conducive to self-government, if we occasionally abstain from palatable food?” he asked. “The genuine Christian, who desires to gratify his lusts, must first be strong enough to deny his palate the accustomed food.”

“That may be, if it is voluntarily,” she replied, “and not compulsory; it might answer, if men did not substitute for flesh a variety of other delicate victuals. But that men please God by a selection of particular food, – that they defile themselves on a fast-day by food which is allowed on other days, – that especially there is something meritorious in it, – this, dear sir, I no longer believe, because the Savior and his apostles have taught me differently. For Jesus says, (Matt. 15:11, 18-20,) ‘Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theft, false witnesses, blasphemies. These are things which defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.’ So, then, it is not eating flesh. ‘For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,’ says Paul, (Romans 14:17,) ‘but righteousness and peace, and

joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.’ This is surely expressive language of the apostle, according to which no essential importance should ever have been attached to fasting and other works of penance. Yea, the same apostle warns us against teachers of false doctrines, (1 Tim. 4:3,) who ‘forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving,’ and he assures us (verse 8,) ‘that bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.’ I will fast no more, dear sir; but I will exercise myself in godliness.”Verse 29. ‘Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say. If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’

“When I think how many churches, chapels, and monasteries are dedicated to the Savior, the mother Mary, the apostles, the saints and martyrs among us, and what great honor we pay them, it has often occurred to me how it would be if, in our day’ Jesus, or Peter and Paul, were to revisit some rigid Catholic country – for instance, Spain or Italy – and were to teach the same things which we now read in the writings of the Evangelists and apostles, whether they would be regarded as good Christians, or not rather as heretics, if they administered the cup in the sacrament, attached no particular importance to fasting, called none father or holy father, made eternal life dependent on obedience to the commandments of God, and recognized no pope, no service of the saints, or mass, holy water, monastic life, penance, indulgences, auricular confession, and many other things by which Catholics are now distinguished? I should think that the Savior and the apostles would not be permitted to come to Spain or Italy, and would be acknowledged as good Christians only here among the Protestants. In Spain or Italy they would certainly fall into the hands of the Inquisition, and be regarded by the pope as Jesus was regarded by the Jewish high-priest, Caiaphas.”

“Julietta, you are surely no longer a Catholic! you have become a Protestant! Take care and do not let your opinions be known!”

“Whether I am yet a Catholic, or have already become a Protestant, I really do not know myself. But this I know, that I am a Christian, and am surely a genuine Christian, for I have been taught by the discourses of

Christ in the Evangelists, and by the doctrine of the apostles in their writings alone. I do not appear to myself to be a Catholic any more, at least I am not a good one. But I do not give myself any trouble about that, if I only dare believe that I am a good Christian. But I must speak about it, sir; the truth must not be concealed, so that others also may be brought to acknowledge it, and not be strengthened in their errors.”

“It may do well enough here; but at the seminary you would soon be silenced.” observed Charles.

“Yes.” said she. “I know full well how the spirit of inquiry is crushed there. Even Protestant young ladies dare not express their sentiments freely; and I have seen how Catholics are treated who show any heretical tendencies.

“Bad enough that there they know no better means of maintaining their faith than by force. It does not become the successor of the apostle Peter to employ force; for when Peter (Matt. 26:51, etc.) drew his sword in defense of Jesus, the Lord said, ‘Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?’ I should think that thus the pope should wait, until God promotes the true faith in a proper manner, and not by force. Jesus did not establish an Inquisition; he did not allow it; he did not command it; he did not employ it.”

“I see, Julietta, that you are so well versed in the Scriptures that you have an answer for every thing. But you do wrong in confining yourself exclusively to the Bible. For we have tradition, which from the apostles, through the bishops and holy church fathers, has come down to us, which we must highly honor, for it determines many things of which the New Testament contains nothing, and settles other things besides.”

“To discuss and judge the subject of tradition requires more learning than I possess,” observed Julietta. “But this I know: – that it dare not contradict that which the Evangelists and apostles have written, for then they must have contradicted themselves; and that a knowledge of and belief in tradition are not reckoned among the things demanded as necessary to salvation. For in none of the many passages in which we are taught what is essential to salvation, is one word said about tradition. The whole matter appears to me very strange. Suppose your father had made a written will in presence of a magistrate and honest witnesses, and after his death there

should come one of his friends and say, 'Your father also made an oral will and entrusted it to me, and in it he has appointed me your guardian, transferred to me a portion of his paternal privileges, and left me a handsome legacy; what would you think? If the oral will frequently contradicted the written one, annulled many parts of it, contained a number of additional articles, made new dispositions of the property, and, finally, was very much to the advantage of the man who said your father had entrusted it to him, would you attach as much credit to it as to the written one? Or would any person find fault with you for adhering exclusively to the written one?'

"Your simile is lame."

"It may be lame, but it goes! I wish it would go into your heart!"

"I really believe you wish that I should abandon Catholicism."

"I wish you were as I am, – a disciple of Christ and the apostles, and ceased being a disciple of the pope and the priesthood."

"Then you are no longer the latter?"

"No! I am no longer such unconditionally, only in as far as I see that our priests teach the doctrines of the New Testament."

"Then you are a Protestant?"

"It may be; but the gospel was in existence before the pope and all the cardinals." – (With deep solemnity.) "Sir! I am a poor orphan; I stand alone in the world; my kindred are also unknown to me; I was left truly destitute. You are my only friend on earth! But, even at the peril of your displeasure, I will not conceal from you what is in my heart." (With excitement.) "Really, sir, I have become a better woman, even though I yet may be a sinner; a faithful friend also have you got in me. Hear what occurred to me when I left the seminary with you. I cannot conceal it from you any longer. I once more confessed to Father M , who belongs to the Jesuits, and requested his blessing on my journey. 'Go in God's name, my child,' said he; 'but do not forget what you owe the holy mother, the church. You are going in the company of a straying sheep, which has but lately been brought to the true faith. Much of the poison of heresy imbibed in his youth yet remains in him, and it is to be feared that he will again be drawn over to the cursed Lutheran heresy by his family and friends. The mother of God has enjoined it upon you, as a good Catholic, to watch over his faith. Observe him closely; pry into the conversation between him and his family and friends; if they become too familiar, dexterously try to excite discord and mistrust between them. You may also employ falsehood; for it is not sin when it is done for

the honor of God, and the church will absolve you from it. But above all, my child, do not neglect to communicate every thing that occurs to him to the reverend Father N, who will give you further instructions. But this correspondence you must keep secret, and especially do not let him discover that you are watching him. Be zealous and wise; you shall be rewarded. The reverend father will faithfully provide for you.’ At that time, sir, when I received this commission, I was very glad, and believed I would perform a good work and merit heaven if I executed it. But since this book fell into my hands, and I have read it, I have changed my mind. You can be easy! I will not betray you; I will not sow discord between you and your parents, neither will I write to Father N.”

Charles was thunderstruck at this announcement. He could not conceal the emotion which agitated him. He felt ashamed and indignant that the lady had been employed to watch him.

Father N was a bosom friend of Colbert, who had converted him. He saw plainly that both priests had acted in concert. He had become a Catholic from such honest and deep conviction, that it mortified him exceedingly that any should yet doubt his sincerity and firmness. This apprehension of theirs appeared to him at the same time irreconcilable with a good cause, which trusts alone to its merits. And then the commission about the secret correspondence and discord with his parents! With what snares was he beset, if Julietta was not honest! He felt it painfully that they did not seek him, but the honor of the church; and it now was clear to him, what a friend once said to him, that they make proselytes, not that they may be saved, but that the church may be filled.

11. Tradition And The Infallibility Of The Church

WHEN THE FATHER RETURNED, the evening conversations were resumed, and the subject of discussion was, *Whence do we derive a knowledge of Christianity?* Charles maintained that, besides the Holy Scriptures, tradition was a source of this knowledge, and defined tradition to be that oral instruction in matters of faith, morals, church ceremonies, and church government, given by the apostles and transmitted by the Christian bishops in an uninterrupted series. He held this to be an essential point in the faith of Catholics, and hence the Council of Trent has established it, (in the first decree of session 4:) “The holy synod adopts all the books of the Old and New Testaments, *and the traditions*, those which relate to faith as well as those which relate to morals, with equal pious reverence. He who willfully rejects the traditions, let him be accursed.”

The father acknowledged that he was not well acquainted with the nature of tradition, and requested Bernhard to converse with Charles on that subject, with which he readily complied.

“You will grant, dear friend,” began Charles, “that the apostles, when they taught in the churches, must have said many more things than we now find in their epistles.”

“*More?* certainly,” granted Bernhard; “but whether *any* thing else than their epistles contain, is a question the affirmative of which you cannot prove.”

“I am satisfied with the *more*, which you grant. You will further acknowledge, that all the epistles are merely occasional writings, in which the apostles do not treat of the whole system of faith and morals, but only partially, just as they found occasion in the circumstances of the churches.”

“That I cannot wholly grant.” said Bernhard. “It does not apply at least to the evangelists, the epistles to the Romans and Hebrews, neither to the

epistle of James nor the first of John, for their general design is to instruct the reader in all that relates to Christ and his doctrines.”

“But you will grant that Paul refers to this oral instruction which he gave to the churches. 2 Thes. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23, 24; 1 Tim. 6:20.”

“I grant this, and confess that we Protestants would diligently search and highly esteem this oral instruction, if we had it; for it would afford an explanation of many parts of the apostolic writings. We only regret that this instruction is lost, and that there is nowhere any credible account of it.”

“What!” exclaimed Charles, “do you not know that this is the tradition of the Catholic church, that it was transmitted by the bishops, and gradually introduced into the writings of the church fathers and into the decrees of the councils?”

“This your church maintains, but it is not so. I have read the church fathers, and know how it is with respect to tradition.” replied Bernhard.

“But you must admit the general ground for tradition, namely: *whatever was believed by Christians at all times and all places, from the beginning of Christianity, must necessarily be regarded as having been taught by the apostles themselves.* For it would be impossible that an error should have become a general doctrine from the beginning,” maintained Charles.

“I can admit all that, and yet you will gain nothing by it. What was taught in the beginning by all Christians, that the Apostolic Confession contains, which our church also possesses. It is that which the fathers until the third century call the tradition of faith; that was the general faith of all churches to which they appeal, and which they oppose to the new doctrine of the heretics. *Nothing else.* They have nothing of your mass, the adoration of saints, the pope and his power, purgatory, confession and absolution, withholding the cup in the Lord’s supper, transubstantiation, seven sacraments, indulgence, pilgrimages, the rosary, holy water; and I boldly challenge you to the proof that any of the church fathers of the first four centuries ever appealed to tradition with respect to these things. On the contrary, you will find that it is the doctrine of the apostles’ creed, or a similar short summary of general doctrine, that *they understand by tradition.*”

“I can scarcely believe this,” observed Charles.

“Then only hear,” continued Bernhard. “The great church father Tertullian, who flourished at the end of the second and beginning of the third century, contends in his book *de Praescriptione* against the errorists of his time, who gave out that their doctrine was taught by the apostles as a secret

doctrine. Tertullian on the contrary maintains that those churches, which were undoubtedly founded by the apostles, knew nothing of that kind, but taught differently, and that the general doctrine of the apostolic churches must be regarded as the '*rule of faith.*' He calls tradition the rule of faith, but he also mentions what it contains. This he does in the thirteenth chapter of his book, where he gives a summary of Christian faith very similar to that contained in the apostles' creed.

"Besides Tertullian, let us only hear the celebrated bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus, who died about the year 202, and who in his book against the heretics also refers to the tradition of the general church, and in the tenth chapter of the first book writes the following confession, which you will find very like that of Tertullian."

He read it, and then continued: – "This faith, adds Irenaeus, 'the Christian churches in all countries held as unanimously as if they had all lived in one house. Let the learned alter nothing of the sense of this faith, but only seek to illustrate it further.'

"From the latter you see, dear friend, that at that time they had no tradition about the more specific explanation of these doctrines, and that the faith generally adopted by the old church fathers was nothing more than what is here set down, all of which agrees precisely with the apostolic creed, and that, as no man will deny, accords perfectly with the New Testament. Every thing additional, then, which was subsequently introduced under the name of *tradition*, was not transmitted from antiquity, but is *newly-invented* doctrine, which can by no means be regarded as apostolic. With respect to the more explicit illustration of these doctrines, which, as Irenaeus says, was left free to the opinions of the learned, there was so little unanimity among the church fathers, that the Jesuit Daniel Petau, in his learned work on the doctrines of faith, himself grants that it is uncertain what the fathers of the first four centuries taught about the divinity of the Son and of the Spirit. Paul Sarpi also says, in his celebrated history, that the bishops assembled there were very doubtful what authority they should ascribe to tradition, and that only at last the numerous Italian bishops and their well-directed threats brought it about that the council ascribed equal authority to tradition with the Scriptures."

"I must indeed grant you all this," said Charles; "but still I justify the judicial authority of tradition by the infallibility of the church, even if this authority was established at a later day. The church has the spirit of God, and

hence cannot err; and Paul himself calls her (1 Tim. 3:15) the pillar and ground of the truth.”

“As respects this passage,” Bernhard replied, “Paul can call the church the pillar of truth, – that is, of the Christian doctrine, – and yet nothing follows from it in favor of her infallibility. For it is the church through which the Christian doctrine is maintained and propagated in the world. Without the Christian church the existence of Christianity cannot be conceived. But the words ‘pillar and ground of the truth’ do not even belong to the word *church*, but to the following verse. That, the Catholic translator of the New Testament, Van Ess, has himself acknowledged, and properly united them with the following verse. He has it, ‘The mystery of godliness is the pillar and ground of the truth, and, without controversy, great,’ etc. But when you say that the church has the spirit of God, and hence is infallible, I ask you, whom do you comprehend as the church?”

“The bishops assembled in council,” answered Charles.

“Have the priests alone the spirit of God, and not also the laity?” asked Bernhard.

“The priests alone for the decision of doctrines, for in that the laity have no voice. But, for sanctification, the laity have also the spirit of God,” said Charles.

Bernhard continued: – “But does not John write to *all* Christians, (1 John 2:20,) ‘Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things’? Does not Paul say to all Christians at Ephesus, (Eph. 1:16,) ‘I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* in the knowledge of him; the *eyes of your understanding* being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,’ etc.? And on what grounds will you divide the gift of the Spirit, which affords both wisdom and sanctification, and appropriate to the priests the wisdom, and to the laity only the sanctification? Who are ye, that ye thus prescribe to the Spirit of God and set limits to his operations? And now, dear friend, in what light will the infallibility of this priesthood appear, if you inquire into the contradictions of which they are guilty? A few examples will suffice. The doctrine of Arius was condemned by the Council of Nice in 325, but was declared as true by the Council of Antioch in 341, and was finally again condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381, through the influence of the Emperor Theodosius. The doctrine of Eutychus prevailed at the Council of Ephesus in 449, and

was afterward condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The great Councils of Constance (1414) and Basle (1431) solemnly declared that a general council was superior to the pope; and the high-priests at Rome declared, with equal solemnity, in their bulls, that that was a wicked heresy. Where, then, is the infallibility of the priesthood? And is not the whole priesthood of the Eastern church in continual controversy with the Western priesthood on many points of faith? You may now, then, give up this infallibility.”

“But if you hold the church as fallible,” observed Charles, “then the case might occur that she would embrace errors, and they would gradually become so numerous that the truth would be wholly obscured – yea, finally altogether lost. Thus the object of Christianity would be totally frustrated, which God cannot permit; and hence it is reasonable to infer that, by his Spirit, he would make the church infallible.”

“The church is composed of men, and all men are subject to error,” replied Bernhard, “consequently also the priests. But such an exclusive order of men as the priesthood of the Catholic church is exposed to double danger of erring, because it has an interest peculiar to itself, – a party interest, – and it is very natural and almost unavoidable that its own advantage would sway its judgment and influence all decisions. Great as has been the number of errorists, by you called heretics, from the first century to the present day, yet Christianity has always continued to exist, and will yet longer endure. The infallibility imputed by you to the priesthood alone, makes the matter worse in every respect. That the priesthood is not infallible, we have already seen, and history abundantly proves it. Even all the principal heretics came out of this infallible priesthood. The great presbyter, Tertullian, became a Montanist. The arch-heretic Arius was a presbyter in Alexandria; Apolinaris, bishop of Laodicea; Paul of Samossa, bishop of Antioch; Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople; Maletius, bishop of Antioch, – all these became heretics and founders of heresies. The bishops of half the Christian world were Arians in the middle of the fourth century, and were deposed en masse by the Emperor Theodosius. Great and lasting heresies on the doctrine of the Trinity and the two natures in Christ were particularly prevalent among the priesthood, and not among the laity; and the whole priesthood was, on account of these heresies, split into parties, which mutually condemned each other at councils. How can men ascribe infallibility to such a priesthood? And who originated the idea of this infal-

libility? Not the laity, but the priesthood itself. You see, then, that the tradition of the Catholic church, the truth of which is grounded on the infallibility of the priesthood, has no foundation, and that the evangelical church is perfectly right in holding to the written word of God in the Holy Scriptures, but not to that which a fallible priesthood in later ages wishes to declare as the word of God.”

“You have completely vanquished me, dear friend, and I really do not know what more to oppose to your arguments,” Charles acknowledged. “It is true that half of the priesthood of the Christian world was once Arian, and it was only the political usurpation of the Emperor Theodosius that overthrew the Arian bishops. That I certainly do not know how to reconcile with the infallibility of tradition and of the priesthood.”

“I can add another ground, my son,” now said the father, “which was always sufficiently strong to me to reject that tradition professedly transmitted by the priesthood. Among the Jews in the time of Christ there was also an oral tradition, to which the pharisees and scribes attached great importance, and through which, just as in the Catholic church, many ceremonies, opinions, and precepts were established, which the Mosaic law did not contain. But Jesus rejected this tradition most decisively; only read Matt. 15:1-9.”

“But the Mosaic law contained every thing the Jew was to believe and practice,” observed the son. “But it cannot be proved that it was the object of the writers of the New Testament that it should contain every thing which the Christian must believe and practice. Hence, tradition was necessary to supply what was wanting.”

“There is nothing wanting, my son. You have heard that, until the fourth century, that alone was regarded as essential Christian faith which our apostles’ creed contains, and that was distinguished by the name of tradition. All this you will find complete and full in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. You will also scarcely deny that the gospels were written for the instruction of those who desire to become Christians, and certainly contain every thing which is necessary to be known for salvation.”

“On this matter,” said the mother, “we have decisive testimony in John 20:30, etc., where it is said: ‘And many other signs, truly, did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and *that believing ye might have life through his name.*’

“The Savior also says, (John 17:3:) ‘And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.’ And on these subjects the Scriptures surely give us full and sufficient instruction.”

“You always drive me from the field with the Scriptures, dear mother,” remarked Charles, “and I see that you are as conversant with the Scriptures as ever. But still I think I can easily prove that the Bible is a very unsafe source of knowledge of the Christian faith. But I think we had better postpone this subject until tomorrow.”

12. Unwelcome Correspondence

WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT of our fair Italian friend during the continuance of these theological discussions. She had no particular taste for such entertainments, and, though occasionally present, yet she took no prominent part in them. It must be confessed; however, that they were of essential benefit to her in her present state of mind, for some doubts were dispelled and some truths more distinctly illustrated.

Her deportment had secured the esteem of all who knew her, and she had even become a favorite in the circle in which she moved. Her appearance, manners, amiableness, and intelligence, were of themselves sufficient to gather crowds of admirers about her; but an additional interest was attached to her, in the eyes of the religious community, from the well-known fact of her religious inquiry. This was a subject of conversation in all circles, for miles around; and it was even thought that the old minister's congregation had become somewhat larger of late, on that very account. Everybody wanted to see this interesting young Italian lady.

Julietta frequently received letters from the seminary, which, at first, occasioned no change in her conduct or feelings. They passed off as ordinary affairs, and awakened no anxiety. Gradually, however, it was observed by the family that her letters seemed to render her unhappy, but, as she said nothing in relation to them, the family did not inquire. This anxiety rose to such a pitch that she absolutely trembled whenever a letter was put into her hands; and the reading of it by no means soothed her agitated nerves. The family suspected the character of the letters, but knew nothing positively.

The young lady would spend hours in her chamber alone, and, when she re-entered the family circle, it was evident she had been weeping. She lost her usual vivacity, and all the efforts of the family to restore her cheerfulness were fruitless. Picnics, visits to friends, musical soirees, – all failed to render her happy.

One day Charles ventured to express his anxiety, and inquired into the cause of her dejection.

“Any bad news from the seminary? – any person dead?”

“No!” she replied, in a melancholy tone, and, after a pause, added, mysteriously, “The bird has escaped from the cage, and they are strewing the most tempting dainties all around to lure it back, again.”

“I am sorry to hear that,” said Charles; “for the mother superior always tenderly cherished that little canary; it sang beautifully. Do you think they will recapture it?”

Julietta’s face was lighted up with a smile. It was a rainbow on a sky more than half covered with clouds.

“You smile!” he remarked. “I should suppose you would grieve.”

“Yes,” she replied; “I smile at your literal interpretation of my language;” and then, with a trembling tone, she added, “*I am the bird that has escaped from the cage!*” and then, with stronger emphasis, “Recapture me? never, never! No tempting dainties shall lure me. The escaped bird, that has tried its wings on the free air and soared aloft, will not of itself return to its prison-cage.”

In uttering these words, her pale face was covered with crimson, her lips quivered, her eye was lustrous with excitement, and, after a hasty turn or two across the room, she sank down into an armchair.

Charles betrayed some emotion also, but it was occasioned more by her own excitement than by the fact mentioned.

“Then you have resolved never to return?” he inquired.

“Not as a Catholic; and as a Protestant they would not receive me!” she replied.

“But remember your position!” he continued. “You have no relation in this country; you have a character to establish. Catholics will denounce you, and Protestants will mistrust you.”

She lifted up her eyes toward heaven’ and, in slow and solemn tones, uttered these words: – “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.”

“Julietta,” said Charles, “though I have known you so long, yet every day reveals some admirable trait in your character. Oh that I could display such firmness!”

“Do you not remember that heart-inspiring hymn of Luther,” said she, “which I heard the first time I ever entered a Protestant church, and which

has been ringing in my ears ever since? It is a paraphrase of the forty-sixth Psalm.” And she took the Bible from the center-table, and read, –

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”

She had scarcely finished these words when a carriage stopped at the gate. The coachman leaped from the box in one bound, and hurried into the house, holding in his hand a letter addressed to Signora Julietta Marchi; and in one corner were written in the Italian language what is equivalent to our English, *In haste*.

As soon as she cast her eyes on it, she uttered a slight scream, and it was uncertain whether it expressed delight or alarm.

“My brother’s handwriting!” she exclaimed; “and evidently written but a day or two ago. His last letter was dated at Naples!”

All this she said while she hastily tore open the envelope. During the reading, her countenance betrayed alarm and grief, and yet a slight suspicion flitted over her mind.

It purported to come from her brother, who had arrived in this country as a tenor singer with an Italian troupe of operatic performers; and, as the engagement in New York did not commence for ten days, he concluded to visit his beloved sister at the seminary. He was greatly disappointed at not finding her there, but could not prosecute his journey farther, for he was suddenly taken ill, and he besought her by all a sister’s affection to come immediately; and, that there might be no delay, he had sent a special conveyance.

The handwriting was evidently her brother’s, though apparently written by a somewhat trembling hand; but this she imputed to his physical infirmity occasioned by his sickness or the long and boisterous voyage.

Accompanying this letter, there was a note from Colbert, stating that, since the brother had written his letter, very unfavorable symptoms had appeared, and the opinion of the physician was that his case might terminate fatally.

Here was a dilemma. What was to be done? The escaped bird might, after all, be caught.

She did not trust her own judgment, but consulted the pastor and his family. She had no doubt that the letter was genuine; and there was her brother, a stranger and dangerously sick. A sister's affection prevailed. She resolved to go. The family did not feel at liberty to interpose any obstacles, though they suspected that all was not right. It was determined that Charles and Amelia, who intended to visit some friends in a neighboring village, should accompany her that far.

They were not long in getting ready. Julietta promised to be back as soon as her brother recovered; and she promised the pastor also not to suffer herself to be beguiled by popish artifices.

She was commended to God's care, and yet painful misgivings were felt by all. Amelia ventured also to warn her against the perils she would encounter.

Behold them all entering the carriage: – the coachman, impatient, and urging the necessity of the utmost speed; Charles, rather sad at parting with the lady, though for a brief period; Amelia, gay, but still cherishing a secret apprehension, which she tried to conceal; and Julietta, struggling with fear and hope. She did not burden herself with luggage, for she expected to return shortly, and, waving farewell to the parents, they started in haste on the doubtful journey.

“I fear,” said the pastor to his wife, “that all things are not right. I have some acquaintance with Jesuitical artifice, and I doubt – I doubt” He here concluded with a significant shake of the head.

The mother was not disposed to be severe in her judgment, and hoped that all would end well.

Two hours had not elapsed before a person was seen rapidly riding toward the parsonage. The pastor happened to be at the door, and was informed by the messenger that an accident had occurred to the carriage, by which the three persons were somewhat injured, but the strange young lady the most severely of all. He had been sent to the village for a physician and to inform the pastor of the affair.

It was not long before the physician and the pastor were on their way to the scene of the occurrence, which was but a few miles from the village. When they arrived, they discovered that Charles and Amelia had escaped with slight bruises; but Julietta was suffering from a severe contusion, which the physician pronounced not to be dangerous. She had been conveyed to a neighboring house, where she was comfortably provided for.

This accident terminated the journey, and Julietta did not see her brother. This she deeply regretted, but she acquiesced in the will of God.

Their injuries were occasioned by the overturning of the carriage while the coachman was heedlessly driving along the brink of a considerable declivity. In a few days Julietta was removed back to the parsonage, but several weeks elapsed before she perfectly recovered.

She received no other letter from her brother expressing his disappointment at her not coming to meet him, nor did she receive intelligence from any one else of his condition. If he had gone, he surely would have informed her; if he had died, she certainly would have heard the fact from some other source.

A few weeks after, a pupil of the seminary, on her way home, stopped at the village to see her former music-teacher, and from her they learned that no such person had been at the institution at all, and that the whole affair was a disingenuous trick to get Julietta into their power.

She thanked God for her deliverance, and now, for the first time, fully recognized the special providence of heaven in the accident which prevented the journey.

13. The Bible

SOME DAYS AFTER, the conversation was resumed, and Charles began: – "It disturbed my mind very much when Colbert brought forward the following argument against the Protestant church: –

"‘The Protestant church holds exclusively to the Bible and rejects the authority of the infallible church. But the Bible is written in dead languages, and must be explained. But who is to explain it? Your theologians have never yet agreed about a great number of passages, and never will, because to produce a unity of opinion there must be an infallible interpreter, which we Catholics possess in the church and tradition. Among you every theologian proposes his private opinions, and you have nearly as many theological systems as learned divines. Nothing but confusion arises from such a state of things. What one adopts the other rejects. Many will not approve of any thing in the Christian system which cannot be proved by the light of reason. Some try to explain away from the Scriptures the doctrine respecting the devil; others, the miracles and prophecies; and others, this and that doctrine. Your creeds do not bind your teachers, for you desire freedom of conscience and of investigation. The consequence is, that the most diverse opinions and caprices are published, so that the people do not know what to believe; they become confused, and finally believe nothing at all. Hence, your liberty in teaching what you please, your want of an infallible judge in matters of faith, is a great evil, which will yet lead to the total dissolution of your church. This evil can only be opposed by abolishing all freedom of instruction; by unconditionally submitting to an infallible judge of faith, whose decisions dare not be investigated, and even the grounds of which dare not be asked. This judge of faith we have in the pope and priesthood, whose declarations all must submit to, without the liberty of examining them. By this means the valuable blessing of a perfect unity of faith is secured to us. What one believes, all believe; one and the same creed is adopted by all; and what is once established as an article of faith by a council of priests can never become a subject of doubt.’

“I knew nothing satisfactory that I could reply to my friend. What say you to it?”

The father took it up, and said, “I would first reply by merely denying that your vaunted infallible judge of faith, the pope, and the priests, ever accomplished that which you attribute to them. For, as respects the interpretation of the Scriptures, men were never of the same opinion in the church.”

“Only read the commentaries of Clemens of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustin; then, in later ages, those of the scholastics; and you will find that they are much more discordant than the commentaries of the present theologians can possibly be,” added Bernhard. “The reason of this is that the principles of correct Scripture interpretation were unknown. But since these have gradually become better known in the Protestant church, and more firmly established, divines have become more unanimous on the sense of the Scriptures, and this unanimity would be more general if there were not always some who are anxious to make the Scriptures say what they wish or think they ought to have said. But such foolish caprices as the church fathers had by thousands, and which the Romish church declares as obligatory, none of our theologians now dare to utter; for instance, when Clemens of Alexandria (Paedagog. III. 10) employs the words of the Savior, (Matt, 18:20,) ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I will be in the midst of them,’ to prove that marriage is pleasing in the sight of God, and interprets the word ‘*three*’ as meaning the husband, the wife, and their child! Or when Irenaeus (Against Heretics, IV. 12) explains the three spies whom Rahab sheltered at Jericho to be the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! But when you say that we have almost as many theological systems as distinguished divines, I reply that the case was not different in the early church and in the Romish church. Tertullian had a different system from Clemens and Origen; Augustin had another; Gregory Nazianus still another. Among the scholastics, Anselm, Thomas, John Erigena, Duns Scotus, Occam, Biel, and others, until the Reformation, all had their peculiar systems. The popes and the priesthood could as little prevent this as an uncounted number of so-called heresies, the majority of which proceeded from this priesthood itself. Of what avail then was your infallible priesthood to you? It did not prevent a difference of opinion. This it could not do; but the fact of the matter was essentially this: the majority always persecuted and condemned the minority, and the party that was put down by force was always wrong and heretical, and the party that conquered was orthodox and right.

This, in a few words, is the history of your ecclesiastical infallibility, which exhibits your position of the utility of an infallible judge of faith in all its nakedness.”

Amelia now ventured an opinion. “I should think,” said she, “that it requires two parties to complete this matter: – one which maintains its infallibility, the other which believes it and blindly subjects itself. Of what avail is infallibility to the first, if the second does not believe it and takes the liberty of judging for itself? Hence, the unity of faith is but little promoted by your infallible pope and his bishops, if they have no means of convincing the laity of their infallibility. What means have the popes used for that purpose?”

Charles was confused, and did not reply.

“According to history,” continued the father, “the means were outlawry, sentences of condemnation, the Inquisition, and persecutions of every kind, which the popes, the clergy, and the princes who aided them, brought down upon the refractory with tremendous violence.”

“In that they showed their infallibility pretty much as our neighbor the wild blacksmith, who is accustomed to convince his wife of the correctness of his opinions with an iron rod!” said the daughter.

“The refractory were silenced, and with that the priests were satisfied,” observed her father. “They did not certainly convince them; for, as is well known, conviction cannot be forced. The Romish priesthood has itself experienced that; for to this very hour the controversy is prosecuted, whether the pope is always infallible, or only in certain cases? whether he can be judged by a general church council? whether his decrees alone are valid, or only after ratification by the church? whether he alone is the bishop of the church, and all other bishops only his vicars, or whether he is only first among the bishops and equal with them? The popes, indeed, have decided all these to their own advantage, and have declared the contrary opinion as heretical; but the other bishops have never yet believed them. They have rather expressed the opposite opinion, but that the popes again have not believed. Hence, the infallible priests have never yet been able to maintain or even to produce unity of faith among themselves, to say nothing of the laity.”

“I see plainly,” said Charles, “That the Romish priesthood could not create a perfect unity of faith. But it is certainly very natural that controversies about faith should be decided by the clergy.”

“Certainly.” replied his father; “but only by *argument* and *good reasons*, and not that their decisions should be arbitrary and subjected to no further examination. For no man can be obligated to a blind faith. It is immoral to regard any thing as a duty, of the propriety of which you are not convinced. Jesus and the apostles do not demand a blind faith.”

“But Paul writes to Timothy, who was bishop of Crete, (Tit. 1:9-13,) that he should ‘*stop the mouths*’ of ‘*gainsayers*.’ Yea, in verse 13 he says, ‘*Rebuke them sharply*, that they may be sound in the faith.’ In this he certainly authorizes the bishops to employ severity in holding gainsayers to the faith,” said Charles.

“You draw a very unsound – I may say, a foolish – conclusion, my son. The apostle is only speaking to Titus about rebuking the perverse; and because the Cretans were, as the apostle says, (v. 12,) ‘*evil beasts and slow bellies*,’ he admonishes him (v. 13) ‘*to rebuke them sharply*,’ – that is, for their immoral and licentious practices. But thus to rebuke does not mean ‘*to employ severity in keeping them to the faith*.’ Titus was only commissioned to teach and to rebuke; but it is not said, ‘*You must with all severity insist upon others that they believe what you say; for what you and other bishops say is infallible, and the laity are bound unconditionally to believe it*.’ This is what your priests maintain, and by which they set themselves up against the apostles’ will, *as lords of your faith!*”

“But, surely, the apostles did not allow the laity to examine and judge what they delivered to them; and, consequently, the successors of the apostles, the priests, have the right to demand unconditional obedience to the faith from the laity.” remarked the son.

"But the great apostle Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth, (1 Cor. 10:15,) and says, – ‘*I speak as to wise men. Judge ye what I say*.’ Again, (1 Cor 1:24:) ‘*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy*.’ But that the priesthood is not infallible, and has not dominion over the faith of the laity through the Holy Ghost, as is maintained, is abundantly shown by the rule which the apostle lays down to the Christians of Thessalonica, (1 Thes. 5:20, 21:) ‘*Despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast to that which is good*.’ But what, on the other hand, did the Catholic bishops at Trent say? – ‘*We command that no one dare to believe or teach otherwise than is here established*.’ How modestly the great apostle speaks, and how arrogantly the insignificant bishop at Trent speaks directly the contrary! In vain, then, does the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:2, 8) warn the

Christian bishops against the proud conceit of being lords and judges in the church, when he says, 'Feed the flock of God, – *not as being lords over God's heritage*, but being ensamples to the flock.'

"But experience has proved," said Charles, "that, where liberty of faith is allowed, very different opinions are entertained and published, and thus the people are perplexed."

"Different views on religious subjects have always been entertained in the Romish church as well as in ours, both when men were forced in their faith and when they were free to think as they pleased," the father granted. "But, unless these different opinions are persecuted, experience proves that they have no effect on the essential substance of religion – that is, on the practice of religion. I have heard many Protestant preachers during my travels, but did not find one whose doctrine gave me offence; all edified me. You need only read the great multitude of printed evangelical sermons to convince you that their authors, although of different sentiments, yet all labor for the *same* end, – namely, to promote Christian life among the people. There are some, indeed, who make the pulpit the theater of learned brawling; but they are few, and they are finally silenced, because the people withdraw themselves; for they desire to have edification, and not controversy."

"But even if it were not so," observed the mother, "yet every Christian has the Bible for himself, and, truly, the will of God, with respect to us and what we must do to be saved, is so simply and plainly written in it, that *on that point* even a layman cannot doubt. Remember what I told you before on this subject. I think that men entertaining different opinions can still lead Christian lives. I only held those religious opinions as injurious which make men indifferent about virtue, secure in their sins, and inspire a false, delusive consolation. Such opinions are, indeed, erroneous and superstitious."

"You are perfectly right, dear madam," said Bernhard. "The effect which a doctrine has upon the conduct of a man is a principal mark of its truth or falsehood. This Jesus himself says, when he warns against false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothings and lays down this rule: – '*By their fruits ye shall know them.*' And why shall we not follow the church of the early centuries, when, as Irenaeus assures us, the simple doctrines of the apostles' creed were maintained, and liberty was given to the theologians to think of other controverted points as they pleased. Christianity was free, and grew and flourished. It will not now decline, even though this difference of opinions exists."

“Even if I should grant this,” said Charles, “still it is very evident that this liberty of investigation in the Protestant church has also attacked the doctrines of the apostles’ creed. Men believe that the name *Protestant*, with which many are so much delighted, allows them the privilege of protesting against every thing which they cannot discover by their own unassisted reason, and they take pride in gradually rejecting all the peculiarities of Christianity and maintaining nothing but natural religion.”

“I do not deny,” said Bernhard, “that the name *Protestant* has been the occasion of some mischief. Some men have abused it. But our church expressly recognizes an authority to which every Christian must subject himself, – namely, the word of God in the Holy Scriptures. How, then, can Protestantism consist in the rejection of all authority excepting reason? But still it is true that there has arisen among some Protestants a spirit of illumination, which would explain every thing that is peculiar in Christianity; but what a delusion!”

“I am glad that you acknowledge this.” remarked Charles, “and I hope that you will also grant that the Catholic church has kept herself free from that, and that a unity of faith has also existed in her, of which the Evangelical church is totally destitute.”

“There you are wrong, dear friend. That liberalism which ridiculed genuine Christianity, and scarcely left natural religion untouched, came from France – *Catholic* France. Voltaire, who signed his letters ‘Christomoque,’ (mockers of Christ,) and boasted that ‘he alone was able to overthrow the edifice which twelve men (the apostles) had erected,’ Boubanger, Frenet, De la Mettrie, and others, who called themselves philosophers, were the men who transplanted this mockery of religion from France to Germany. But what awakened this infidelity in France was the strenuous perseverance of the Romish church in all errors and abuses. In a country where the massacre of St. Bartholomew was witnessed, – in which, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the twentieth part of three millions of Protestants were in a short time horribly murdered and more than half a million driven away, – no wonder that a combination of all the more enlightened men was formed against such abominable cruelties of the Romish church. That they should attempt to overthrow Christianity with the Romish church was a lamentable but a natural mistake. Such extravagance is opposed to the spirit of the Protestant church; and you must grant that it was Protestant writers who conquered that bold infidelity, and finally exhibited it in all its nakedness.”

“But you have a party among the Protestants – the so-called *Rationalists* – who elevate reason above the Scriptures, and who attempt to reduce Christianity to mere natural religion,” said Charles.

“That we lament,” replied Bernhard, with an air of triumph; “but has not the Romish church also such a party? Were not the French liberalists – the Encyclopedists – also Catholics? Were not they Catholics who in the revolution abolished Christianity, but yet were magnanimous enough to decree that France should at least have a God to believe in?”

“But still it is not good that there should be such a diversity of religious sentiment.” remarked Charles.

“But how will you prevent it?” asked the minister. “God has so created man that he can only believe on good evidence, and this evidence has not the same effect on every man. This is the case in the Catholic just as in the Protestant church, and the difference is only this: – that the Romish church, by punishment and the Inquisition, forces to silence or to hypocrisy those who have other sentiments in matters of faith; but the Protestant church leaves the decision of such things to the force of truth and argument. I should think that the latter was most conformable to the will of God, who, if he had desired perfect unanimity of religious opinions, would have found other means to that effect than the horrors of the Inquisition and the condemnation of heretics, in which fallible men punish those presumed to be erroneous, by taking away their life, or liberty, or property, or reputation, without being able to convince them to the contrary. You cannot, then, bring it as a well-grounded objection against any church, that parties exist within her pale.”

“You do not intend to maintain that diversity of religious opinion is useful and desirable?” asked Charles. “That certainly can never have been the conviction of the church, which always must insist upon unity of faith.”

“I do honestly believe,” said Bernhard, “that diversity of views on unessential points is salutary, and prevents narrowness of opinion and intellectual languor, which are the death of religious activity. Just as God did not wish men to become virtuous without conflict with sin, so he did not desire that we should become wise without conflict with error. This conflict of opinions, it is true, awakens in many a blind party-spirit; but it is still to most men a beneficial excitement to learn and understand the truth. The controversy between the Christians converted from Judaism and those from heathenism in the apostolical church was of much benefit; it produced the

apostolical resolution which made Christianity forever independent of Judaism, (Acts 15.) Hence the old church fathers did not lament this diversity of opinion, as you do. ‘By comparison with error,’ says Origen, (Homil. in numb. 9:1,) ‘truth only shines more brilliantly,’ Were the doctrines of the church not attacked, and not encompassed by the opinions of heretics, our faith would not be so pure, and not appear so well investigated and proved. But hence, the attacks of gainsayers are directed against the general doctrine, that our faith may not slumber from inactivity, but be filed to smoothness and beauty by frequent collision. For this reason says the apostle, (1 Cor. 11:19,) ‘There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.’ In like manner the venerable Bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, expresses himself, (De Unit. Eccles. p. 197.) If, then, the church of the first three centuries, although persecuted with fire and sword, endured different religious opinions among her members without injury, we at present, when the church is at peace, will have less harm to fear from diversity of sentiment.”

“I should think,” observed Amelia, “that the beautiful saying, ‘that a virtue which requires watching is not worth the watching,’ is also applicable to truth. A truth which requires force and punishment to prevent it from extinction is not worth the labor bestowed on it; it is not a truth.”

“But the liberty of the use of the Scriptures, which you allow to the unlearned, has certainly led to much confusion and fanaticism,” said Charles.

“It is not the fault of the Scriptures,” replied Bernhard. “Men became fanatics without the use of the Bible. Witness the Mystics in your own church. But even if diversity of sentiment arises from liberty of opinion and Scripture interpretation, or should a few Christians occasionally be led into extravagance; it would be an unavoidable but an unimportant evil, that could be easily endured, and which, as abundant experience shows, is most safely met by mild persuasion. But to employ for this purpose the desperate means which the Romish church uses, and to subject all Christians unconditionally to the caprice of the priesthood, and to pursue with, excommunication and punishment as heretics all those who doubt their infallibility, is to me such intolerable tyranny over the conscience, that every other evil appears infinitely smaller. Why should *all* be deprived of a privilege allowed by nature and by no means to be forced from us, because a *few* among thousands abuse it? Is the whole state converted into a madhouse because a few citizens are insane? The rule by which you abolish all liberty of investiga-

tion, and prescribe a blind faith in a few hundred priests, in order to prevent the circulation of one or another erroneous opinion, appears to me to be acting just about as rationally as if a great state would prohibit navigation to its subjects because now and then a ship is wrecked, and would grant the privilege only to some inhabitants of islands.”

“I see plainly, that the expedient of obligating all the laity to an unconditional faith in what the priests say, is a foolish one.” granted Charles.

“Only pursue the matter to the end!” continued Bernhard. “The few hundred bishops who assembled at the councils since the fourth century are to have the right of prescribing to the millions of Christians of their own time and of all subsequent ages an unalterable creed! Who will insure to us their wisdom and impartiality? How few of them are well enough known to us to trust them! Did they not live in times of great excitement, in which the judgment is liable to be perplexed, and when men are not qualified to take a dispassionate view of subjects? Do we not see, from many of their writings, that they interpreted the Bible very differently – that the majority did not at all understand the Hebrew language, and many of them not even the Greek? Had they been inspired by the Holy Ghost, as you maintain, they would have been unanimous in the establishment of the doctrines; they would have spoken, as it were, with one tongue, by *one* inspiration, as the prophets of old. But they disputed, entertained different opinions, and were forced, like other men, to come to conclusion by argument, and thus were dependent on their own powers. And sometimes their meetings were stormy enough. The Council of Ephesus, in 449, supported its opinions by soldiers armed with swords, and monks with clubs. The Council of Trent, so decisive for the interests of the Romish church, was frequently in the greatest discord; and the bishops wrangled so fiercely that there was danger of a total dissolution, so that at last the Archbishop of Palermo, Tagliava, threw himself upon his knees in the midst of the assembly, and, with tears and outstretched hands, begged the bishops to conduct themselves decently and come to an agreement. The number of priests also at these councils who had the right of voting was always very small; and it is indeed altogether unfair that a few hundred priests, among whom there have always been many stupid and few learned heads, should prescribe a system of faith to the 125,000,000 Catholics who now may be living in the world, and among whom there are many learned, wise, and good men. When the Council of Trent was opened, there were only twenty-five priests present entitled to vote. Their number

gradually increased, it is true; but even at the end of the council there were but two hundred and twenty-five voters, of whom the Italian clergy alone composed more than the half. The most of the resolutions of this council, however, were passed by less than one hundred votes. And are these few persons to represent the whole Christian world, and be able to prescribe a faith forever valid to all Christians to the end of time? and is every one who dares to reject any article to suffer as a heretic in reputation, liberty, or life? Here, truly, if anywhere, the warning of the apostle is applicable, (1 Cor. 7:23:) ‘Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.’ And I would ask, if God had found it good to make the priesthood infallible by his Spirit; why did he often permit a great part of the priesthood to fall into error and heresy, which again had to be condemned at other expensive councils, and not without violence, by another part of the priesthood?”

“I know not what to reply to that,” said Charles. “But what expedient would you propose for maintaining the necessary unity of faith?”

“None at all,” replied Bernhard. “Unity of faith in your sense is not necessary, because it is not possible. Hence, Jesus also (Matt. 13:24-30) was willing that the wheat and the tares should be left together until the harvest. It is not a part of the plan of God to deprive the human mind of all self-dependence by means of the bare letter of creeds, and to produce such a unity as a clock-maker wishes when he sets several clocks to the same hour. In every age divine truth has been differently viewed by different men, and yet it has not been destroyed. Then, if a complete identity of all religious opinions is not possible, and can be attained by no expedient, – if the Romish priests are not qualified for the office of infallible judges of faith, and could never produce or maintain the unity of faith, – then it is folly to subject the laity to the declarations of the priesthood, and thereby fetter the conscience and enslave the mind, which not only fails of its design completely, but is also highly injurious.”

“But still it appears to me,” said Charles, “as though there were a certain unity and perpetuity of faith produced in the Romish church by the judicial authority of the priesthood.”

“You say rightly – ‘*a certain*,’” remarked the father; “for I have before shown you the true character of this boasted unity of faith. It is indeed only a certain unity, for it was produced, not by the force of sound argument, but by the force of external power, – that is, by the fiercest persecutions of those who would not believe without good grounds; for which reason it is

not a true internal unity, but specious, external, and hence exceedingly unworthy of confidence."

"Indeed, your professed unity and perpetuity of faith is partly a mere *outward show*, partly a *very great evil*," said Bernhard.

"I should like to hear the proof of that? If you produce it, I will recall every thing I said this evening against your church."

"I can, and will produce it," continued Bernhard. "Tell me, do you mean this by unity of faith, – that the *creeds and confessions* of the church remain the same and agree with each other? or this, – that all Catholic *Christians entertain precisely the same opinions* founded on the creeds, and no others? Certainly the latter; for we have the former unity of confessions, and to a much greater extent than the Romish church, in which popes and councils have so often publicly contradicted and condemned each other."

"I also understand it in the latter sense," replied Charles; "for on that account a creed is established, that all may have the same view of Christian doctrine; and hence in our church the creeds are patterns of faith for each individual, whereas your church regards yours not as patterns, but only as *evidences* of that which the church acknowledges as the meaning of the Holy Scriptures."

"Perfectly right," said Bernhard; "but do you think it possible that all men, with the best intentions, will understand a formula of doctrine in the same way? or will they not rather interpret it very differently?"

Charles replied, reluctantly, "Certainly experience teaches that men are not likely to take the same view of a subject."

"Say, rather, it is impossible," said Bernhard. "And hence that unity of faith so loudly boasted of in your church is nothing more than that which we have, – namely, a unity of *language in the public confessions*."

"But cannot these confessions be expressed with so much precision," asked Charles, "that it is not possible to think differently about them, but that all who understood the language must entertain the same idea? I should think that the Athanasian creed, for example, speaks so precisely that it must necessarily create in all the same ideas of the doctrine of the Trinity."

"It is certain," said Bernhardt "that this is the most precise and least equivocal creed we have; and yet theologians have disputed whether the Trinity is an attribute of God, or something else; all the illustrations which have been attempted produced a different result, and either destroyed the unity of the Divine Being or the distinction of the persons. Your popes

themselves saw that a unity of faith was not secured by the decrees of the Council of Trent, and hence they publicly proclaimed that no one should presume to interpret the decrees and language of the Council of Trent, but that this is the exclusive privilege of the popes. They really established in Rome a particular commission of priests for this object. Thus in truth they make to the world this remarkable acknowledgment: – that the meaning of the public confessions is variously apprehended, and that a general council is not competent to produce unity of faith among Christians.”

Charles remarked, “I must confess that this *committee of explanation*, to which the decrees of the Council of Trent are referred, is in open contradiction to what is maintained, – namely, that the decrees of councils produced unity of faith.”

“To pursue the matter to its legitimate results,” said Bernhard, “we might say that the explanations of this committee needed explanation; for that purpose another must be appointed, and, for the arbitrament of this one, again another, and so on. Thus the whole priesthood would be nothing but a series of committees, which explained each other’s explanations, and on which no final decision could be made, because the last as well as the first would be understood by the faithful in different ways.”

“But what, then, does the Evangelical church do? Where does she look for the final decision?” asked Charles.

“The first and final decision we seek in the Holy Scriptures,” answered Bernhard.

“And on what authority do you believe that the instructions of the Scriptures are infallible?”

“Certainly not on the authority of one or several men, but on the authority of *argument*, which every one has liberty to advance, because by argument alone a genuine and lasting conviction is made, and conviction upon good grounds only is worthy the dignity of religion and rational man. Paul also tells us, ‘*Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.*’”

“But this occasions among you a great variety of opinions.”

“That is true,” said Bernhard; “and we do not try to prevent it; because, as I have shown, God has so created men that every one is a living responsible being in himself, and must arrive at the truth by the exercise of his own powers. This variety of views among individuals does no harm to the grand object, – namely, Christian life, – and affords us the opportunity, at least, of showing that we desire to be sincere. But the assumed infallibility of your

priesthood in councils renders it impossible for the Romish church to correct an error once committed or an abuse once established. Your Council of Trent about twelve hundred years ago adopted purgatory, masses for souls, withholding the cup, transubstantiation, celibacy of the clergy, the damnation of all who are not papists, indulgences, satisfaction by penance, and other things, as *eternal* articles of faith; and it is in vain that now so many sensible Catholics desire an alteration. In a church which claims to be infallible, error is eternal, and proscription and punishment support this error as irreversible truth. By this means the Romish church comes into inextricable conflict with the progress of the sciences and social cultivation. She cannot, like the Protestant church, keep pace with these things, but she must sink in the stream of time, or she must try powerfully to check the development of the human mind, or to bring back again the times of the Middle Ages, in which she sprung up and then only could flourish. And to accomplish that is the avowed object of the Romish priesthood at the present day, but which can be as little effected as if an attempt were made to bring a full-grown man back again to childhood. Our public confessions, on the other hand, are not intended as patterns of faith or as prescriptions, but are only evidences of the views which men entertained of the doctrines of the Scriptures at the Reformation. We then can correct an error if it is discovered, and avail ourselves of all the improvements in the science of interpretation; but, in essential points, this has not been necessary. Hence, the gospel of Jesus will endure and be extended, but that of Rome and Trent will decay and perish.”

“I am myself almost persuaded that we boast too much of perpetuity and unity of faith in our church,” granted Charles; “that difference of religious views is unavoidable; and that the defense and explanation of the word of God by argument is still the best.”

“If it were not presumptuous in me to take part in this learned controversy, I would also have a word to say to enliven the discussion a little,” said the daughter.

“Truth may be concealed in a jest; let us hear,” remarked the father.

“The Scriptures say to the woman, ‘Thy desire shall be (subject) to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.’ This is very plain, but yet in all ages it has been differently understood. The inhabitant of the East was the lord of his wife in the strictest sense of the word, and she his servant. Among the Greeks the wife was also subjected to servitude, although in a milder form. Bernhard explained this matter to me very beautifully. You know how that

expression is understood now. Many ministers, when they come to the words ‘He shall rule over thee,’ in the form of matrimony, add, ‘*In all reasonable cases.*’ But what is gained thereby? Every wife and every husband have their peculiar views of these ‘reasonable cases,’ and they would hardly agree in sentiment if a whole book were written on that subject. Yea, if an explanation were given by a whole assembly of infallible popes, it would be no better; for every wife will never be any thing else than she can be, either mistress or servant. It depends altogether upon the relation she sustains to the man whom she has received as her husband, with respect to talents, accomplishments, respectability, character, influence, and the like. It appears to me to have been thus already in ancient times; for I think that Sarah and her daughter-in-law Rebecca interpreted the old saying, ‘He shall rule over thee,’ in their own way, although in their times the strictest interpretation was generally prevalent. But what injury is to result from a different interpretation of that passage among wives I really cannot see. Until now, at least, the world and domestic life have always moved along tolerably well.”

“Yes, you ladies! – ’you interpret every thing as you please and in your own favor,” observed Charles. “But it would become you very well, if you all said as the virtuous Mary did, ‘Behold the handmaiden of the Lord!’”

“Yes; but Mary, when she said this, had not a selfish, growling bear of a husband before her, but – an angel. We do not read that Mary ever said any thing like that to Joseph, her husband. If indeed the men were all angels _____”

Bernhard interrupted her, – “And the women all angels, then they would be on an equality! But jesting apart – you see, dear Charles, that the views of men about the formulas of faith will always be various, and that there could not be popes and councils enough to decide every thing, and to drive every thing into the heads of men in the same way. But still every church may continue to have her written creeds. Nothing is, however, gained but a unity of language in the public formulas, and not a similarity of views in the understandings of men. Variety of religious opinion is natural, and cannot be avoided. Hence it is wrong to condemn each other as heretics on this account, and to employ authority and violence to force men to entertain the same views on this subject.”

Charles could not reply, and found it convenient, after a pause, to change the subject to another, that occupied much of his attention, and then withdrew, promising to renew the conversation hereafter.

14. Another Attempt

THE ACCIDENT which happened to Julietta awakened a deep sympathy in the hearts of many persons, and numerous visitors came to express their condolence, as well as to congratulate her on her fortunate escape from more serious danger. She received letters from some of her former pupils, conveying their sympathy, and informing her that in a few days she might expect a visit from some inmates of the establishment, at whose coming she would be surprised.

Julietta, at first, was not certain that she should regard this intended call as one of condolence or as designed for another purpose, which she secretly suspected. She resolved to prepare herself for the interview, properly presuming that it would require all her faith and moral courage to withstand the encounter.

A few days after, the familiar carriage, horses, and coachman of the school drove up to the door: and who should alight but two of the teachers. Sisters Angelica and Theodosia? They were rather young and handsome ladies, well educated and refined, of engaging manners and dignified bearing. They met Julietta with the most tender embrace, and displayed the most affectionate interest in her condition. Not the least evidence was given that they were aware of any change in her mind; and, in the presence of the family, they lavished on her the most extravagant praises. They spoke of her accomplishments, talents, and virtues, and expressed a hope that she would soon be able to return to the seminary. When an incidental allusion to her brother was made, they adroitly turned it off; and introduced some other subject.

The family thought proper to retire and leave Julietta and her visitors by themselves. They had scarcely left the room when their tone and manner were altered, although they did not become harshly severe at once. They said they were aware of her religious course recently, and had come for the express purpose of remonstrating with her and of inducing her to return with them to the school.

Then the trial began. Julietta acknowledged that she had always been treated kindly by them, and had been contented.

“Why, then, not return at once?” they inquired.

“I have changed my religious opinions, and can no longer harmonize with you,” she modestly replied.

They expressed profound regret, but betrayed no violence. Their deportment was ladylike, and their language conciliatory.

Their amiable demeanor had a subduing effect on Julietta, but she secretly prayed for firmness and faith.

By degrees a discussion arose, which was conducted with becoming temper on both sides, occasionally only producing a flash of displeasure on the part of the nuns, which was, however, suppressed with consummate tact.

“You were satisfied with your place and with us, you have remarked, Julietta; and, then, why should you remain here?” they asked.

“The caged bird is satisfied with its imprisonment, because it never knew the sweets of liberty; but let it escape and fly over the meadows and drink of the clear streams and associate with its fellows, – and will it voluntarily return?” she asked.

“Yes, if it find no food!” they significantly replied.

“True,” said she; “but food is abundant in these flowery meadows, – on these trees bending down with the weight of luscious fruit, – in those fields waving with golden grain. ‘The Lord opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.’ I was satisfied, it is true; but now Christ has made me free, and in that liberty I shall stand, and not suffer myself to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

“How you have changed your language, Julietta!” they exclaimed.

“Say also, my heart and ways, and hopes and aims!” was her quick reply.

“But, dear child, I just now remember, Father Colbert enjoined it on me to tell you that your salary shall be raised immediately on your return,” said Sister Angelica.

“It was small enough, but I was content. No money can buy me now; no bribe can move me,” was her dignified answer.

“But you know that you could not clothe yourself as gaily as your position required; but now you will have the means,” added Sister Theodosia.

This appeal to her vanity only excited the displeasure of the young lady, and, with considerable warmth, she replied, “I would rather be dressed in

rags and be free, than glitter in gold and be a slave.”

The ladies soon discovered that it was necessary to change their course, and one of them said, –

“Oh, Julietta, you should only see the handsome young man we now have in the place of Werner. He is so handsome! You know that we, as nuns, dare not speak or even think of men; but we are sure he would suit you. He plays exquisitely, he sings divinely, and the girls are dead in love with him. They all say, however, that you would admire him because of the similarity of tastes. Had you not better come?” said they.

“I admire talent, wherever found; but my heart is not susceptible to the emotions you speak of. Perhaps you are smitten yourselves, and I might be in your way,” she replied sarcastically.

This remark, under other circumstances, would have brought forth the severest rebuke; but it was convenient now to pass it by with an affectation of pious horror at the ill-timed reflection.

“But do you not know, Julietta, that your going away in company with an unmarried man created considerable observation, and that you can only repair the mischief done by returning with us?” remarked Angelica.

This remote imputation started the blood of the young Italian lady into a quicker course. She rose from her chair, her eye flashing fire, and her lip quivering. She fixed her withering gaze on the sister, and exclaimed, “You are the last person who should utter language like this! – you who advocate a system which confines women within barred gates and high walls, to which priests alone have access! – you who subject yourselves like slaves to the will of men, who surrender your judgment, conscience, and all, to their keeping! – you who are sworn to defend nunneries, monasteries, and other similar establishments, which have been the fruitful source of crimes that dare not be mentioned, and which have been abolished even in Catholic countries because of their acknowledged immorality! – you who –”

She was here suddenly interrupted by Sister Theodosia: –

“Cease, Julietta; your language distresses us. I pray you, be calm. I can easily account for this violence: you have not yet fully recovered from the fever consequent on the accident, and, I presume, about this time of day it comes on.”

“Not in the least,” replied the young lady. “True, I am still weak; but my mind is clear, and I speak the words of soberness and truth. I am not mad. Sister Theodosia!”

By a dexterous maneuver, the visitors drew off the inexperienced girl to another subject; and, when her agitation ceased, one of them made another appeal.

“But, dear child, what will be your mother’s feelings when she hears of this? She cherished you so tenderly; she trained you so faithfully in the only true religion; she commended you so devoutly to the protection of the Blessed Virgin, when you left her; – and now, will it not break her heart to learn that you have gone astray?”

The allusion to her mother brought tears to her eyes. She was subdued. She resumed her seat, and uttered not a word. She covered her face with her handkerchief, and even sobbed.

The sisters felt that they had touched the proper key, and now began to entertain some hope.

A dead silence of a few minutes ensued. Julietta then drew from her pocket a New Testament, opened it, and, without saying another word, turned to the eighth chapter of Matthew, and read from the eighteenth to the twenty-second verse, inclusive, the last of which is, “But Jesus said unto them, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.”

“What book is that, Julietta?” asked Sister Theodosia.

“That book which, if not forbidden by your priests, at least is not encouraged; – that book which contains not a word about popes, purgatory, processions, salvation by good works, nunneries, Inquisition, indulgences, mass, and the hundred errors in which I have been trained; – that book which teaches that we are saved by faith in Christ without the works of the law; – that book which it would be well for you to read; – that book which –”

Here Sister Angelica suddenly turned pale, and Sister Theodosia, believing that she was about to faint, hastily rose, and exclaimed, “A glass of water, if you please, Julietta!”

This interrupted her remarks, and she procured the water to restore the fainting nun. More time than would otherwise have been necessary was spent in this process, and, when she had perfectly recovered, the conversation on the Bible was not resumed.

All their appeals to the pride, vanity, avarice, and filial affection of Julietta had been fruitless; and one more attempt was to be made.

They changed their tone, and now began to threaten, and hold up the perils of apostasy and the sin of leaving the only church in which salvation

can be found.

But she was prepared to defend herself, and their attacks were most successfully repelled. They soon found themselves incompetent to conduct the argument, and were confounded at every step.

They at length rose in a high state of excitement, and, forgetting their usual politeness, left the house without even the customary farewell, and, entering their carriage, drove off at a rapid rate.

15. The Priesthood And Consecration

ONE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT in favor of the Romish church; which had deeply rooted itself in the unfurnished mind of Charles, was the doctrine concerning the *priesthood*, which he introduced for discussion the next evening. He had been convinced that the Catholic priests were the only persons divinely authorized to give religious instruction and administer the sacraments, and that they were fully empowered to forgive sins. The mother thought that this was a subject which deserved no investigation, inasmuch as little depended on it; but the father maintained the contrary, inasmuch as the doctrine concerning the priesthood was a principal ground of the Catholic church, presumptuous in its character and encroaching exceedingly on the rights of others; and Bernhard observed that the proselyters of ancient and modern times had attempted to impress very deeply on the minds of the people the objection that the Evangelical clergy had no right to the office they sustained. To prevent unnecessary dispute, they at the commencement granted to Charles that Jesus and the apostles designed that there should be teachers and officers in the church, inasmuch as the apostles appointed presbyters and deacons in the congregations, or permitted them to be appointed by the churches. The father and Bernhard argued, that on this was founded the legitimacy of the clerical office established in the Protestant church, and then asked Charles why he controverted this legitimacy?

“The Romish church teaches,” he replied, “that Jesus and the apostles not only appointed teachers and officers in the churches, as you think, but that they established a distinct priestly order, to which belongs exclusively, and without the participation of the laity, the government of the church, the right to teach, to administer the sacraments, to forgive sins, and to decide controversies. Hence, without the priest the layman can do nothing. The priest must baptize him, and thus he first becomes a Christian. The priest must confirm him, must absolve him at confession, offer the sacrifice of

mass for him, help him out of purgatory, and by all these means unlock for him the gates of paradise, which the priest alone can do. Finally, it is the priestly order which, on account of its infallibility, has the exclusive right of determining what the layman must believe as true and reject as false, and what is real sanctification and the proper means to promote it.”

“Then the Catholic priests are not *guardians* of the souls of the laity, but *lords* of their souls,” remarked the father, – “their unlimited monarchs, because in matters of religion and salvation they have not only executive authority over the laity, but legislative. The laity are – pardon the comparison – the negroes, and the priests the planters. We have no such priests in the Evangelical church.”

“You cannot have them,” replied Charles; “for the rights of the priesthood are derived from the apostles, and are only communicated by priestly consecration. Hence, they can be possessed only by that priesthood which descends from the apostles in an uninterrupted chain of consecrations, and thus perpetuates and communicates these priestly gifts. The Catholic clergy can show historically the series of their bishops up to the apostles, consequently, derive their priesthood as genuine from its founder, Christ; but the Protestant clergy cannot do this; they can only derive their ordination and authority from the founders of the Reformation, Luther and Zwingli, who had it not in their power to found a priesthood.”

“Have you forgotten, my son, that Luther and Zwingli were consecrated priests of the Romish church, and also could trace their consecration to the apostles, and therefore could impart it to the clergy of the Evangelical church? Have you forgotten that at the time of the Reformation, very many Romish clergymen in Saxony, in the imperial towns, in all Germany and Switzerland, and also in Denmark and Sweden, became Evangelical clergymen, and hence brought over with them the consecration of the Catholic church into ours?”

“Indeed, dear father, I did not think of that. But I should think that Luther and the other Catholic clergymen had lost the consecration, inasmuch as they declared themselves independent of the Catholic church, and of the high-priest at Rome.”

The father, smiling, observed, “That is heresy, my son. You know certainly that your church and the Council of Trent have established the position, that consecration imparts a sacerdotal character *that cannot be lost*, – which is not destroyed by deposition and expulsion from the church, and

which of course could not be lost by all the Romish clergymen who became Evangelical. Once a priest, always a priest.”

“You are right, father. We must grant that Luther, Zwingli, and others, always remained legally-consecrated priests. But I believe they could not consecrate others, because they separated from the pope and Catholic priesthood, and fell into heresy.”

“Their heresy consisted in this,” continued the father; “that they ascribed to the Holy Scriptures a higher authority than to the decree of popes and the priesthood; that they elevated the authority of Jesus, the founder of the priesthood, above the priesthood itself, the master above the disciples. For this reason, it is impossible to rob them of the legitimacy of their consecration before God and Christ. But if they whom you call heretics had lost the authority of perpetuating sacerdotal consecration, then you would render doubtful the rights of the Romish clergy themselves. For from the first to the tenth century it was the clergy among whom very frequently, and for a long time, the so-called heresy reigned. In the middle of the fourth century the half of the Christian clergy were Arians.”

Bernhard here said, “I just remember that the bishops Dionysius of Maitland, and Eusebius of Vercelli, were Arians, and that the Romish deputies to the Council of Aries (in 354) themselves subscribed the condemnation of Athanasius, whose doctrine subsequently prevailed over that of Arius.”

“If then these avowed heretical bishops continued to consecrate without afterward re-ordaining those consecrated by them.” said the father, “and if consecration was further extended by these, then a great proportion of the present Romish priests received their consecration from Arians and other heretics, and consequently are not lawfully consecrated.”

“I feel that my ground is untenable.” granted Charles. “But just now the principal point occurs to me. The consecration of priests can only be performed by a bishop; consequently, Luther, Zwingli, and other Catholic clergymen, who were not bishops, could not transplant it into the Evangelical church.”

“You will only get into greater difficulties by that, my son. How do you know that a bishop only can consecrate?”

“It seems to have been the custom from the beginning.”

“But custom does not create a necessity. Besides, it was not so at the beginning, but a custom introduced at a later day. The apostle Matthias (Acts 1:15-26) was not elected in the place of Judas the traitor by Peter and the

apostles, but by the congregation at Jerusalem, which also (verse 24) prayed over him. Paul and Barnabas were consecrated apostles to the heathen, not by an apostle, neither by a bishop, but, according to Acts 13:1-3, by three pious private persons at Antioch. If then only a bishop could legally consecrate, Paul, Matthias, and Barnabas were not lawfully consecrated; consequently the elders ordained (Acts 14:23) by Paul and Barnabas, and all those consecrated by these again, which certainly constitute a great portion of the Romish clergy, have not received lawful consecration. Besides, there is no reason why a bishop only should consecrate, since by consecration, agreeably to our opinion, every one receives the same supernatural gifts, consequently can also communicate them, if they are at all communicable. Then you must grant that our clergy are validly consecrated, or acknowledge that the Romish priests are destitute of it also. But I attach no importance to it, because the whole doctrine of the power of consecration and the transmission of a supernatural gift; which renders the priestly order infallible and makes them the spiritual tutors of the laity, is altogether groundless. For by what means do you believe these supernatural gifts are transmitted?"

"By the laying on of hands at ordination." answered the son; "by which the Holy Ghost is communicated to the priests, and they receive the authority of teaching infallibly, effectually administering the sacraments, and offering to God the sacrifice of the mass."

"And what authorizes you to ascribe such operation to the laying on of hands?"

"The Scriptures themselves impute it."

"In that you are mistaken, my son," Interposed his mother. "The laying on of hands was not first introduced in the time of Christ, but it was a very ancient Jewish custom, and was a sign of the conferring of something invisible. That which was conferred may have as well been something good as bad – something spiritual or temporal. Hands were laid on the animal that was sacrificed, as a sign that the guilt of sin was laid upon it, and that it must expiate this guilt, (Lev. 1:4; 3:2; 4:15; 16:21;) on blasphemers, to show that the guilt was theirs, and that they deserved the punishment, (Lev. 24:14;) on Levites, as a sign that the care of the temple and the holy things were committed to them, (Num. 8:10;) upon Joshua, to show that the dignity of a leader of the nation was conferred on him, (Num. 27:18-23; Deut. 34:9.) In the New Testament you find that Jesus laid his hands on children when he blessed them, (Matt. 19:13-15,) that the same was done to the sick

to heal them, (Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18; Acts 9:12; 28:8,) and that hands were laid on newly-converted Christians to bless them and impart the gifts of the Spirit, (Acts 19:6.) When, then, it was practiced at the admission or installation of elders and deacons, (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6,) it was nothing peculiar, but something common, and they received thereby no extraordinary gifts, but the gifts of the Spirit, which *all other Christians* also received by the laying on of hands; and these gifts were so little connected with this custom, that even the yet unbaptized heathen received them after the mere hearing of the sermon of the apostle Peter, without the laying on of hands." Acts 10:44-46.

"I never before knew that the laying on of hands was so common, and that it equally exerts an influence on the laity," said Charles. "From this it certainly follows that this custom is not essential in the consecration of priests, and cannot be the means of communicating gifts peculiar to the priestly order."

"You will be yet more deeply convinced of this, my son, if you remember that the apostle Matthias (according to Acts 1:24-26) was consecrated, without the laying on of hands, by mere prayer; and Jesus himself, when he commissioned his apostles, observed another custom. He said to them, (John 20:21-23,) 'As my Father has sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, *he breathed on them*, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

"By laying on of hands, then, Jesus did not consecrate the apostles. Consequently, it cannot be essential or necessary to consecration, or the apostles were not properly consecrated, and, of course, the whole Romish clergy. Priestly consecration can then communicate nothing but external authority to perform ecclesiastical services. But the *internal* consecration which qualifies for this office cannot be inherited like a piece of land or a lordly title, and it cannot be received by the laying on of the hands of men; for it consists in the religious spirit and gifts necessary for the performance of the official duties."

"According to that," said Charles, "the priesthood would have no supernatural gift, which it appropriates to itself as a peculiar possession, in which the laity have no part?"

"What foolish questions you can ask, Charles! If you want another proof, only look at the bishops, the elders, and the deacons, from the first to

the sixteenth century. They were seldom unanimous in religious opinions; the priestly order was the most fruitful source of opinions which another portion of this order declared as heresies. The Phocians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Arians, Novatians, Adoptians, Eutychians, and many others whom you designate as heretics, had priests as their founders and priests as their defenders. The Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, – all consecrated priests, – carried on among themselves the most scandalous and prolix theological controversies, which in part are not yet discontinued. And these priests, of whom one part was always contending against the other, who condemned each other as heretics, are to be infallible, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, and to have the right of determining in an infallible manner what all Christians are to believe or not to believe! And these priests, who themselves first introduced the opinion of their presumed privileges and made it an article of faith, we are to believe upon their bare assertion, when they themselves so grossly contradict the opinion by their actions!”

“I see very well that I cannot dispute the legitimacy of the consecration of the Evangelical clergy on the grounds stated.” Charles was compelled to remark.

“That does not yet settle the matter, dear Charles,” said Bernhard. “We have granted your conception of the priesthood, and only shown that the Evangelical clergymen had all the right of appropriating to themselves what the Romish church ascribes to the priesthood. But we could have cut the matter short, and said that Jesus and the apostles did not design to establish a priesthood in the Christian church.”

“You can scarcely be serious?”

“Perfectly serious. *Teachers* of the gospel and *overseers* of the congregations they appointed, but no priests. For what is a priest?”

“The Romish catechism says: ‘*The office of a priest is to offer sacrifice to God and to administer the sacraments.*’ The correctness of this definition is derived from the Old Testament.”

“From the Old, truly, but not from the New. We have already shown you that the New Testament declares all sacrifices as abolished by the death of Christ. There is then no sacrifice to be repeated, and consequently, in the New Testament, no priest who has a sacrifice to bring. Besides, the apostles never regarded themselves as priests.”

“That I grant; but the administration of the sacraments is surely exclusively committed to them!”

“No, no! Only read the 11th and 12th chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,” said Bernhard. “There you will see that the gifts of the Spirit were common to all Christians; – that every one, the women alone excepted, could rise and teach in the congregation and explain the Scriptures. Teaching, then, was confined to no order, but it was free for all who felt themselves moved to it. And there is not the least proof that baptizing and administering the Lord’s supper were exclusively committed to the apostles, bishops, or elders. Paul says (1 Cor. 1:14-16) that in the large congregation at Corinth, which he established, he had baptized only two persons and one family, and adds, what is very decisive, ‘For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.’”

“I cannot surely dispute the assertions of the apostle Paul. But the apostles expressly received the power to forgive and retain sins, and through them the bishops received it,” said Charles.

“Remember what we said on that subject before, which you could not refute,” observed the father.

“The matter was thus represented to me, dear father: the principal design of Christ is to be the *mediator* between God and men. After his ascension to God, intercession for his people is alone ascribed to him. Whence then shall mediation between God and men come after this time? How are we placed in a situation to fulfill the conditions under which the mediation is to be of benefit to us? If it was not the will of Christ to continue his mediation personally to the end of the world, and the Scriptures speak only of one part of his personal mediatorial office, which he continues after his ascension to heaven, it is easy to believe that he committed to others the other part of his mediatorial office, – that which is visible to men on earth. And this mediatorial office in all its parts continued by Christ on earth, although not personally, is the Catholic priesthood. It is Christ acting and living on earth, until the end, in substitutes furnished with his authority and the necessary grace.”

“All that is pure nonsense,” said the father; “it has no support from the Scriptures, – yea, it is contradictory to the Scriptures. Show me but one passage in which the Savior says that the apostles should be his substitutes after his death and carry on his mediatorial office in his stead. On his departure from the earth, the Lord said to his apostles, (Acts. 1:8:) ‘Ye shall be witnesses unto me,’ but not. Ye shall be mediators in my stead, my substitutes in the mediatorial office. And, according to Matthew 28:18, 20, the

Savior, just before his ascension, said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven *and on earth*, I am with you always, even *unto the end of the world*.' How foolish, then, for you to speak as though Christ could or would not any longer exercise power on earth, and for this reason appointed priests in his stead! The apostle Paul contradicts that notion most decisively, when (in Heb. 7.) he ascribes to Christ an eternal priesthood, – that is, forever in exercise, continually in operation, – and hence draws the conclusion that there is no more necessity for a priesthood to perform its functions through men as his substitutes. In ch. 9:10, etc., he says that the human priesthood was only necessary until the appearance of Christ, 'the time of the Reformation' that he offered himself *_once for all*, 'having obtained eternal redemption for us_', (ver. 12,) and that now there is no more occasion for continual sacrifice, (ver. 25, 28.) So, my son, we need no further sacrifice and no priest; and Christ is not, as they wished to persuade you, separated from his church. Your idea of 'the priesthood's substitution in the place of Christ on earth' is an idle whim, directly in opposition to the Scriptures."

"Then there would be no priesthood in the Christian church?" asked Charles.

"It was not the design of Christ that there should be a priesthood in the sense of the Romish church." replied Bernhard. "The bishops and elders of the apostolical church did not constitute a distinct and privileged order, but they were partly teachers, partly overseers of the congregations, and stewards of the public affairs of the church. Hence, every one could be a bishop, if he was qualified for transacting this business. The deacons of the apostolic church were nothing more than stewards of the public alms, and took care of the poor, (Acts. 6:1, etc.,) and not even clergymen in the sense of our church. Hence, there were also deaconesses, (1 Tim. 4:9, etc.,) which affords certain proof that there was nothing sacerdotal in their office. The bishops, elders, and deacons, first began gradually to be regarded as a distinct exclusive order in the third and fourth centuries. All that was peculiar to the Mosaic priesthood was attributed to them, and hence the idea of the priesthood first originated. According to the representation of the apostle, *all Christians are priests*; and Peter says, (1 Pet. 2:5, 9:) 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy *priesthood* to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation.'

"But by 'spiritual sacrifices' the mass is not understood, but, according to Rom. 13:1, 2, Heb. 12:14, 16, the laying off of sin and the putting on of

Christian virtue. But when Peter says all Christians are priests, he is rather to be believed than when the pretended successor of Peter asserts the contrary. Hence, the Evangelical ministry is fully authorized to perform its functions *by the appointment* of the church, and very properly leaves the forgiveness of sins and the opening of paradise to Him whom it becomes, – the Most High in heaven, – and does not presume to repeat the sacrifice of Christ to God, since Christ offered himself once for all.”

“I can say nothing against that.” said Charles; “but yet there is something consoling in the belief that the clergy provide for the forgiveness of our sins; for our salvation, and the genuineness of our faith!”

“Yes; just as the eulogists of slavery say.” observed the father; “it is certainly very consoling to slaves that they need not be solicitous about shelter, food, and clothing, inasmuch as the master must provide all these. But they do not thereby reflect that the slave has nothing of his own; that he must yield unconditional obedience, must bear with all the whims of his master, and endure all the stripes of his overseer without a murmur. And these stripes the Romish priests have laid right lustily over the shoulders of the laity. But all that might be endured, if the clergy were able to fulfill what they promise and on which account they demand such unlimited power over the souls of the laity. The master gives his slaves real shelter, food, and clothing, because he is their master; but the priests only give directions toward paradise, which is not their own, but God’s; they promise forgiveness of sins, which does not depend on them, but on the mercy of God: – that is, their blessings are all prospective. They themselves possess them not, and only expect them from the grace of the great Master above. And how can you believe that these men are under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and filled with wisdom and holiness, when you read the complaints of all ages against the pride, cruelty, licentiousness, and crimes, of popes and priests? I do not deny that there have been very many pious, venerable, and excellent bishops, priests, and popes; but it is equally undeniable that there have been many others who were wicked, licentious, ignorant, lewd, and despicable. There is then among them the same mixture of wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, which is observed among the laity; consequently, the priests can possess no spiritual gifts above the laity, but are equally subject to error and to sin.”

16. The Romish And Evangelical Worship – The Mass

THE NEXT MORNING after this conversation Charles again read over the paper which he had prepared for the purpose of seeing what yet remained that he could advance in justification of his conversion to the Romish church. He found only two things: – first, that the Catholic *worship* was preferable to the Evangelical; and, secondly, that the Catholic church receives especial dignity from the *saints* and *martyrs* which belong to her. Difficulties occurred to him on both these points; but still he determined to bring them forward, to hear the opinions of his friends, that there might be a perfect understanding between them on all the points involved in the controversy. Hence, on the next evening he introduced the subject of the Catholic worship, to which he ascribed two principal advantages over the Evangelical: – first, that it is much richer in festivals, and hence awakens and promotes more ardent devotion; and, secondly, that it addresses the senses more powerfully, and by its splendor and ceremonies presents a more tangible and effective view of invisible things, and brings them nearer to our feelings. But he soon had occasion to wish that he had been silent about the multitude of festivals in the Catholic church, for his friends framed a strong argument against the Romish church from that very circumstance. The festivals have been multiplied to such an extent, they said, that they seriously interfered with the business of the citizens and retarded public industry, so that the Catholic princes themselves were obliged to remedy this abuse, and to prevent the introduction of new church festivals, except by their permission. His friends also objected on the ground that many festivals were founded on things which must be regarded as indubitable historical or religious errors; for instance, the festival of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, the commemoration of the chair of St. Peter, the Corpus Christi, of the chains of St. Peter, the ascension of Mary, of All Saints, (those which are in purgatory,) the numerous festivals of saints and martyrs,

many of which are founded on very uncertain legends. They opposed him on the ground that in the Old Testament the law was in full force, – ‘Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work,’ and that, although now the celebration of the seventh day was abrogated, and the first day of the week was selected as the Lord’s day, yet that the prescription of six working-days was still in full force, and that, hence, it was opposing the design of God, when men multiply holidays at such a rate that, finally, they have become almost as numerous as the working-days.”

They consumed more time in discussing the second point, which was, the superior advantages of the Catholic worship on the ground of the deep impression it made on the senses of men. Charles laid much stress on the salutary influence which the church solemnities in Rome exerted on so many strangers. They objected to this, that Rome afforded no criterion of the effect of the Catholic worship generally. “In a city,” said the father, “where the high-priest is at the same time a temporal king, and his person, when he publicly appears as a priest, is at the same time surrounded with the temporal majesty of the throne, where the subordinate priests are at the same time officers of the kingdom, and the church solemnities are performed in all the gorgeous magnificence which the unlimited will and wealth of a monarch can bestow upon them, – in such a city the worship will naturally be distinguished by a brilliance which can be found nowhere else. But the city of Rome, with her sumptuous St. Peter’s church, is not the Catholic world; and the king-priest – the pope – and the sacerdotal court surrounding him are not the Catholic church. We must consider the ceremonies in themselves, and not as they are performed at Rome.”

“But altogether irrespective of Rome,” replied Charles, “yet the customs and service of the Catholic church are of such a nature that they make a much deeper impression than the service of the Evangelical church. The latter employ only the understanding, but do not awaken religious sensibility; hence, they are only suited to the inhabitants of the cold North, who have no sensibility or taste, and not to the sprightly French, Italians, Spanish, and the inhabitants of the South generally. They require something entertaining, something addressed to the senses, which will excite their imagination and feeling.”

“I have often heard similar speeches.” said the father, “especially from enemies of the Evangelical church in France, and was always not a little astonished; for one single example completely prostrates this baseless idea,

and that is derived from the Mohammedan system. No religion in the world has such meager ceremonies as the Mohammedan. Their mosques are destitute of all ornament, of all pictures, of every thing that could gratify the senses or intoxicate the mind, and are only decorated with passages from the Koran, their holy writings. Their worship consists in fastings, ablutions, and prayers. They are perfectly satisfied with their frugal and dry service, and are complete fanatics in their religion. And yet they live in the warm – yea, hot – latitudes of the earth, in comparison with which Italy, Spain, and France must be called cold countries. You find them throughout all Asia Minor, in burning Arabia, in India, in Persia, in Egypt, in the interior of Africa, and in the torrid deserts. That stupid prattle, then, that the climate of France, Italy, and Spain demands that we convert the worship of God into a theatrical exhibition, and that pilgrimages, processions, masses, and pictures of saints and Madonnas, are essential, has always been exceedingly abhorrent to me, and is only depreciating those noble nations. The people, it is true, are everywhere the same, and they take delight in that which pleases the eye and charms the ear. But their imperfection is not our law: we must elevate them to more refined spiritual enjoyments. That this can be the case in Southern countries you see in the Reformed Christians of France and Switzerland, whose church service is much more simple than ours; but yet they are zealously evangelical, and in France many of them have been unshrinking martyrs of their faith and steadfastly withstood all temptations to apostasy. And was it necessary to establish another mode of worship for the Hollanders and the English in the colonies which are situated beneath the burning equator, in West India, in South Africa, East India, and the Indian peninsula, because there a hot sun burns over their heads and the cold fogs of their native land do not surround them? But, even if it were true, as you say, that the South cannot dispense with its theatrical worship, and that the North only begets men insensible to feeling, because employed with the understanding alone, then it would be an indication of the Creator himself that Romanism was not calculated for the North, and, consequently, you have no right to condemn and calumniate us. It is nothing but foolish, groundless prattle! If the inhabitant of the South is already a creature of lively sensibility, then his inflammable temperament should not, in addition, be flattered by religion; he should not be entertained by religious shows, and the extravagancies of his warm blood should not be encouraged by endless ablutions and indulgences. By these means he is only made worse, more volatile, and

careless; he is by the climate already disposed to idleness, and by your endless fasts you only nourish that disposition. You should rather give him a church service which would cool the blood, moderate his fire, and lead him to reflection, and not to fanaticism.”

“Even if I grant that, dearest father, yet there is still one advantage which we have, of which you are altogether destitute. The Catholic worship represents the invisible things and mysteries of religion in splendid paintings and ceremonies, which promote devotion in a great degree.”

“Bernhard, I leave you to reply to that.”

“Let us see, Charles, what you have more than we. We have public preaching, and much more frequently than you; the Lord’s supper also; and we do not administer it half, as you do, but whole, as Jesus instituted it. We have singing, prayer, and baptism. We also celebrate the principal festivals of the church. We also have, as you, churches, organs, clocks, choirs, the ordination of the clergy, and their solemn installation into office. What you have besides are processions and pilgrimages, of which it must be acknowledged that they cherish devotion in a very small degree, – yea, not at all; you have pictures of saints, holy water, incense, the baptism of bells, – mere trifles, which are unworthy of notice. The principal thing is the *mass* and that alone.”

“You are right,” said Charles; “it is the mass which constitutes the grand distinction. That is the principal part of the Catholic worship, which exceeds every thing in importance, even the sermon.”

“If we attend to the writers of your church,” continued Bernhard, “the mass is the most exalted service that can possibly exist, and awakens devotion more ardently than any thing else imaginable. But let us hear what your mass is. ‘The mass,’ says the Council of Trent, in the twenty-second session, ‘is an unbloody sacrifice, in which the priest offers to God the same Christ who hung upon the cross, as an atonement for sins and transgressions, even if they be enormous; a sacrifice which the priest offers not only for the sins of the living, and in the place of punishments and penances, *and for other necessities*, but also for the departed but yet not wholly-purified Christians in purgatory.’ The council not only authorizes public masses, at which the congregation is present, but also authorizes – yea, commands – private masses, which the priest may hold in a retired chapel, and enjoins that the mass shall be celebrated in the Latin language. Is it not so!”

“Even so,” said Charles.

“The principal idea, then, which lies at the bottom of the whole affair, is this: – that the priest, in performing the service of the mass, offers the body of Christ as a sacrifice to God anew. The fact that the sacrifice of the mass is the principal feature in the Catholic worship should afford you a complete development of the whole character of the Romish church, of her service, and of her fundamental difference from the Evangelical church. The character of the Romish church is *priestly*. From the fourth century onward, the Christian bishops were regarded as counterparts of the Old Testament priesthood; they were believed to correspond in all respects; they were no longer considered what the apostles had been, and what it was the wish of the apostles they should be, – namely, teachers, examples, and overseers of the church, – but as mediators between God and men, who sacrifice to God for men, and who thus procure for them grace and pardon from God. So soon as this view became prevalent, so soon was there attributed to all the services of the bishops, and other clergy, a priestly – that is, a propitiatory – influence with God, which was productive of grace. Their services in baptism, confirmation, the solemnization of matrimony, and the like, produced, as Christians believed, that effect on the supernatural world. And this is the principal distinction between the Evangelical and Catholic worship: – that we do not ascribe to our worship any supernatural effect on God, but only a moral effect on men, and we arrange and conduct it accordingly. Our worship is intended to enlighten the understanding, to incline the will to the practice of Christian virtue, and to purify and sanctify the heart. Hence, the preaching of the divine word, in connection with singing and prayer, is with us the principal matter. The Catholic worship, as a sacerdotal one, is intended to operate on the invisible world, – on God, – and to move him to absolve you from punishment and to exercise grace toward you. Hence, preaching is with you a subordinate service; at every time of worship there is required a sacrifice, and this is performed in the priest’s celebrating the Lord’s supper for himself, and thus a continual sacrifice is offered to God.”

“But is there not something consoling in this continual sacrifice, that, amid our daily infirmities, the grace which we so much need is daily operating?” asked Charles.

“This sacrifice of the mass, which is always to be had for money, may certainly be very consoling to him who desires constantly to sin.” replied Bernhard. “He will not be apt to let his sins become very old. They will always be young and blooming! For, as the church father Arnobrius (Adv.

Gentes, xii. p. 128) correctly says, 'The multitude of sins will only be increased if the hope of absolution is held out, and men will willingly submit to penances when the grace of the pardoning power can be purchased. But this consolation of the mass is not only dangerous to morality, but it is entirely without foundation. What idea must men entertain of God and of his grace, if they can believe that, so often as the priest sacrifices, God is compelled to be gracious to the sinner and to change his mind respecting him? For such a compulsion is inseparable from the idea of the sacrifice and its effect on God, because if God were voluntarily gracious there would be no necessity of the sacrifice of the mass by the priest. But, besides, this whole view of the mass has not the least foundation in the Scriptures. I challenge you to show me a single passage in the New Testament in which the Lord's supper, even in a general view, is represented as a sacrifice offered to God. For I will not even ask you for the proof that a priest is to offer it. You will not attempt to prove that. In the whole New Testament, although reconciliation through the death of Christ is often spoken of, you will not find one passage in which it is even remotely intimated that the sacrifice offered by Christ of himself was or is to be repeated among Christians. On the other hand, the whole epistle to the Hebrews expressly contradicts that sentiment; for it is the object of that epistle to show that by the sacrifice of Christ, which he *once* offered, *all* sacrifices among Christians are rendered unnecessary. To quote only a few passages from that epistle will be sufficient."

He here read Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 25-28; 10:10, 14, 18, and then proceeded:

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"Can any thing be plainer than these passages? Is not the repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, in every form, here declared untenable and perfectly superfluous? And where, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which treats so extensively of the Lord's supper, does the apostle Paul express the opinion, even remotely, that the sacrament is a second sacrifice, that the priest shall partake of it for himself only, and that thereby the priest sacrifices Christ anew?"

"I acknowledge that a second sacrifice is nowhere spoken of in the New Testament," said Charles.

"Say, rather, that the second sacrifice is distinctly represented as unnecessary. From all this, then, it is evident that the fundamental doctrine of your church respecting the mass is an error, unfounded in the Scriptures, and consequently every thing that your church teaches of the efficacy of the

mass, particularly the private and soul masses, is fundamentally erroneous. But this is not the only thing erroneous that lies at the foundation of your mass. The second error equally great, upon which the whole rests, is this: – that bread and wine are changed by the consecration of the priest into the body and blood of the God-man, with which, at the same time, (as the Council of Trent, session 13th, says,) *the soul and divinity of Christ are present*. But this change is not supported by a single word of the Scriptures. And the whole matter is in itself a palpable contradiction.’

“I know what you are after,” said Charles. “You think we teach that the bread in the Lord’s supper is bread and not bread at the same time; that would certainly be contradictory. But the church teaches that the *substance* of the bread is changed into the body of Christ, but that the *form* and the external appearance of the bread and wine remain unchanged.’

“I did not believe that you – pardon me – would betake yourself to such a groundless subterfuge. Tell me, what is the difference between the substantial and the accidental in the bread? If the bread still smells like bread, tastes, nourishes, and is and has every thing like real bread, what is then that substance that can fall away and be displaced by the body of Christ?”

Charles continued silent, unable to reply.

Bernhard continued: – “How can you suffer yourself to be deceived by such miserable subtleties? This whole doctrine of transubstantiation, as history tells us, first originated in the ninth century only, from *Paschasius Radbertus*; it was at that time violently assailed by the most distinguished divines, such as *Maurus*, *John Erigena*, and *Ratramnus* and was only first ratified in 1063, at a council held at Rouen. The belief that the host is the body of God, and is offered to God as a renewed sacrifice, is founded on that doctrine. I will not even mention the contradiction that arises from the fact that the priest himself consumes the host, and hence appears to offer the sacrifice not to God, but to himself, which militates against all the customs of the Old Testament, in which that which was to be offered to God was either sprinkled toward the altar or burned, but never consumed by the priest, although the priest received a portion of the offering. With this there are connected many other errors: for instance, that of purgatory in masses for souls; of other masses, you believe that they can serve all the various wants of life, and hence you can have a mass read for good weather, for a safe journey, for the thriving of cattle, and for other things, to which surely the exalted sacrifice of Christ never had any reference. If then the fundamental

ideas of the mass are errors, it is very clear that it cannot excite a salutary devotion unless the believer becomes an unbeliever, and entertains very different opinions of the mass, and by his own devotion attributes to it a different efficacy. But all ceremonies which exhibit an error, and which men conscious of that error must interpret to themselves in a sense totally different from that designed, in order to excite devotion, are false, useless, and superstitious, and dare not find a place in the worship of Christians. For a ceremony is the picture of a thought held up to the senses, and must hence be conformed and suited to that thought, just as a garment to the body. It only receives dignity from the thought of the truth on which it is founded, and thus impresses the mind; independent of that, it is empty and injurious.”

“I feel the truth of what you say,” acknowledged Charles. “I myself have often at the mass thought of something else for my edification. I regarded it as a representation of the omnipresence of God.”

“The sensation of the greatness and glory of God will be more powerful in your soul if you contemplate the starry heavens with the worlds revolving in eternal silence, rather than a vaulted church with the priest at the altar. And did you not miss our admirable hymns in the Romish church?” asked Bernhard.

“Indeed, I cannot deny that the Evangelical church-singing, in the matter and form of the hymns, exceeds every thing that we have in that part of our service, and that it is peculiarly calculated to excite devotion. I will acknowledge to you that that old hymn, ‘Commit thy ways to God,’ etc., and that beautiful one of Gellert, ‘My days on earth are ending,’ still afforded me the more heartfelt edification even in Rome.”

“Neither dare you forget the influence of our preaching,” said Bernhard. “We have indeed an infinite advantage over you, that instead of the mass we have made preaching the principal part of the service. Tell me, what kind of sermons did you hear in the Catholic church, which edified and made you a better man?”

“Here I must grant you every thing, my dear friends,” said Charles; “for it is too true that the sermons which I heard in the Catholic church were not only not edifying to my ear, accustomed as it was to better sermons, but were often in the highest degree offensive.”

17. Julietta And Purgatory

CHARLES AND JULIETTA had not conversed on the absorbing theme for several days. One morning she entered the parlor where he was reading, and, with an animated countenance, remarked, "Mr. Charles, I have got rid of a great fear, which has hitherto often tormented me, and I feel as if I was born anew, free as a bird in the air."

"It is no doubt something again that you have found in your New Testament that puts you into such high spirits," said Charles, smiling.

"And is there any thing wrong in that? Is not this book given to us that we should search it? Oh, I bless the hour it came into my hands! It has made day out of the night which surrounded me, and, instead of the chains which fettered me to the earth and the mercy of the priests, it has given me wings which raise me to God, who is also my Father, to whom I am not, as I was to the priest, a mean servant; He permits me to experience his grace, and no man is able to separate me from Him."

"Well, what is it that you have found?"

"That there is *no purgatory* in which my soul is once to be tormented!"

"What is your idea of purgatory?" asked Charles; "surely a gross and vulgar one, as though it were a kitchen-fire, in which the soul will experience all the pains which you feel when you burn yourself. But many good Catholics have a more refined idea of it. Their opinion of it is, that the soul will be purified of all the dross of sin, and they leave it undetermined how it is to occur. For the holy Council of Trent has certainly established the doctrine of purgatory, but did not determine what representation men should make of it to themselves."

"That is a mere subterfuge, dear sir. The holy Council could have had no other conception of it than that which has been general among men until now: their idea was that it was real fire, and hence the Council of Trent says that souls will be "tortured" by it. Your so-called refined idea is nothing but a subterfuge, by which men seek to avoid the offensiveness of a doctrine the falsehood of which is too evident. If the condition is one of *torture*, and

if men for mercy's sake are bound to have a multitude of soul-masses read to deliver the soul from this torment, we must believe that it is real fire, or some other condition of indescribable agony."

"You are right; the church believes that it is such a state of agony," Charles replied.

"But is not the expectation of a purgatory, in which pious souls are to be tormented after death, something frightful, that will not only embitter the dying hour of a good Christian, but fill him with alarm during his whole life? And what a terrible thought, when a friend of ours, a husband or wife, a father or mother, dies, that we must believe, notwithstanding all their piety, that they are in awful torment, the very idea of which fills us with horror!"

"But, Julietta, you certainly know that the church has the means of delivering souls out of purgatory, namely, – the masses for souls?"

"Certainly! After the church has first made us fear and tremble, then she offers us help. It really appears as if men were frightened for the express purpose of consoling them, and as if purgatory were invented for the masses, and not the masses for purgatory! And how can such a poor person as I am be benefited by these masses? – for they cost money. The church does not make it an easy matter to get out of purgatory; for one mass is not sufficient. For the rich, who can pay for many masses, many are read, and for princes, they are read by thousands. If *one* mass were sufficient to get a soul out of purgatory, it would be sinful extravagance to suffer the body of God to be sacrificed by the priest a hundred – yea, a thousand times, for a thing already accomplished by the first mass. If, then, many masses are used – I do not exactly know how many – in order to escape the tortures of purgatory, you see plainly that the consolation of the church is consolation only for the rich and exalted, who can pay for many masses, but not for the poor, who must serve out their time in purgatory. 'The gospel is preached to the poor,' said the Savior, when he (Matt. 9:5) replied to the messengers of John the Baptist. But purgatory is no gospel or good news; for the poor it is tidings of horror. But the whole New Testament contains not a single word about purgatory."

"You do not perhaps know, Julietta, that the passage 1 Cor. 3:13, 15, is generally quoted in its favor."

"I know that very well; but only read for yourself the passage, verses ninth to nineteenth in connection, and the purgatory of souls will immedi-

ately be extinguished. Paul warns the Corinthians against creating parties and following one distinguished teacher rather than another. All the teachers, he says, by their teaching helped to build the temple of God, – that is, the Christian community; but what their materials were – whether stone, or wood, or hay – the fire of trouble and persecution would prove and decide. Then the building constructed of wood and straw will be destroyed by fire, and the master-builder, – that is, the teacher himself, – if he is saved, will only be saved by fire, – that is, certainly not without great damage to himself. The words do not refer to souls after death, but to the church on earth in times of persecution. The fire represents severe trials, but is by no means intended as real fire; for the building is also figuratively spoken of the Christian community, and stone, wood, and hay, which are to endure the fire, are figuratively spoken of good and bad doctrines, of truth and error. It would be foolish if in this whole simile you were to interpret the expression *fire* literally, but the others – temple, stone, wood, hay – figuratively.”

“Certainly that passage proves nothing, and I myself never used it as such.” said Charles. “But you have found nothing, I suppose, that directly disproves the existence of purgatory?”

“Most certainly have I found enough, and it is just that which, to my joy, has delivered me from such great fear. It is already enough for me that Jesus and the apostles, who so often and extensively spoke of a future state, said not a word about a purgatory; for they could not have been silent about it altogether. But they speak in a manner which shows that there can be no purgatory for pious souls. Of poor Lazarus, Jesus says, (Luke 16:22,) ‘And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom;’ therefore not into purgatory. To the thief on the cross he cried out, (Luke 23:43,) ‘Today shalt thou be with me in paradise,’ and this man was a robber, whose soul certainly was less purified than that of a pious man. On this I trust, and hence I have abandoned all faith in purgatory, and am free from all fear. What could I think of the mercy of God? Can I praise the mercy of a father who still suffers me to be tormented by a consuming fire, and, as it were, burnt out, although his Son sacrificed his life for me that he might forgive me, and the priest has unceasingly repeated this sacrifice in the mass for me, although I tried my utmost to fulfill his commandments! And, sir, how can you conceive at all of the whole affair, without making the soul something corporeal? The whole idea is certainly taken from met-

als which are melted and purified by fire. The soul surely cannot be any thing as coarse as a piece of metal which is burnt out in the fire!”

“Such a vulgar idea of it cannot certainly be entertained, although that is the idea of the church,” said Charles.

“I believe that it *cannot at all* be understood, – that men can have *no conception* of it. I come to this conclusion from the manner in which I was purified of the dross of sin, which I brought with me from Italy, by this blessed book.” (*holding up the New Testament.*) “There was no fire and no torture, although there was sorrow. I was brought to see the truth; I learned to love it; I resolved to practice it; I do practice it to the best of my ability; this is the history of my conversion, and no person can be purified in any other way. Sorrow purifies him as it did the prodigal son, whose father did not first let him go through a purgatory before he received him, but immediately prepared for him a feast of joy. Of this sorrow Paul says, (2 Cor. 7:10,) ‘For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;’ ‘to salvation,’ observe, not to purgatory, ‘He that is dead,’ says the same apostle, (Rom. 6:7,) ‘is freed from sin.’”

“Oh, Julietta, your soul is full of light! You are indeed happy.”

“That I feel, and thank God. But I owe it altogether to the gospel, to which alone I will hereafter cling. I have experienced to my salvation the fulfillment of what the Savior says, ‘Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’”

“In God’s name, cleave to it, Julietta. I at least will not lead you in any other way than that in which you yourself walk, conducted by the gospel.”

“That would also be in vain. How blind I was that I wondered so much, when we first entered the Evangelical countries, that presumed heretics were also prosperous, and that they were industrious, honest and moral! I see plainly that the gospel daily exerts on them the same influence that it has exerted on me; it makes them better and more contented, and with such a people our heavenly Father will be pleased.”

18. The Saints And Martyrs

CHARLES did not end this conversation with Julietta without some feeling of shame. By the simple guidance of the gospel, she had delivered herself from gross errors which her education had engrafted on her. This fact filled Charles with shame, inasmuch as he had suffered himself to be seduced from the Protestant truth into these gross errors. He became more and more sensible of the precipitancy with which he had acted; his regret became more painful, and he would have given much if he could have recalled all that he had said and done. The thought of returning to the Lutheran church occurred to him frequently. But the sensation of shame always suppressed it, inasmuch as such a step would appear to exhibit him to the world as changeable and fickle, or as a weak-headed youth who easily suffered himself to be led astray. The customary expedient of quieting his mind in this painful state of uncertainty was the consolation that, as a Catholic, he might be a good Christian and yet think of the doctrines as he pleased. The next evening he confessed to his friends that he could not withstand Julietta's Scripture proofs, and that this morning she had so clearly demonstrated the non-existence of a purgatory that he himself no longer believed it.

"I only wonder, dear Charles," said Bernhard, "that you ever have believed it, as it so evidently is a remnant of paganism. The whole idea originated from the system of Zoroaster, who lived before Christ, in Media. He was a worshiper of fire, and taught, as his works still extant show, that at the end of time the whole world must go through a stream of fire, by which it will be purified and glorified in light. From him also the Platonic philosophers among the Greeks took the idea of a purification after death. From these sources the opinion was also received by several church fathers' as Origen and Augustin. But both seem to have regarded it rather as a figure of moral reformation. It was by no means a doctrine of faith at that time. It became such only through the Roman bishop Gregory in the sixth century, and then was gradually extended through the church. But the fear of purgatory, from which the priest alone could redeem, was too useful to the priesthood,

and the masses for the dead founded upon it were too profitable to them, that they should permit this opinion to be abolished when it was once prevalent. The Council of Trent established it as an eternal article of faith in the Romish church, and thus stamped as a Christian doctrine a thing that in its origin was as foreign to Christianity as the invocation and worship of angels, saints, and martyrs.”

“What!” exclaimed Charles; “you declare this invocation and worship to be foreign to Christianity? I see an advantage of the Catholic church in that very thing, that she has so large a number of saints and martyrs, who are her ornament and glory, of which the’ Protestant church is wholly destitute. These heroes of faith and humility bear strong testimony to the truth of Catholic Christianity, and their example is a powerful stimulus to the faithful.”

“As far as I am acquainted with the legends of your pretended saints,” observed the father, “we have no reason to envy you that advantage. But even granting that the saints of your church were real saints, yet your glory on their account amounts to nothing. For, as your church was first founded only in the eleventh century, the apostles, saints, and martyrs of the first thousand years are not yours exclusively, but are common to the whole church, and, hence, belong also to us. But to worship them and the angels, to consecrate churches, altars, and festivals to them, to pray to them, to depend upon their intercession with God, – all this, on the best grounds, we regard as wrong. What do your confessions teach on this subject?”

Charles replied: – “The Council of Trent, in the twenty-fifth session, says, ‘The bishops shall teach that the saints intercede with God for men, – that it is good and useful humbly to invoke them, and to take our refuge in their intercessions, *merits*, and *assistance*, for the attainment of blessings from God through his Son Jesus Christ, who is our only Redeemer.’

“The Romish catechism, in the third part, says, ‘The *angels* are also to be invoked, partly because they continually see the face of God, and partly because they willingly undertake the defense of our salvation. There is evidence in the Holy Scriptures of this invocation. Jacob (Gen. 32:26) prayed to the angel who wrestled with him, that he would bless him.’ The same catechism, in the fourth part, says, ‘The holy church with great propriety directs her thankful prayers and invocations to the most holy mother of God, that she may by her *intercessions reconcile* us sinners to God, and obtain for us *temporal* and *eternal* blessings.’ Hence, the Catholic church renders

to these intercessors a sort of worship, and permits them to be chosen as protectors of individual men, churches, provinces, and countries, and teaches that men can receive from them protection against every kind of misfortune and the attainment of every kind of blessing.”

“I am, indeed, an unlearned woman,” said the mother; “but I think that I could refute the whole episcopal assembly at Trent from the Scriptures. For the doctrines of your bishops are so directly at variance with the Scriptures, that it is wonderful how these shepherds of your church could speak so decidedly against all Scripture. They say that we must invoke the saints and Mary, but the Lord says, (Ps. 50:15,) ‘Call *upon me* in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.’ In Ps. 145:18, it is said, ‘The Lord is nigh unto all them that call *upon him*.’ (v. 19:) ‘He will fulfill the desire of them, that fear him; *he will also hear their cry, and will save them*.’ Hence, it is not necessary that it be first introduced to his notice and recommended to him by Mary and the saints. Jesus also teaches us to pray to God without such mediators, when (Matt, 6:9) he says, ‘After this manner therefore pray ye: OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN.’”

“But, dear mother, is not intercession for others a general duty? And shall not the saints in heaven also perform this duty?”

“Intercession for others is undoubtedly a duty of love, according to 1 Tim. 2:1, Luke 6:28, James 5:15,” replied the mother; “but all the passages of Scripture treat only of the intercession of the living for the living, and not of the dead for the living. But this intercession is nowhere represented *as something necessary in order to obtain help from God*, The New Testament recognizes only one Mediator for us, – not Mary, not the saints, but Jesus Christ. In Rom. 8:34, it is said, ‘Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us;’ and in 1 John 2:2: – ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ This is also said in Heb. 4:15, 16, and 7:24, 25. We do not, then, need the intercession of saints and angels. ‘Ask,’ it is said, ‘and it shall be given unto you.’ But it is still less allowable for the Christian to worship the angels and saints in any manner. In Isaiah 42:8, it is said: – ‘I am the Lord; that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.’ Jesus commands, (Matt. 4:10:) ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.’ And in Rev. 19:10, 22:8, 9, we read that John was about falling down before the angel to worship him; but he declined the honor, with these words: – ‘See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and

of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; *worship God.*' Neither did the apostle Peter accept of this honor, but said to Cornelius, as he fell at the apostle's feet, (Acts 10:25,) 'Stand up; I myself am also a man.' You find not a single example of intercession of the dead for the living, or of angels for us, in the New Testament. That example of the angel by whom Jacob desired to be blessed, which is quoted by the Council, is not at all applicable to this case. Thus Esau and Jacob were blessed by Isaac and Ephraim, and Manasseh by Jacob, (Gen. 27:48.) Can any one, on that account, say that they worshiped Isaac or Jacob? You see, then, that the Scriptures direct us to pray immediately to God, and not to angels or to saints; and they are still further from allowing them divine honors."

"But you are wrong, mother, if you believe that the Catholic church approves of the adoration of angels and saints. That is only paid to God. She only allows a religious veneration of them by invoking them for their intercession and assistance."

"That distinction is nothing more than a mere play on words," said she. "It is written in the Scriptures, '*Call on me* in the day of trouble,' but not on an angel. *To call on the name of God*, or to call on God, is in many places in the Scripture equivalent to worshiping God or praying to him; and, if there were yet a difference between praying to God and worship or invocation, it would certainly be unintelligible to the people, and that would really seduce them into a sort of idolatry."

The father now spoke: – "That is also the offensive feature of the subject to me, – that the abuse of regarding the saints and angels as subordinate Gods can scarcely be avoided. For he who seriously believes that Mary and the saints hear his prayers, must make out of them a sort of omnipresent and omniscient beings. Gregory, for example, is at the same time invoked in Naples, Rome, Piedmont, Sicily, Austria, Bavaria, France, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Chili, Peru, Brazil, St. Domingo, and other places. Either he must be, like God, present at all these places, to hear these invocations, or he must, like God, be omniscient, to know all these prayers, sighs, and silent vows, or he can ascertain nothing of all these, and, of course, render no assistance. Particularly is this worthy of observation with respect to Mary, who is worshiped and invoked most generally. It is calculated that there are a hundred and twenty-five millions of Catholics in the world, and forty millions of Greek Christians, of whom the majority daily pray, '*Hail, Mary.*' They live dispersed over the whole earth. But the blessed spirit of Mary is

to hear and present all their prayers to God. Is it not evident that men must presuppose that Mary is a sort of goddess, hearing all, omniscient and omnipresent!”

“Really, I never represented the matter to myself in that light, and see plainly that it militates against all our conceptions of a human soul,” replied Charles. “But it is still a consoling thought to believe that the saints pray to God for us. God is such an exalted being that we feel ourselves separated from him as it were by a great gulf, which Mary and the saints fill up.”

“That cannot be your sincere opinion; if so, you must not know God at all,” remarked the mother. “The Psalmist says of him, ‘*Thou understandest my thoughts afar off; lo, there is not a word on my tongue hut thou knowest it altogether.*’ Read the whole of the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, and learn from that how foolish it is to seek for an interpreter of our desires to the omnipresent God, who knows our inmost thoughts before they are distinct to ourselves, and to ask for a sainted intercessor with him who is our gracious and merciful Father. Your worship of the saints tends to alienate the hearts of Christians from God; he becomes strange to them; they accustom themselves to think only of men. God appears to them in the unworthy aspect of an Eastern king, whom no man can approach excepting through flattering intercessors and courtiers. Where is that love, that filial confidence, which the Christian has in God as his Father? The Romanist prays more frequently to Mary and the saints than to God. But, since you also pray to God, I wish to know why you do not *always* pray to God, but most frequently to the saints? If you believe that he accepts prayer generally, and, if consistent with his wisdom, hears it, then you must also believe that he *always* hears, and feels disposed to answer it. Consequently, the intercession of saints is very superfluous, and, in truth, an insult to God, as though he were first to be reminded of his mercy and rendered gracious through men.”

“You may not be wrong in that, dear mother; but yet it is not to be denied that the martyrs and saints deserve to be venerated and praised by us.”

“Yes.” said the father; “but only as all other pious Christians generally, *not as mediators between God and men.* For we have only one Mediator, and that is Christ. We may honor the heroes of virtue and the martyrs of the faith. We may cherish their memory and celebrate their courage; but *pray to them* we dare not.”

“But the religious veneration of martyrs and of saints is so ancient in the church that it can be traced back to the first century,” remarked Charles.

“All that would follow from that is that the error was ancient; but certainly an error, for it militates against the Scriptures most decisively,” added the father.

Bernhard now said: – “And, besides that, an error which is indebted for its origin to an opinion which was exploded by Christianity. The ancient world before Christ, even the Jews, believed that the souls of all men, after death, went to a subterranean world, – that is, a place of abode under the earth, – an opinion which the first church fathers also still entertained, and which you will find extensively set forth by Tertullian, if you read the fifty-fifth and fifty-eighth chapters of his book ‘On the Soul.’ To explode this idea was the design of Christianity, and hence it everywhere promises true believers freedom from death, or from this subterranean abode, and eternal life *in heaven*, or *with God*. But the thought that souls after death leave the earth entirely and go to heaven to God, appeared very singular and difficult to the ancient world, so that, for a long time, they adhered pertinaciously to the old idea of the subterranean world, and regarded immediate ascension to heaven as something extraordinary, – as a very distinguished reward. This they ascribed, as is seen from the oldest fathers, exclusively to the martyrs. They believed that the reception of the martyrs into heaven was like that of Christ, because they, like Christ, suffered death. Of many passages of the old fathers which I could quote, I will only select the words of Tertullian, (‘Of the Resurrection,’ ch. 43,) who says:– ‘No one who has departed from the body in death (without going into the subterranean world) can immediately abide with the Lord, unless he suffered martyrdom; in which case he at once goes to paradise, and not into the lower worlds.’ You can now easily see how men could come to regard the martyrs as intercessors, – namely, because they, and they alone, besides the angels, were considered as inhabitants of heaven, who surrounded the throne of God, and consequently (for so humanly did they conceive of this matter) had the opportunity of praying to God for the living. The ancient church then had still some ground, in a prevailing though erroneous and antichristian idea, for regarding the martyrs as intercessors with God; but there was no ground for extending this at a later day to the so-called saints, than, at most, the desire of substituting in the imagination of the converted heathen, in the place of their gods of which they were deprived, something else, which did not appear to militate

against the unity of God. The saints and martyrs were substituted in the place of The demi-gods, or those men whom the Greeks and Romans regarded as demi-gods, because they were considered not to be in the lower world, but in heaven.”

Charles observed, “If that be the case with respect to the intercession of saints, it is certainly founded on an erroneous opinion. But, dear Bernhard, why do you call the saints so-called or pretended saints? Do you not believe that their virtues are genuine and worthy of imitation!”

“As the evening is far advanced, let us postpone that to another time.”

“That is also my desire,” said the father; “for, Charles, we have hitherto heard your accusations against our church, and your representation of the advantages which you ascribe to the Romish church. We have defended ourselves against the former, and the latter we have examined by the light of Scripture and history. If you have joined the Romish communion from full conviction, you must also consider our arguments against your church, that you may know how to answer us. It will not be much; for, in our defense thus far, many principal points have been discussed and decided.”

19. A Third Attempt At Rescue

JULIETTA in the mean time was making rapid progress in religious knowledge and experience. She found it rather difficult in all things to conform herself to Protestant modes of thought; and it was not easy to dispense with some unessential outward forms, to which she had been taught to attach great importance.

Another affair of a tender character was also making progress, but as yet there was nothing more than a tacit understanding between her and Charles. Everybody, however, agreed as to the expediency of the match; people said it would suit very well, and, as is usual in such cases, especially in country villages, it was a subject of conversation in all circles.

Additional interest was attached to the lady by the fact of the well-known and insidious attempts to inveigle her back to the seminary. It was presumed, if they had succeeded in that, she would not have escaped again.

It was now thought by all that no further attempts would be made, and that the poor persecuted girl would be left undisturbed.

For some days, certain strangers, with no apparent object in view, were seen loitering about the village and particularly inspecting the parsonage. They appeared anxious to avoid intercourse with others. They would come and go at intervals of a few days; but no particular notice was taken of them, and it was only after the occurrence about to be narrated, that almost everybody remembered having seen the strangers in the village.

Julietta had devoted some time to the study of botany, and frequently went into the woods and fields in search of flowers. On these excursions she was usually accompanied by Charles and Amelia, but sometimes she ventured to go alone.

One day, as she had sauntered far into the woods in search of a particular plant that was known to grow in that locality, she was suddenly surprised at seeing two men rapidly approaching her. She presumed at first they were laborers going to their work; but, as they drew nearer, she observed that they were directing their course toward her, and betraying a haste and confusion

that were remarkable. This alarmed her, and she was soon rudely assailed and forced still deeper into the woods. She screamed and struggled; but one of the miscreants thrust his soiled handkerchief into her mouth, which almost stifled her. The poor girl was exhausted, and without much difficulty they dragged her along. Occasionally she recovered for a moment, and most piteously implored them to spare her. She promised them all she possessed. At one time, she fell on her knees, and with clasped hands and weeping eyes she entreated them to pity her. She pleaded in terms that would have moved a heart of stone; but all was fruitless.

One of them finally said, in a gruff, foreign accent, –

“We will not hurt you if you only go with us; but go you shall, by the Holy Virgin!”

“Go where!” she exclaimed.

“Where you came from!” was the answer.

“To the seminary?” she asked.

“Never mind, my lady; only keep quiet. Do not fear any thing else; but we have sworn to take you back. So you had better be quiet, or we shall use force. We have a carriage just beyond the woods.”

Relieved of the most dreadful apprehension of all; she became comparatively calm, and was ready to submit to her fate. She, however, hoped that her long absence from home would excite alarm and induce them to send persons in search of her, or that she would meet some one in the woods who would rescue her.

While they were proceeding slowly along, as fast as the fatigue and alarm of the poor girl would allow them, the loud barking of a dog was heard; and this was immediately succeeded by the sharp crack of a rifle. This alarmed the abductors and gave hope to Julietta. The rifleman had missed his shot, and the squirrel at which he had fired leaped from tree to tree in the dense forest in the very direction of the alarmed ruffians. The dog came bounding along, and, observing them, suddenly stopped and growled fearfully. It was not long before the huntsman came running along, for he knew that something unusual had thus suddenly interrupted the barking of the dog. When his approach was observed by the men, they instantly fled in an opposite direction, but not too soon to escape the recognition of the huntsman.

The poor lady was overjoyed. She absolutely screamed with delight. She held out both hands to the welcome deliverer, and rushed toward him, as if

half distracted with joy.

A few moments sufficed to explain the whole affair. The huntsman became desperately excited, and was about to start off in pursuit of the villains; but it at once occurred to him that the lady required some attention, and he remained. But still he could not refrain from crying out after them, "I know you, you scoundrels, and shall pay you well for all this!"

"Do you know them?" asked Julietta.

"One of them certainly, and I suspect who the other is," he replied. "The tall man is the gardener at the popish seminary some miles from here, and I think the other is a popish blacksmith in the village in that neighborhood. What was their design in treating you thus?"

The girl tremblingly said, "They intimated very plainly that they intended to take me back to the seminary!"

"The infernal scoundrels!" muttered the man.

Julietta expressed her gratitude to him in the warmest terms, and, taking her watch from her belt, offered it to him; but he said, "No, miss; I am rewarded sufficiently in the pleasure of having rescued you out of the hands of these accursed persecutors."

He conducted her safely home, and the report of the affair soon spread through the neighborhood and excited universal indignation. It became the subject of newspaper comment; but, of course, the authorities of the seminary denied any participation in or knowledge of it.

The deliverer of Julietta was subsequently rewarded in such a way that he could not refuse it; but no efforts were made to arrest the offenders.

20. The Morality Of The Romish Church – Christian Perfection – Indulgence And Good Works

CHARLES had nothing to object to the request of his father to listen to the arguments in favor of the Protestant faith. It was reasonable. They had heard him; he must now also listen to them, for he had nothing more that appeared worthy of bringing forward in his justification. With great reluctance, he was obliged to acknowledge to himself that every thing by which he hoped triumphantly to justify himself, had vanished into air. True, none of his relations had yet uttered an expression which alluded even to the absolute necessity of his return to the Protestant church; but he certainly expected such a requisition from the resolute character of his father, and thought with trembling of that agreement which he had entered into with him at their first conversation respecting the duty of abandoning an erring church. To receive more light on several points which Bernhard had refuted from the nature and character of the first church, he took up the writings of the apostolic fathers, Justin and Tertullian, and read them with diligence. But they set before him a picture of the ancient church which was less and less like the present Romish church. These writings, far from affording him any weapons for the defense of his church, only sharpened more and more the weapons of his opponents. The state of mind which this occasioned was intolerable. He felt that he must soon come to a decision, and, at the same time, that nothing but a return to the truth so precipitately abandoned could again restore peace and harmony in his soul. So soon as he had once acknowledged this conviction, he became more contented; and hence in the evening he went, considerably composed, to hear what his friends would advance in opposition to the church of Rome.

“The principal thing which I object to in your church,” said the father, “is this: – that she has corrupted the science of morals, and has attached to a

false virtue, which deserves not the name, the character of special holiness. The majority of the saints of the Middle and latter ages received the honor of saints from this false virtue.”

“This is no doubt also your view of the subject, Bernhard, and hence you yesterday said ‘the pretended’ saints. Give me your reasons,” said Charles.

“On that subject I must necessarily be somewhat lengthy, and I pray you to grant me your attention a little longer than usual,” began Bernhard. “Before the time of Christ, there was an opinion prevalent in the East, that the body was the prison of the soul, and that matter was the origin of evil. This view of the body was not unknown to the philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras, and was also entertained by the Hellenistic Jews, as the example of Philo of Alexandria shows; yea, it pervaded all that part of the world where Christianity first flourished, and hence was adopted by the first Christian teachers. But, unfortunately, it perverted morality. It was believed; for instance, that the soul could only approximate perfection, or be made an acceptable instrument of the spirit of God and rendered worthy of union with God, partly by abstaining from every thing that would be agreeable to the body and that would excite the natural desires or gratify the senses, and partly by employing all severe measures to weaken and blunt the natural appetites, to mortify the body, and thus afford the soul a greater liberty in spiritual meditations. Even before the time of Christ, such abstinence, or *mortification of the flesh*, as it was called, was not uncommon. The moral zeal of the first Christians led them to adopt this; and they soon carried it much farther. The natural appetites, which occasioned carnal enjoyments in satisfying them, were now regarded as sinful, and abstinence from this satisfaction of them as meritorious. The enjoyment of delicate food, matrimony, – in fine, every sort of luxury, indulgence, or mere carnal gratification, – was considered incompatible with Christian perfection. On the other hand, fasting, the most simple food and drink, severe abstinence from all public amusements and enjoyments, voluntary poverty, celibacy, the voluntary performance of humiliating services, were regarded as particularly meritorious and especially holy. Hence, a second marriage was reprobated as an evidence of great incontinence. The priests, if they made any pretensions to sanctity, lived with their wives as brother and sister, and many laymen did the same. From this was evolved very gradually the doctrine of the Romish church respecting *Christian perfection*, or a piety which does more than the moral law enjoins, and which God does not precisely demand, because it is

not possible to all men, but which the apostles have still recommended as particularly acceptable to God. This constitutes the ‘*evangelical counsels*’ of the Romish church, and the actions flowing from them, the pretended ‘*good works*’ of that church. This perfection, according to your church, consists in celibacy, voluntary poverty, almsgiving, fasting, prayer, blind obedience to priestly superiors, retirement from the world and its business and enjoyments, or monastic life, and every sort of voluntary severe treatment of the body. Those who distinguished themselves in this kind of abstinence and self-mortification received *par excellence* the name of saints. But this pretended virtue was carried to the greatest extent at the time when the innumerable mendicant monks arose, who made a peculiar merit of idleness, of supporting themselves by alms, and of living and wandering about in the most disgusting filthiness.”

“But will you condemn such voluntary abstinence, which was often founded on deep religious feeling?” asked Charles.

“I grant that in the case of many it was founded on deep religious feeling; but it was evidently a false sanctity after which they strove. For it proceeded from incorrect views of human nature and the design of human life, and, to the greatest prejudice of Christianity, it cast into the shade the moral law, upon which the welfare of man depends. To live in lawful marriage, faithfully to bear all the burdens of domestic life, to bring up pious children for the state and the church, – all this, according to this doctrine of perfection, is nothing; but not to marry, not to lead a domestic life, not to have and educate children, is sanctity. To live among men, to work for them, to be engaged in trade or any kind of business, to serve the state and to be useful to society, – all that is nothing; but to lock up one’s self in monasteries, to renounce the world, and to be constantly engaged in pious exercises, is sanctity. But why should I expatiate on this subject? I will merely state the grounds on which I must reject this whole doctrine of perfection. That which cannot become general because, if it became general, it would dissolve the constitution of civil life and human society, and, consequently, frustrate all the designs of the Creator with man and render the extension of the church impossible, is not and never can be proper; it is not perfection, but aberration from the truth, and enthusiasm. Against this principle you can indeed say nothing. But your pretended Christian perfection would unavoidably produce such a dissolution of church and civil society, and hence the whole system is pernicious fanaticism.”

“But the church does not intend that this Christian perfection shall become general, because all men have not the spirit necessary for it.” remarked Charles.

“Then it is not perfection, not sanctity; for, according to the directions of Christ and the apostles, every man is commanded to be perfect and holy. That which would be folly and corruption if it became *general* cannot be virtue when only a *few* practice it. It is then something merely allowable, but nothing good. A country filled with merely holy monks and nuns, instead of industrious fathers and mothers, would show very distinctly the complete folly of monkish virtue. And do you expect to reconcile *the blind obedience* which constitutes a part of this perfection, with morality, which must rather obey God than men? Has not this blind obedience in the monastic order been often most shamefully abused, particularly by the Jesuits?”

“But the church surely did not authorize such abuses?” said Charles.

“But she should not authorize the principles from which such abuses proceeded.”

“Has she really approved these principles of Christian perfection?” he asked.

“Do you yet ask that? Has she not approved them in every monastic order? Has she not founded on them her whole doctrine of penances, which the Council of Trent declared as highly necessary? Has she not expressed her approbation of them in the worship of pretended saints? Has she not on them tried to justify the celibacy of the priests? But, my friend, this subject has yet another feature, very serious and very destructive to morality. It is taught that the saints have, by their voluntary good works of Christian perfection, done more than God demands of men: they practiced virtue above virtue, or *works of supererogation*, and thus purchased merit before God of which they do not themselves stand in need. This extra merit, it is further taught, remains in the church; and in these superfluous merits of the saints the church possesses an inexhaustible treasure, of which the pope in Rome possesses the key. To all those person who fail in obedience to the moral law, and, instead of merit, have the guilt of sin, the pope can supply from that treasure as much merit as they need to efface their guilt before God; that is, he can grant them *indulgence*; and the written document certifying that he has out of this treasure of merit given them what their necessity required is – *a bill of indulgence*.

“How conveniently a man can procure virtue in your church! Why need he fulfill the law of morality with diligence and anxiety, and procure for himself any moral merit, since the multitude of saints have heaped up an *inexhaustible* treasure of merit, which he need only permit to be imputed to himself, and with which the church has always been very liberal?”

“Bernhard, I cannot believe that it is so! This would be a real trade, which would vastly depreciate the value of morality.”

“Well, then, only hear the papal bull in which the late year of jubilee and the distribution of indulgences are proclaimed: –

” We have resolved to exercise the power which has been given to us from above, to open the fountains of heavenly treasures, which have accrued through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the *Blessed Virgin* his mother and the saints, to dispense which the author of mankind has granted us the power. We grant and vouchsafe *grace in the Lord, forgiveness, and complete pardon of all* their sins, to Christians who in the time of jubilee confess with true penitence and sorrow, strengthen themselves with the holy communion, and who devoutly visit at least once a day, for thirty days in succession, or periodically, the churches of St. Peter and of St. John, of Lateran and St. Mary Massora, and fervently offer prayers to God for the *glory* of the Catholic church, *the extirpation of heresy*, the harmony of Catholic princes, the salvation and peace of the Christian community.’

“Thus you hear whence the pope distributes his gifts: – from the treasures not only of the merits of Christ, but also of Mary and the saints, which the pope – we know not why – represents as heaped up at Rome. You can also receive a portion of them, if you go to Rome and pray for the extirpation of the church of your native land.”

“Oh, Bernhard! that was an unkind reflection!”

“Pardon me! my remark was really not intended to apply to you, but to the bull of the pope, which demands this from the faithful. I did not mean to wound your feelings, but to show you the monstrous absurdity of the doctrine and the moral mischief it occasions. But surely you cannot justify this use of the presumed holiness of the saints? for it subverts all the principles of morality, and exhibits virtue – that is, the fulfillment of the moral law – as a matter of small importance, and thus depreciates it very low.”

“Certainly I do not justify that use, but consider it an abuse; but if any one chooses to follow the ‘evangelical counsels,’ as they are called, I can-

not blame him for it; the almsgiving that is included in it is certainly very useful, and is a work of Christian mercy.”

The father now remarked, “That is the only one of your so-called good works that is of any benefit to human society, and it has established among you many excellent charitable institutions. But you will not deny that the other virtues of the saints – as celibacy, fasting, monastic life, prayer daily continued for hours in succession, blind obedience to the clergy, self-mortification, and the like – are not of the least benefit to human society, and only draw men away from the commandment, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ And I cannot even approve of your almsgiving. With you the merit is not in the giving and the good you do thereby, but you seek it in the voluntary parting with your money or property. Almsgiving with you is a work of penance, by which you render satisfaction for your sins, as if you pay God for pardon; and yet in it you only do your duty and nothing more. Hence, you go and cast money into the poor man’s lap without choice or object, and thus you only make idlers and beggars, who literally swarm throughout all Italy, that one would believe that beggary and idleness themselves belonged to Christian perfection. With us, the merit does not consist in the sparing of our abundance, but in the aid we render. Hence, we do not support the idle, but the weak and those unable to work; and thus what we do (and it is really a vast deal) is not injurious to the public good, but useful.”

Bernhard now continued: – “Your religious veneration of saints also engendered the *veneration of relics*, which the Council of Trent established, and in which, as the whole world knows, so much deception and gross mischief are practiced. This merit of relics, together with the pretended miracles connected with them, only nourishes the superstitions of the great mass; but the effect is also this: – that with the more enlightened it renders Christianity itself and its history suspicious, if not contemptible. I often wonder that intelligent bishops of your church do not feel that a miracle-working relic is nothing more than a miracle-working idol of a primitive tribesman in Africa.”

“I cannot contradict you in that; and neither will I deny that I have often heard sensible Catholics highly disapprove of these things, and volatile ones ridicule and scoff at them most wickedly,” said Charles.

“But if you acknowledge, my son,” concluded the father, “that the whole system of saint virtue militates against the spirit of genuine Christian virtue,

then you see here another proof that the Romish church has failed in the principal design of Christianity, which is to deliver men from the dominion of sin and lead them into the path of Christian virtue. But let this suffice for this evening. When we meet again, I will invite your attention to some other things of a similar character.”

21. Continuation – Absolution From Oaths – The Pope’s Mar- riage – Blind Obedience – The Government

“IT WOULD NOT BECOME ME MY SON,” began the father, “as a Protestant believer, to exalt the Christians of my own church above the Romanists in respect to their morals. Judge for yourself. If I am to believe the accounts of travelers, Italy is precisely the country where domestic and civil virtues flourish least. Now, I believe that I am not demanding too much when I say that in Rome, – where the pattern and supreme head of Christians resides, – where the sacred and infallible priesthood reigns not only spiritually but temporally, – where all receive the true faith from the fountain-head, – where the temporal power which the clergy hold in their pious hands offers no hindrance to their activity in promoting morality, but every possible means of advancing it, – in Rome, where alone sentence is pronounced on the holiness and sinfulness of men, where heretics are condemned and saints canonized, – in Rome, where the vicegerent of Christ, with his apostles, the cardinals, resides as spiritual and temporal monarch, – in Rome, Christian morality must flourish more than in any other place in the Christian world; there the whole influence of Christianity upon men must exhibit itself. Roman Christians must be patterns for the Christian world. Is this so, Charles? Speak.”

“No, truly, dear father; I am told you will not only not find more Christian morality there, but less, than at other places.”

“Then I am fully justified in the conclusion that genuine Christian faith, genuine Christian character, – in a word, genuine Christianity, – is not found there. It is not to be imputed to the climate, for ancient Rome exhibited many splendid virtues; but it is to be attributed to the fact that the pope

and the clergy, with their temporal power and glory, have set themselves up in the place of Christ and the Christian church, and that the whole design of Catholicism is not to make men virtuous and acceptable to God, but to make them obedient servants of the priesthood. Hence that eternal series of sacerdotal measures by which men, without ever being really reformed, are always absolved and conducted to heaven. But on this subject I have already spoken at the commencement of our discussions. Hence that praise of the virtues of the saints, which fills monasteries and monkish orders and enriches the churches and clergy. But of that we spoke last night. This evening I will direct your attention to several things which evidently must have an injurious effect on the morality of the Catholic population, and is indeed a serious charge against your church. The first is the cruelty which she has always exercised against those differing from her in opinion, the persecutions which she has in all ages excited against those who would not recognize the supreme authority of the priesthood, the monster of the Inquisition, which was begotten by them and which the popes nourished and supported, the millions of bloody sacrifices which your priests have occasioned for the maintenance of their dominion, and that everlasting unchristian condemnation and cursing of all Protestant Christians.”

“I cannot deny,” said his son, “that the popes of the earlier ages did charge themselves and their church with many sins of blood; but still I believe that now a milder spirit prevails in Rome, and that they no longer practice the barbarities of the dark Middle Ages.”

“It is a miserable deception,” quickly responded the father, “only played off by the proselyters for the purpose of soothing the abhorrence which the cruelties of their church have excited in the minds of men. Did not the former Pope Pius VII. solemnly protest against it, at the Congress of Vienna, that the Protestant Christians in Germany should enjoy the same privileges as the Romanists? Did not the same pope address a circular, dated Nov. 30, 1808, to all foreign Catholic courts, in which he said: – ‘It is as false as *slanderous* that the concordat (with France in 1801) established the toleration of other worship. This religious treaty contains not a single word that has reference to any worship *condemned* and *forbidden* by the church of Rome’?”

“But this worship condemned by Rome was that of the Reformed church in France. The same pope, in May, 1808, wrote to the French clergy: – ‘The indifference (of the French code of laws) which *prefers* no religion above

another is highly insulting to the church of Rome, and is opposed to her spirit; for this church, on account of her divinity and necessary unity, cannot unite *with any other.*' If then the Romish church until this hour condemns us as heretics, does not acknowledge us as a church, and continually protests against our civil existence, you must confess that it is not the *will* that is wanting, but the *power*, to treat us according to the spirit of the Middle Ages. Does not this continual hatred and unceasing intolerance stand in open contradiction to the spirit of Christianity, which commands us to love those who differ from us, – yea, even our enemies, – and everywhere enjoins mercy and liberality?"

"I must confess that, my father; and I myself believe that the world would fare badly, with respect to liberty, if the Catholic princes and people would act out the principles of hatred and persecution which are incessantly preached to them from Rome."

"But the clergy of your church have also exerted a very corrupting influence on the morality of their brethren of the faith, *in openly advocating and supporting immoral principles.* I will say nothing of indulgences, for we entertain the same opinion of their pernicious effects. But how often have your popes of ancient and modern days declared the solemn oath of Christians invalid, and thus undermined the sacredness of swearing by oath and reverence for God in the hearts of men! And did they not establish the principle that no faith was to be held with heretics? But all this would have been of comparatively small importance, if only the Romish church had not given birth to the *Jesuits*, received and nurtured them, yea, even now again restored them. The immorality of the Jesuits has become proverbial in Europe. They maintained the abominable principle that the end justifies all, even the worst means, and that hence rebellion, regicide, perjury, falsehood, and every thing infamous, was allowable for the glory of God. They established the scandalous doctrine of probability, as they called it, according to which, a wicked action was allowed if only probably a good effect might be expected from it. They taught mental reservation in oaths and promises; taught that an immoral action is not sinful, if in the execution of it men only thought of God. They, in a word, became so impious and dangerous, that the universal complaints of the *Catholic* courts procured the dissolution of the order. According to a calculation made, it was found that sixty-eight Jesuitical writers encouraged and enjoined the crime of regicide."

“But the Catholic church did not sanction such abominable doctrines,” said Charles.

“No; that she did not do,” rejoined the father, “as the desire for the dissolution of the order shows. But the popes connived at these doctrines; they protected the order against the reigning powers as long as possible; they have again restored it; they cherish and recommend it everywhere. But what your infallible pope, the inspired head of the inspired priesthood, – to which the Jesuits also belong, – does, is chargeable upon your whole church, which recognizes him as the general father of all Christians. Suppose a President, who had dismissed a cabinet officer of corrupt principles for injustice and fraud, would again restore him to favor and highly honor him: who would not be forced to believe that he also sanctions those principles and the practice of them!”

“It is certainly bad enough to restore an order which the moral voice of the Catholic world condemned, without disapproving of their former corruptions and false principles universally known, and without giving to the world some security or only intimating that it had been reformed.” observed Charles.

The father continued: – “Generally speaking, the pope cannot be considered distinct from the Romish church; for the Romanists themselves connect him so closely with it that they will scarcely regard those as Christians who will not submit to him, and all the bishops and clergy of the Catholic world at their ordination must swear ‘true obedience’ to him. Now see, my son, how the popes have always maintained principles which are directly opposed to the gospel, and thus also led Romish Christians to disobey the declarations of Christ and the apostles. They have always maintained, and, of course, their bishops also, that Protestant Christians are damned, because they do not believe more than the gospel contains, and hence show no disposition to know any thing of the peculiar and modern doctrines of the Romish church; and yet you have seen, from the passages quoted from Christ and his apostles in our earlier conversations, that the Bible everywhere declares simple Evangelical faith in the Divine Savior as sufficient for salvation, and makes our eternal destiny preeminently dependent on a Christian life. Besides this, the popes have set this bad example to the Christian world: – that, although they wish to be successors of Christ and the apostles and receive all their power from them, yet they have established doctrines and ceremonies which are opposed to the express direction

of Christ and the apostles. They have set the example of conscious and pre-meditated disobedience. Thus Jesus at the last supper distributed the cup, so also the apostles and the whole apostolical church; but the popes and the bishops deny the cup to the laity. Paul thus several times writes, (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6:) ‘A bishop shall be the husband of *one* wife;’ but the pope and his bishops have established as law, A bishop shall be the husband of *no* wife. Paul (1 Tim. 4:3) censures those who forbid marriage and command abstinence from meats; and, in verse 8, utters the correct principle: – ‘Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;’ but the popes and the bishops forbid the priests to marry, declare celibacy to be a more blessed state, and teach that men avert the punishments of God and render satisfaction for their sins by works of fasting and other bodily exercises.”

“I can scarcely believe, dear father, that our church has ever declared *celibacy* to be a more pious state than matrimony. For how, then, could she honor marriage as a sacrament!”

Bernhard observed, "The tenth canon of the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent reads thus: –

"‘If any one declares that matrimony is to be preferred to celibacy, and that it is not *better* and *more blessed* to remain in celibacy than to marry, let him be accursed.’

“Here, indeed, there is no prohibition of marriage, but still marriage is declared as not good, – a sort of necessary evil; and it is maintained that it is more blessed – that is, it more certainly leads to salvation – to be unmarried. In this, your church stands in open contradiction to the apostle, who says, ‘The bishop shall be the husband of one wife,’ – who blames those who forbid marriage. It contradicts the institution of God from the beginning, who (Gen. 2:18) said, at the creation of the woman, ‘It is *not good* for man to be alone,’ inasmuch as you teach, ‘It is better and *more blessed* that he remain alone.’ Yea, you thereby censure God, who, in creating two sexes and commanding them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply,’ rendered matrimony necessary for establishing a state that was not good and blessed.”

“True as all is that you have said about the praise which our church bestows upon celibacy,” said Charles, “yet I must observe that the doctrine of the Council of Trent has the declaration of the apostle Paul in its favor, who (1 Cor. 7:1-8) says, ‘It is good for a man not to touch a woman. I say, there-

fore, to the unmarried and widows. It is good for them to abide even as I; but, if they cannot contain, let them marry.”

“I am well acquainted with those passages; but their application is totally different,” replied the minister. “For why does Paul advise against marrying at that time? Not because he thought it *better* and *more blessed* to remain unmarried, – not because thereby the way to Christian perfection and virtue would be found more easy, as you teach, – but because he expected the approach of very troublesome times, when misfortune could be more easily borne if persons were alone, than if bound by wife or husband and children. This he says in the twenty-sixth verse: – ‘I suppose, therefore, that this is *good* for the *present distress*, I say, that it is good for a man so to be,’ – that is, remain unmarried. The church, in that early age, generally believed that the approach of the melancholy times and alarms, which Christ (Matt. 24.) had prophesied would precede his coming, was near. On that account they held it *good* (not more blessed) to remain unmarried.”

“You see then, Charles,” said the father, “that the popes and the bishops have spoken of matrimony in a manner that contradicts the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. And how do the principles and actions of your priests and the popes militate against the commands of the gospel respecting *human government*! Paul writes, (Rom. 13:1:) ‘Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.’ And, (1 Tim. 2:1:) ‘I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.’ And Peter says, (1 Pet. 2:13-17,) ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto his governors. Fear God; honor the king!’ This is the voice of the holy apostles. But what has the pretended successor of Peter done? He dissolved the oath of allegiance of the subjects of the German emperors, of the kings of France, of England, and Naples; he set up and deposed emperors and kings, bestowed away kingdoms, and maintained that he could give and take away crowns.”

“But that was only in the times of the Dark Ages.” said Charles.

"Well, only hear what the pope wrote, as late as April 16, 1701, to the king of France and other Catholic rulers, on the occasion of the Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick the Third, taking upon himself the dignity of a king of Prussia: –

"Beloved son in Christ! Although we believe that your Majesty will in no wise sanction the proceeding of Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg, who, setting a *most infamous* example to the Christian world, has undertaken publicly to usurp the royal title, yet we cannot let it pass by in silence, because such a deed is opposed to the *character of papal institutions*, and is injurious to the reputation of the sacred chair, inasmuch as the sacred royal dignity cannot be assumed by a person who is not a Catholic *without a contempt of the church*.

"But the kings and governors, for whom Paul and Peter command men to pray and to whom they enjoin obedience, were even *heathen*, – namely, the Roman emperors, their governors and magistrates. But the popes do not even 'honor' Christian kings, and wish to be the rulers not only of Catholic but also of Protestant princes. The pious apostles wished that Christians should pray for heathen emperors and governors; but the late Pope Leo, in his bull on the jubilee, warns the faithful to pray for '*Catholic princes*,' but not for Protestant rulers, and also for '*the extirpation of heresy*.' But the contradiction extends still further. Paul commands the Christians at Home (Rom. 13:6, 7) to pay without refusal the tribute imposed by the heathen authorities; but the popes maintain that, without their consent, no prince has a right to impose taxes on his subjects."

"What pope ever uttered such monstrous arrogance!" asked Charles.

"Urban the Eighth, who, in 1627, issued the famous Green Thursday Bull, containing seventeen maledictions, which on every Green Thursday is read in St. Peter's church at Rome, in which it is said word for word: –

"We excommunicate and condemn all who, in their countries, impose or increase, or demand to be imposed or increased, any new taxes or assessments, except in such cases which are GRANTED them by right *or by particular permission of the apostolical chair*."

"Confess, dear son, that in these things your popes have exalted themselves above Christ himself and the apostles, and demand more obedience for themselves than for those whose vicegerents and successors they pretend to be. Yet Jesus says, (Matt. 10:24,) 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.' And here is the ground of their prohibition to the laity to read the Scriptures in the language of the country, – not so much because they believe that it would be injurious to the laity, as because they fear that the laity might find many things in the Bible quite different from what the popes and bishops have established."

22. The Cup In The Sacrament – Extreme Unction – Julietta’s Resolution

SUNDAY ARRIVED, and the whole family, as usual, attended church, where the Lord’s supper was administered to numerous communicants. Julietta did not fail to be present, and lost not a single word of the whole service. As the members of the family, after church, were collected together in the garden, the mother, who entertained a very favorable opinion of Julietta, asked her how she had been pleased with the Protestant celebration of the Lord’s supper. She extolled it as very appropriate and edifying. She was particularly pleased that the Lord’s supper was not administered, as among the Catholics, in Latin, but in the language of the country, and that the cup was also distributed.

“How did it happen, Charles,” asked the mother, “that in the Romish church the cup is refused to the laity? There appears to me to be no reason at all for it.”

He thus replied: – “The Council of Trent, in the twenty-first session, says, ‘We dare not doubt that the partaking in one kind is sufficient for salvation. For, although Christ instituted the supper in both kinds, of bread and wine, it does not follow that all faithful Christians are bound to partake in both kinds.’”

“I should like to know why not?” she asked. “If the words of the Savior, ‘*Take and eat*’ authorize the partaking of the bread, with equal right do the words ‘*Drink ye all of this*’ authorize the partaking of the cup. If the latter is not obligatory on *all* Christians, I cannot see how the former is binding on all. The whole ancient church partook of bread and wine, as the passage, 1 Cor. 11. fully shows.”

“The council acknowledges that, inasmuch as they say, ‘Though it is true that partaking in both kinds was common in the beginning of Christianity,

yet that custom in the lapse of time changed to a very great extent,” said Charles.

“But it did not follow, from that, that this custom was good and right, and that they were authorized to establish it as law. In doing that they certainly sinned against the express words of Christ, ‘Drink ye all of this,’” observed Julietta.

“Neither is it true,” said the father, “what the council says of this custom. It first arose only in the twelfth century in England; hence the Greek church, which separated from the Latin as early as the eleventh century, always distributed the wine. But the ground of it was the opinion, which was first raised in the ninth century, that bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ. Because it was feared that the laity would let a drop of the blood of the God-man fall to the earth, or wipe it from their mouth, they gradually withdrew the cup from them in consequence of this superstitious fear.”

“The Romish catechism also gives other grounds, – namely, the wine would become sour if it were kept like the host.” said Charles.

“And yet why do you preserve the wine? Because you believe it is no longer wine, but the blood of the God-man. But that it becomes sour shows plainly that it is yet wine,” observed his father.

“The catechism says, further,” continued Charles: – “There are many who cannot endure the taste of wine, yea, not even the smell; and in many countries there is great scarcity of wine, and the procurement of it difficult and expensive.”

“Unfounded reasons!” exclaimed his father. “Wine is not offensive to one in a million of men; why should it be withheld from all? Shall we abolish preaching because a few in the congregation are deaf? If wine in some cold countries is difficult to procure, it should not be also forbidden in warm countries. But the small quantity that is used in the Lord’s supper can be procured in all countries of the world. All these things could at furthest only justify an exception to the rule, but never could constitute a rule.”

Julietta now said, “Eating and drinking belong together, and are essential to human life. As these in the sacrament are figures of heavenly food or of grace, both must be given to men, as Jesus gave not only bread to eat but also wine to drink. A half sacrament is no sacrament at all.”

“The Romish catechism furnishes another reason, and that is the doctrine of *concomitance*, which the Council of Trent also established in the thir-

teenth session, – viz.: that the blood is also contained in the body of Christ, and hence the partaking of the bread is at the same time partaking of the blood of Christ.” said Charles.

“I am acquainted with that invention of the scholastics, but can never think of it without disgust. For the thought of the *bloody flesh* of Christ is something exceedingly indelicate to me.” remarked his father,

“But they certainly do not mean that!” said the mother.

“Assuredly! For the Romish catechism, in express words, declares it to be a heretical error if any one maintains that the bread contains the mere *bloodless body* of the Lord.”

“Then I must confess.” continued she, “that I have no conception of what you call the bloody body of the Lord. That fresh-killed meat is bloody I well know; but to apply this to the glorified body of Christ is to me out of all reason. This vulgar conception also flatly contradicts the apostle Paul. He describes the bodies of those risen and the body of Christ since his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:42, etc.) quite differently. He says, ‘It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; (but not consisting of flesh and blood;) it is sown a natural body; (consisting of flesh and blood;) it is raised a *spiritual* body.’ Verse 50: – ‘Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.’ In Phil. 3:21, he says, ‘Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.’”

“As respects myself,” said Julietta, “I hold to this: – that Jesus took the cup and said, ‘Drink ye all of this!’ The learned subtlety that the blood was in the flesh Jesus certainly knew as well as the bishops of Trent, and hence, if it had any application here, he could have spared himself the distribution of the cup. It would also follow, from that, that the cup was not at all to be taken, and that the priests in no case had to drink it.”

“Julietta is perfectly right,” remarked the father. “Thus they could also baptize in the name of God, and not, according to the command of Christ, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, because, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in God.”

“I must acknowledge to you, friends, that there is no tenable ground for withholding the cup. But the Evangelical church has not done right in abolishing *extreme unction*, inasmuch as it was undoubtedly instituted by the apostle James.”

The father took this up, and said, “Let us read the passage in its connection; James 5:13-16: ‘Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and, if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and *pray one for another, that ye may be healed*. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.’ You see that the apostle gives good rules, which refer to three conditions, – namely, affliction, joy, and sickness. You cannot contend that the third good rule is the institution of a sacrament, or you must also grant that it is also a sacrament to pray in the days of affliction and to sing psalms in the days of joy. The first two rules no one has ever explained as prescribing a sacrament, and consequently the third cannot be so considered. But what the apostle here advises is not your extreme unction. Among you it is performed by *one* man, and he is the priest; but the apostle says the *elders*, not the *elder*. He did not regard it as a priestly business, and hence at the conclusion he says, ‘*Pray one for another; confess your faults one to another.*’ He excludes none; he speaks of that which all should reciprocally do; not of that which concerns the priest. But he does not deduce any particular effect from the anointing with oil. We see from Mark 6:13, where it is said, ‘They cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and *healed them*,’ that anointing with oil was a medical application which is yet practiced in the East. You, on the other hand, teach that oil, because consecrated by the bishops, has a sacramental influence in driving away the devil from the departing soul and procuring for it the grace of God. James only mentions the use of oil because at that time it was customary, and rather refutes the opinion that oil had a particular effect, inasmuch as he says, ‘And the *prayer of faith* shall save the sick; for it availeth much.’ It is not the oil, but the prayer, that he holds out as the principal thing; so that Christians should not think that any dependence was to be placed on the use of oil. If then a Protestant Christian in sickness calls for pious friends or his minister to pray for him, he conforms to this direction of the apostle, who gives it, not to ordain *a sacrament for the dying*, but to aid the *sick in their recovery*. Only for the last object does the Greek church practice the anointing with oil.”

“I am at least convinced that my Savior will not reject me if I die without being anointed by a priest, provided I do what he demands of those who enter into life, – that is, keep his commandments,” said Julietta.

“You are right!” said the father. “Adhere to that, and be constantly diligent in the practice of Christian virtue; then you need not fear that a priest can close the gates of Heaven against you. But you do not need him to open them for you; priests and laymen are equally subject to the judgment of God, and both need his grace.”

“I am glad that you think so precisely with me; and this gives me courage to ask two questions. They are these: – whether I dare celebrate the Lord’s supper with the congregation here, and whether the pastor would reject me?” asked the lady.

“Julietta, you appear too intelligent,” replied the father, “that I should consider these questions, with which you surprise me, as the result of inconsiderateness. Hence I must tell you that you cannot celebrate the Lord’s supper with us, if you still regard us as heretics and condemned, and not as your Christian brethren; for the Lord’s supper is a feast of brotherly love, and they who celebrate it must regard each other as brethren.”

“If that is the condition, then I can commune with you with a good conscience. I am no longer a Roman Catholic, but a Protestant Christian, and I acknowledge you as my Christian brethren. Do not look at me with so much surprise! I am in real earnest, and it is my maturely-considered determination.”

“But who, dear friend, taught and instructed you?” asked the father.

“Here! this book! – the gospel, – the discourses of Jesus and the writings of the apostles. These alone will hereafter be my only guide, for they *alone* are the original teachers of Christianity. The pope I will leave in possession of his dignity and honors, but I can no longer consider him as the vicegerent of Christ, nor the supreme bishop of Christians; and I can no longer believe him and the bishops, except so far as they teach out of this holy book.”

“If that is your sincere conviction, then you have adopted the fundamental principle which we maintain against the Romish church; then you are in so far a Protestant Christian. But have you considered every thing? Oh, be precipitate in nothing; for it is dangerous to be rash in such an important matter. I will not dissuade you from taking a decided step, but far be it from me to persuade you to it! Your own inclination must actuate you, your own

conviction guide you; for you alone are answerable for what you do, and not another,” said the father.

“I have considered all things well. No earthly expectation, no hope of gain, actuates me; my faith draws me, – my own heart. Oh, if you only knew how it was with my soul once, and how it is now! Once, anguish, fear, anxiety; now, contentment, joy, confidence!”

“I believe you, Julietta! You are not deceiving us. Grant her request, dear husband,” said the mother.

“In this matter I can properly neither grant nor refuse; but I can advise, and especially because she has here no friend except ourselves, and is a stranger in the country. Remember that you as a Romanist can reckon upon much support and aid from the adherents of the Romish church, which you will lose so soon as you unite yourself with us.”

“I have thought of that, and do not desire to be aided and preferred to worthy natives of the country on such grounds.”

“If you are really in earnest, you must do one thing beforehand; you must go and mention your determination to some minister, and must suffer yourself to be examined and instructed as far as is necessary.”

“I feel that this, even if not necessary, is still proper, and am prepared to do it. To whom with more propriety could I express my resolution than to you? I will put myself under your pastoral care, and now and forever declare myself a Protestant believer.”

All present were deeply moved. The mother fell on the young lady’s neck and wept tears of joy. The daughter, who was called in, embraced her tenderly. Charles tried to conceal his emotion, but could not. The father, in a tone expressive of the deepest feeling, said, ‘Let us pray;’ and they all knelt while the father poured out his heart in fervent thanksgiving for the restoration of this lone stranger to the true faith in Christ.

23. Charles In A Dilemma – A Man Can Be A Good Christian As A Catholic

THE FAMILY WAS ALONE, and the conversation of the evening related exclusively to Julietta. The mother extolled the extensive knowledge she had gained of the New Testament; the father applauded her clear understanding and correct views; Amelia spoke in admiration of her amiable disposition, and Charles bore testimony to her virtue and intelligence. He related the interviews he had had with her about her religious scruples, by which the father was yet more deeply convinced that it was nothing but the silent power of the divine word which had here purified a mind from erroneous opinions engrafted upon it in its youth; which gave him occasion to say, jocosely, that after this he would not think it strange in the pope to exhibit so much zeal against the reading of the Bible by the laity.

These remarks relative to the change of mind in the lady were so well suited to the son, that he could not avoid feeling their applicability to himself. The youthful sincerity of Amelia had often induced her earnestly to request him to abandon his Romanism, and, without saying any thing more about it, again to return to the Protestant church. A formal public adoption of the faith did not appear to her to be necessary. Charles would willingly have submitted to that proposal, if his conversion to the Romish church had really been so little known to the public as he at first flattered himself. Notwithstanding the family had kept it a secret, yet it became extensively known, and they did not know how. Even the day on which Charles adopted the Romish confession, and all the minute circumstances attending it, were spoken of in public. Only a short time before, a Romish physician, by the name of Frederick, had settled in the place, where he was much esteemed for his intelligence and moral worth. He was distinguished for his liberality to the poor, for he not only accepted nothing for his services, but even fur-

nished the medicines at his own expense. Only a few days before, he had saluted Charles in public company as his brother in the faith, and, unpleasant as was the salutation, yet he had publicly to acknowledge himself a Romanist. At the same time the doctor told him, though secretly, that his conversion had been heard of in D – , and that it was expected he would betake himself thither for protection, where he would be most heartily welcomed. Under these circumstances, it appeared to Charles that a silent return to the Protestant church, as though nothing had happened, would only give occasion to greater clamor and public conversation.

The mother entertained a different view of the subject. She could not refrain from telling the son how happy she would be if he could retrace the precipitate steps he had already made. How cheerfully would he have done it if it could have been accomplished without shame and exciting public observation! For he had to acknowledge that he was no longer a Catholic in faith, that all his doubts against the Protestant church had been removed; and that he had completely failed in justifying his conversion.

The father had thus far maintained a total silence. But it was this silence which made Charles feel as men do on a sultry day before an approaching storm. He well knew the decisive, resolute character of his father, and was not deceived on this occasion; for the father, after he had asked him in the evening whether he had yet any thing important to advance in justification of his conversion to the Romish church and he had answered in the negative, at once demanded his immediate return to the Protestant church. “You have,” said he, “yourself acknowledged, and were forced to grant, that all the advantages which you plead in favor of the Romish church, and by which you sought to justify your course, are either possessed by our church, or are unfounded, and on the other hand, all the charges you preferred against our church were groundless. Yea, what was most important of all, you were forced to grant that the Protestant church admirably serves the whole design of Christianity, but that this was not the case with the Romish church; you yourself proposed and sanctioned the principle, that in such a case it was the privilege and duty of a man to abandon his church, and to choose the church which really answered the design of Christ; – you have” (he continued in an elevated voice) “given me your solemn promise to fulfill that duty; I now demand the fulfillment of that promise.”

“But, dearest father, what a noise will such a step occasion! In what an unenviable light I shall appear! I shall be regarded as a fickle-minded youth,

and they will believe that I became a Catholic from motives of worldly policy. The Catholics will hate me; the members of the Protestant church will mistrust me – perhaps despise me! Ah, dear father, release me from my promise!”

“Only see how conscientious you are about the opinions of the world I But you did not think, when you abandoned your own church, that you would grieve your parents, forfeit their love, become offensive to your fellow-citizens, and that at your return they would look upon you with mistrust, contempt, or – the better-disposed of them – with pity! Then, when error was in question, all this was nothing; but now, when the truth is in question, you seem to be very tenderly concerned about the judgment of the world! Take care, Charles! You yet have time to regain the esteem and love of your friends, or to lose them forever!”

“Speak more mildly to your son, dear husband,” said the mother; “only think that he was far distant from us and from all his friends when he made that inconsiderate step. If he had become unfaithful to the truth here in our midst, then your severe judgment might have been justified.”

Amelia also remarked, “Besides, it was not a fault of his heart, but of his head. If we had had such evening conversations with him before he went away as we have had since his return, he would most certainly have continued faithful.”

“I confess my fault,” said he, “and I have exerted myself to the utmost to repair the injury it has done. But he acknowledges his fault, and yet desires to persevere in it, – persevere in it from vanity, on account of the perverted judgment of a few, although his conscience tells him to do what I demand of him. And, if I was at fault for not warning him, he is doubly to be blamed for becoming a Romanist without asking intelligent advice on the subject. He did precisely as some great characters do, who suffer themselves to be made Romanists because they are too exalted to consult an intelligent Protestant minister, who would soon drive away the mist from their eyes which the proselyters have raised before them.”

“But do you believe it right, dear husband, to employ compulsion in matters of faith and duty?”

“How can you ask that question? We only compel obstinate children with the rod; intelligent men must subdue themselves. But what application has that to this case?”

“Do you not believe that you are exercising compulsion toward your son when you let him feel your displeasure and press the subject upon him with an earnestness which powerfully affects his filial heart? Dear husband, I as heartily desire as you do what you demand of him, and it will greatly add to the happiness of my life if Charles fulfills our wishes. But his determination will only then be of any value to us if he voluntarily makes and executes it.”

“I agree with you perfectly. But it is not applicable here, for I do not wish to force him to do a thing about the moral necessity of which he is doubtful, but merely to overcome the infirmities which hinder him from following the dictates of his conscience.”

“But, dear father.” said Charles, “there are many excellent Catholics who do not believe all that their church has even established as true, but are entirely Protestant in their sentiments, and yet remain in the communion of their church. Will you on that account condemn them?”

“That is quite another case. The Romanist who lives in a country where the Protestant faith is forbidden as heretical may well be excused if he does not separate from his church. For in that case there are important duties which he has to perform for his civil welfare and the happiness of his family. And I have already said that a few errors and abuses which we observe in our church will not justify us in abandoning it, but that this is only the case when the church to which we belong does not serve nor promote, perhaps hinders, the design of Christianity, which is to deliver men from the dominion of sin. In a country such as Italy, Spain, or Portugal, a Romanist will not easily come to this opinion about his church. But, if this were the case, he would be bound by his conscience to withdraw himself from his church. But a Romanist who lives in a country where the Protestant church is lawfully tolerated, and who arrives at the conclusion that the Romish church does not answer the design of Christianity, but that the Protestant church does, him I regard as absolutely bound in conscience publicly to honor the acknowledged truth, and to join that church which does not serve the kingdom of the world, but the kingdom of God. This is your case; and the obligation is doubly binding on you as an apostate from the true church.”

“Only one question! Do not become angry, dear father. Let me ask only one question more. Do you not believe that as a Catholic I can be as good a Christian as if I were again to return to your church? Must you not acknowledge that in all Christian denominations there are good and bad

Christians, and that even with an erroneous confession of faith a man may attain to the object of Christianity for himself?”

“I have already said what was equivalent to an answer to this question in our first conversation, when I proved to you that it is a duty to leave a church under certain conditions. But I will say a little more on this point. I by no means deny that there may be many excellent men and very good Christians in your church. But that is no ground to maintain that in every church alike, man may become a good Christian, and that therefore it is not necessary to unite himself to the better church. What would you have said if the Greeks and Romans, at the time of the first publication of Christianity, had thus expressed themselves? – ‘In our heathenism we have also many excellent men, as Socrates, Plato, and others; men can also be good even as idolaters, who fear God and do right; therefore we continue in it.’ Or do you regard schools as superfluous, because among all nations, even where there were no learned institutions, learned and intelligent men have risen? We should never depend upon the hope that we would be exceptions to the general mass, that we would be unhurt by the influence of erroneous opinions and of customs injurious to morality, and that we did not need the influence of the truth. You would not certainly sanction it if a man would associate with persons who were full of errors and abandoned to licentious indulgences in the hope that he could counteract the influence of such society? Thus, you cannot say that you will keep yourself free from the pernicious influence which the doctrines of your church respecting the priesthood, forgiveness of sin, indulgence, penance, the duty of blind obedience, and the condemnation of heretics, would have upon your mind. And even if you could do this, yet you would be without the incitements to a knowledge of the truth and the practice of piety which the Evangelical preaching, the free use of the Scriptures, and the Protestant worship, afford. In my opinion, it is easier and more certain to be a good Christian in the Protestant church than out of her, and that men can become better Christians within her pale than out of it. And it is a duty not to despise such aid, but to employ it.”

“You must also remember, dear Charles,” said the mother, “that the Savior expressly demands of you to confess his gospel, and that you dare not slight the word of God, without offending him. If all men had thought as you do, – namely, that a man may be a good man, and may believe whatever he pleases, – your Savior would not have found fault with the doctrines of the Pharisees, the apostles would have continued to be Jews, and the fa-

thers of the church heathen, and there would have been no witnesses of the truth in the Christian church.”

“I believe that I can illustrate the matter very plainly to my brother by a simile,” remarked the sister, “which you will, no doubt, think very proper for a lady expecting shortly to be a bride. If I had to choose between two gentlemen, one of whom bore so very good a character for intelligence and morality that I must believe he would make me a happy wife, but the other, by his selfishness and many imperfections, threatened to make me miserable, I would be very much to blame if I would reject the former and choose the latter, flattering myself that I was strong enough to resist all the pernicious influence of his daily intercourse and most intimate society. Thus you stand, dear brother, between two churches, to choose for yourself one or the other as your companion and guide for life. But it is usual and proper that persons require time for consideration in such an important choice, and I think, father, that we should allow Charles time for meditation, that he may make up his mind fully.”

This proposition of Amelia met with general approbation; all acknowledged it was very reasonable, and they agreed that only after the lapse of eight or ten weeks would they again introduce this subject of conversation.

24. Charles And Julietta – Her Serious Illness And Final Recovery – Letters Of Recommendation – Doctor Frederick – Charles’s Return To The True Faith – Happy Family

WHILE CHARLES WAS FLUCTUATING, Julietta was rapidly proceeding in the proper path. She now mentioned her desire of attaching herself to the Protestant church. The pastor examined her very closely on her motives for this step. Her candor, her deep religious feeling, her general character and circumstances, soon convinced the pastor that the Protestant church would gain in her a sincere and respectable member. At length he sanctioned her determination, and, with great satisfaction, devoted himself to the work of instructing her. But he soon saw with astonishment how little he had to do. The young proselyte was so well acquainted with the New Testament, and had attained so distinct and fundamental a knowledge of the essential features of Christianity, founded upon the New Testament, which she quoted with facility, that he found little to add to it. He only illustrated some truths more clearly, reduced them to order and systematic arrangement in her mind, removed some apparent difficulties, supplied some deficiencies, and made her acquainted with the Old Testament and the history of the Christian church and Reformation, of which she had been yet ignorant. After the lapse of eight weeks he declared her sufficiently instructed and qualified to be received into the communion of the church.

The day on which this was to take place had already been appointed, when the change of climate manifested its influence on her health. A cold brought on a fever, which soon assumed a serious character and endangered her life. The whole family felt the deepest anxiety in her behalf, and Charles particularly paid the closest attention to her wants. He was continually at her bedside, and nursed her as he would a friend. But nothing could check the rage of the disease, which had now assumed a nervous type. Julietta herself knew her own condition well; she was certain of dying, and prepared for her end.

“Dearest sir, I am dying!” she feebly said, during one of her worst nights, while Charles was watching at her bed. “I am dying, but willingly and in peace. For what great thing have I to expect in this world? Only one thing grieves me: – that I did not, before my death, publicly profess the gospel, and render that honor to the word of my Savior before men which is his due.”

“Be comforted, Julietta; God will yet grant you life to carry out your resolution.”

“Be it so or not, the will of God be done! Ah, I thank him most fervently that he honored me so highly as to bring me to a knowledge of the truth! What a miserable being would I have been on my dying bed at an earlier day! Then I would have trembled in view of purgatory. I would have tormented myself with painful confessions; I would have been perplexed about the power of priestly absolution, and felt myself separated from God through the mediation of the priest. Oh, how happy am I that I know my soul is not in the hands of the priest, and that it needs not the intercession of the saints, but is in the hands of God my Savior! I have done, according to my ability at least, what the word of God enjoined upon me; and I am certain that I shall enter into eternal life, depending only on the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, my God and Savior, whose ‘blood cleanseth from all sin.’”

“Cling to that consoling conviction, Julietta.”

“I will – I will! I am certain I will! God grant me grace to persevere to the end! But,” – extending her hand, – “hear the dying request of a sincere heart: – Do you also again honor the word of God before the world.”

“Julietta, if I do the will of God, as you have done, am I not then a good Christian? And can I not be as happy as you are, whatever church I belong to!”

“But it is the will of God that you abandon error and publicly honor the truth. Such a confession before the world the Savior demands. ‘Let your light so shine before men,’ said he, (Matt. 5:16,) that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ But particularly hear his earnest language, (Matt. 10:32, 33:) ‘Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.’ Oh, then, go still further, and confess Jesus, and not his pretended vicegerent; his gospel, and not the edicts of priestly councils; the necessity of filial obedience to God, in order to be saved, and not the necessity of obedience to priests; the need of the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and not the need of the absolution of men.”

“You move my heart, Julietta. Yes, I will determine! I will lay aside that shame which has hitherto held me back! I will follow you, dear friend, so that at last I also may meet death with the same composure and joyful anticipation of a blessed eternity!”

“God bless you in that resolution! Thus you do right. Thus you are more faithful and honest than those Pharisees who, though they believed in Christ, yet did not confess him from the fear of men, because they, as the Evangelist reproachfully adds, (John 12:43,) ‘loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.’ Thus you are a worthy disciple of the apostles, who, in the midst of all persecution, acknowledged the truth, and cried out, (Acts 5:29,) ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’ Ah, how utterly vain and worthless is the judgment of men when we are near the judgment-seat of God! But we are exposed to it also in the days of our health, and know not how soon we may be called.”

She was silent. She seemed to have sunk into a deep slumber. But, as Charles approached nearer, he saw her face covered with the paleness of death. No respiration, no pulse, was longer observable. He was deeply affected, and, in silence, vowed to fulfill the last word of admonition of his departing friend. But he hastened after help, if help was any longer necessary. The physician was soon at the bedside of the patient. The body was placed in a warm bath. All in vain! It was again laid in bed, and they were convinced that the last spark of life had expired. But still she only slumbered. The deep swoon was the crisis of restoration. The windows were opened, and the entrance of the fresh breeze awakened the faint spark of life

anew. The father observed, as after some time he visited the supposed dead person, that her pulse had changed. He examined the body, and it appeared to him to grow warm. The physician, being again called in, applied anew all the means of his art. After some hours the patient was restored to her senses, and, soon after, to her speech.

She was saved, and in a few weeks was again perfectly restored.

Her gratitude to Charles and his parents was unbounded. Before this she had been attached to them tenderly, but now her heart was fettered to them. Charles's parents also loved the stranger; they also felt deeply obligated to her when they heard how much she had contributed to induce Charles to retrace his steps and thus remove a burden of anxiety from his parents.

It was a peculiarly happy day for her and the whole family on which she, with Charles, was received into the bosom of the Protestant church. In order to avoid observation and prevent the gratification of idle curiosity, their reception did not take place publicly before the congregation, but in an old church used for week-day services, which was little frequented; but on the next Lord's day both publicly celebrated the Lord's supper with the other members of the family.

After some time, Charles quite incidentally took up, from among his papers, some letters, which he had brought with him from the seminary, which purported to be recommendations to the Rev. Father N – . They were now useless, and he had determined to destroy them. But the father, when he heard of it, was of a different opinion, and believed that they at least deserved to be read, that they might ascertain the good opinion of his Romish friends and their expectations of him, which were now blasted by his return to the Protestant church. The curiosity of the mother and Amelia seconded the resolution, which Charles rather reluctantly consented to, from a secret apprehension that something unpleasant might be discovered. The letters were opened; but they contained nothing but praise of him, with the request to promote in every possible way the worldly prosperity of this "faithful son in Christ." The father was surprised at their barren contents. He examined the letters very closely, to see if nothing secret could be found; but all in vain. At length he observed that the space between the lines was very great, and that one whole page was left blank. He expressed the suspicion that the paper might contain another letter, written in sympathetic ink, the writing of which would only become visible when the paper was dipped in a certain

chemical solution. He was well acquainted with that process, and determined on the spot to try the experiment.

He was not deceived. When the paper was taken out of the solution, writing, before invisible, became distinct, the purport of which was not at all gratifying to his son. His friend Colbert gave the Romish priest to whom the letter was addressed a correct description of Charles's character, particularly of his infirmities, through which he might be influenced. "Although" (it was said, among other things) "he has become a Catholic from conviction, yet certain dependence is not yet to be placed on that, because he has not yet been properly brought to an unconditional faith in the word of the church. Besides, his early principles may again be easily awakened, especially through the influence of his parents, who, I am told, are zealous Lutherans. For this reason, the lady who accompanies him has been instructed to watch him closely, and our excellent Dr. Frederick will also know how to perform his duty. But yet it will be necessary to separate the young man from his parents as soon as possible.

You will invite him to come to – . You will hold out the most brilliant promises to him, and introduce him to the society of such of the faithful as are capable of watching and taking care of him. If he shows any disposition to retract, you will particularly remind him of the uncharitable judgment he will expose himself to before the world, – an argument which is more powerful with him than all others. You will take care that a faithful sister wins his affections, who is instructed to declare that she can love none other than a Catholic; you will, in a word, know how to manage every thing so that he may be retained in the church. For, although nothing particular is gained in him, inasmuch as he is a mere bungler in music, yet the honor of the church demands that he be retained. The lady, a good Catholic, who is educated in obedience to the church, you can easily keep to her duty by spiritual punishments. But whether the alarm of spiritual punishments is yet to be applied to him you can judge of by circumstances, and may easily ascertain from some attempts very carefully made."

At the reading of this letter Charles's face changed color; he blushed and grew deadly pale by turns. Shame for his weakness and indignation at these deceitful instructions filled his heart at the same time. He found that Colbert had, without his knowledge, held a correspondence about him and his parents; he saw with shame how little importance they attached to him. Yet this feeling of shame purged his soul of the last remnant of vanity, which had so

long prevented him from fulfilling the desires of his parents and hearing the voice of his own better convictions. He was glad that the letters were now first deciphered after his return to the Protestant church. The father said nothing. He saw that this letter required no comments of his. The mother laughed at the mistake of the wily priest about Julietta, and wished that he might learn to his shame how the gospel had done more than all his well-arranged instruction. Charles told his parents how she had revealed to him the instructions she had received at her last confession at the seminary. The parents esteemed the young woman still more highly on that account, and reposed still greater confidence in her.

The real character of Dr. Frederick now began to be developed from the mention made of his name in the letter; and it became gradually better known, as they compared together what they had heard of this man. It was not known whence he came. His manners were refined; his acquirements not inconsiderable; his conduct externally proper. Only, toward the last, several things were said of him which excited suspicion. As a physician, he had been so charitable to the poor that it was at last no subject of surprise that several of his patients had become Romanists. They were poor persons, who lived in obscurity. But it was more remarkable that he attempted to convert to Romanism a respectable and wealthy lady; and the report even went so far as to say that she was really converted before her death, and that the doctor administered extreme unction to her. He was applauded for persuading the few members of that communion in the place to establish a Romish school; but men wondered that he himself contributed such a considerable sum toward it, when it was not known whence he obtained it. It was also attributed to his influence that the few Romanists of the town, who before had frequently attended the Protestant church, had since his residence among them absented themselves altogether, and had even withdrawn themselves very much from the society of Protestant Christians. A Romish midwife was also established there by his influence, and was remunerated for her services out of his own pocket. Charles now remembered in what a remarkable manner this man publicly distinguished him as a Catholic, and how frequently he invited him to travel to N – .

Taking all things together, the father concluded that Dr. Frederick was a proselytizer, and perhaps a secret Jesuit, as this society now seeks in all possible ways, and in every disguise, to insinuate itself into the favor of the people in both Romish and Protestant countries.

“I should think,” said the father at last to Charles, “it must now be very agreeable to you, my son, to be delivered from the power of a priesthood which always surround their church members with a sort of secret police. On the other hand, how worthy of the religion of the Spirit is the relation of the laity to their ministers with us! Our religion demands voluntary obedience and faith from conviction. The truth does not need secret inspection and artifice. It maintains itself by its own innate power. It is only error, which is always in danger of annihilation from want of argument to support it, that must be laboriously maintained by this police-system of espionage, but which only answers the purpose for a limited time. Yet I know well that there are Protestant Christians who, either from weakness, or hoodwinked ignorance, or indifference to all truth, yield to all the presumption and arrogance of the Romish priesthood, make them the most obsequious salutations, speak of truth and error only in equivocal terms, for the purpose of winning the favor of these priests, by whom after all they are only despised. This is not confessing the Lord and his gospel before men; this is not seeking the honor of God rather than that of men. No! the truth demands that those who know it should boldly confess it and defend it against calumny. Christian love also demands that for our erring brethren. To maintain, to teach, to confess, to defend the truth, – let these be the distinguishing marks and symbols of genuine Christians. But let it be only the Evangelical doctrine which we confess and defend.”

Charles extended his hand, and said, “Thus let it be, dear father! And nothing in the world shall turn aside your son from this straight path!”

“Then you are again wholly mine! Come to my heart, my dearest son!”

“God be thanked for this blessed day I” exclaimed the mother.

“Oh, Charles,” said his sister, “how happy you have made our parents!”

“I myself am the happiest of all,” he concluded. “Now again is my heart at peace; for only in piety is lasting peace to be found.”

25. The Anticipated Event – Almost A Disappointment – A Stranger – A Surprise – Double Wedding – Conclusion

DOMESTIC CONCORD AND CONFIDENCE WERE RESTORED. Never was a family more completely happy. Relatives and friends came to congratulate the father on the happy occasion, and to welcome the son on his return to the true fold of Christ. There was a jubilee in the house; and though literally no “fatted calf was killed” in celebration of the joyous event, yet there was deep emotion in every heart, and fervent thanksgiving went up to heaven.

The report of this affair incensed Charles’s former Catholic friends greatly. They immediately exerted all their power to injure his reputation as a man and an artist, and circulated the most scandalous stories respecting him and Julietta. But all these artifices of Rome were well understood, and they failed to produce the designed effect. Both these estimable persons gained more friends by the very means employed to defame them. Some who at first stood aloof and entertained suspicions of their sincerity, now came forward and proffered their felicitations.

As evidence of the public confidence in his character, he was soon after elected professor of music in a popular Protestant female academy, and at the same time he was requested to recommend a teacher of drawing and the Italian language. This was designed as a compliment, for it was well understood whom he would select. Julietta was of course chosen; and thus a permanent position for both was secured.

The long-anticipated event was hastening to its consummation. Let not the reader be disappointed at not having witnessed violent paroxysms of love nor heard rapturous professions of undying fidelity. There was no juvenile extravagance in their courtship, nor were there any alternate seasons of

storm and sunshine. The course ran smoothly, though not violently, all the time, uninterrupted by falls or rocks or quicksands. Theirs was genuine, dignified, mutual confidence; there was a perfect harmony of soul, a blending of feelings and interests, and an outflow of softened emotions, constantly displaying themselves more in looks and affectionate treatment than in words and professions.

Neither let my reader take offense at the fact of Julietta accompanying Charles to his home at the invitation of his parents and sister, whom she had never seen. The prudish notions of some would not sanction this conduct in an unmarried lady, but the discovery of the New Testament explains it all. Providence does not accommodate itself to the distorted views of modern conventualism. It was decreed in heaven that the lady should be brought under Protestant influence, and this was the measure employed to bring about that event. Besides, she was not an American but an Italian lady, and fidelity to her national characteristics rendered such a representation necessary. Above all, she was advised by her confessor to accept the invitation, and commissioned as a spy over the conduct of the young man. How Providence brings to naught the counsels of the wicked!

Though there was no formal engagement between these two young persons, yet it was well understood. They felt that they were well adapted to each other, and never doubted that they would be united.

It was now time to treat the matter more seriously. The family arranged it, and the day was appointed. Preparations were made and invitations sent out. There was all the bustle incident to an approaching village-wedding. The young ladies of the neighborhood gathered at the parsonage and spent days in the making-up of divers articles considered essential to domestic comfort; for, be it remembered, there was another lady in the family who was also looking forward to a similar affair. Whoever has been present at a country-wedding in Pennsylvania can easily imagine how the larder and grocery-store were laid under contribution in preparing for such an event.

The middle of the following week was fixed for the double wedding of Charles and Julietta, and Bernhard and Amelia. All hearts were buoyant with hope. There was great excitement among the country-lasses, and numerous new dresses were ordered and numerous old ones altered for the occasion. The village milliner was obliged to employ a few additional seamstresses, and busy was the note of preparation on all hands.

But, alas! how soon our full gush of happiness may be interrupted! All of a sudden a stranger of a foreign aspect appeared in the village. He was a man of rather olive complexion and handsome features, almost hidden, however, by an enormous beard and whisker, and luxuriant mustache. Immediately on alighting at the hotel, he in a strong foreign accent inquired for the house of the pastor, to which he instantly repaired. The first person he met was Julietta, who at once recognized him as her brother, who had but recently arrived in the country. At the Catholic seminary, at which he first called, he learned the history of her conversion and her intended marriage. Without delay he went in pursuit of her, and swore terribly that his sister should never marry an accursed heretic.

After an affectionate salutation on the sister's part and a few questions about home and friends, he rudely commenced an attack. He severely rebuked her apostasy, and repeated his shocking oath that he would never permit her to be allied to an infernal heretic. She burst violently into tears, but not so much from grief at the threatened destruction of her hopes – for her mind was fixed – as at the violence of his language and conduct, and the confusion this affair would create in the family. She finally gained sufficient composure to ask, "How will you prevent it, sir?"

"By the Holy Virgin and all the saints, I will abduct you! I'll tear you away from this family! I'll employ force – or I'll –"

"Here I stand, and, though I am but a defenseless woman, I defy you to lay your hands on me!" was the lady's spirited reply.

The brother was moved. He admired her courage and trembled with excitement. He advanced a step toward her, and it was at first uncertain whether he designed to seize her violently or to pour out a brother's affection on her bosom. She maintained her defiant attitude, and, completely overcome by her manner, he extended his hand, and said, "Julietta, you have overcome me; and yet I do not mean to say that I am reconciled to your purpose."

She now relaxed her severe tone, and mildly responded, "Brother, my circumstances, my views, my aims, my life, – all, all have changed. Separated as I have been so long from our family, I was thrown on my own resources, and was compelled to judge and act for myself. To this conclusion I have come, and no power on earth shall control me. But, brother, I interrupted you before – you said 'you would employ force – or' – there I interrupted you; or – what would you do?"

“Do not ask me, sister, to recite what I intended!”

“I must hear it, brother.”

“Well, then, I was so carried away with passion, I candidly confess, my design was to say that your lover might easily be put out of the way!”

“Did you intend to murder Charles? – your sister’s affianced husband?” exclaimed the affrighted girl. “That is the fruit of the religion you profess; mine teaches forgiveness of injuries. Oh! brother! you do not know the dear object against whom your murderous hand was to be lifted; you do not know the man whom God has chosen for your sister’s husband and protector; you do not know –”

At that moment the door opened, and Charles entered. He was surprised to see a stranger alone with Julietta.

“My brother!” she faintly said, and sank back into a chair.

Charles respectfully saluted him; but the response was cold. The stranger did not know, but presumed that this was his sister’s lover, and hence was formal and reserved. As there was no other introduction, owing to the sister’s agitation, there was also at first no very polite recognition, for the truth is that Charles himself was silenced by his bewilderment. Gradually, sufficient composure was gained, and the conversation became more animated. The stranger was a master musician, and the two before long became familiar. Each performed several pieces on the piano, and in several hours’ interview the stranger had softened down, and had begun to entertain a more favorable opinion of Charles. Julietta, of course, used all her influence to reconcile her brother, and it seemed with some success; still, there was no positive annunciation of his favorable opinion. For a while he seemed joyous, and then he would relapse again into abstraction. He could not be prevailed on to spend the night in the parsonage.

“No, no!” he persisted; “I will call again tomorrow, but I must be alone tonight. Weighty affairs press on my mind. Tomorrow, tomorrow; *bona noche!*” and, waving his hand, he hastily left the house.

It was immediately reported by the village gossips that a complete stop had been put to all matrimonial proceedings at the parsonage as far as Charles and Julietta were concerned; and an air of probability was given to this report from the numerous questions asked by the stranger of the landlord about Charles’s character and prospects, and his undisguised dissatisfaction with the whole affair. This was before he had seen his sister; and the landlord’s daughters were not backward in retailing exaggerated accounts,

which were greatly magnified by every second person, so that before the report had gone through half the village, the match had been entirely broken off.

We will accompany the brother to his lodgings. He immediately retired to his room and was absorbed in deep reflection. Evidently his feelings were softened; but still he could not entirely sanction the alliance. His sister's conversion to Protestantism deeply mortified him; but he presumed he could easily bring her back again to what he conceived to be the true faith. But he could not bear the thought of her marriage with a Protestant, and he an apostate from the church of Rome. There was, however, another fact that annoyed him, to which he had not yet made the most remote allusion. "If I take my sister home to Italy, she might marry a nobleman, and that would exalt our family, but to leave her here to become the wife of an obscure Protestant teacher of music – that I cannot bear;" thus he reasoned with himself. He spent a restless night, and in the morning his mind was still disturbed.

Agreeably to his promise, he visited his sister, and during the morning he became acquainted with the whole family. It was the first Protestant family with which he had ever become acquainted, and he was highly delighted with the unaffected simplicity, the mutual confidence, and the unalloyed happiness of the whole household. He began to think that his sister would at least be happy in her matrimonial connection, for he observed that between her and Charles there existed the most perfect mutual affection.

During the day he had another long private interview with Julietta, and he again sought, though in very mild phrase, to shake her purpose; but in vain. He employed every argument he could think of, but kept what he conceived to be the strongest for the last. "Julietta." said he, "suppose I could offer you the title, privileges, and palace of a countess in Italy: would you then change your mind?" Her curiosity was roused, but she presumed he was jesting. "Nay, I do not jest. I am sincere. Sister, you are no longer poor! A distant wealthy relative of the family has recently died, and we are the only legal heirs; a large fortune has come into our possession, and I have hastened to this country to inform you of it and take you home to Italy. Many an Italian nobleman would feel proud to lead you to the altar! Think for a moment what our family may become! Will you give up this inconsiderate engagement and accompany me home?"

The lady betrayed high excitement from two causes: – first, at her change of fortune, and secondly, at the proposal made to her. She rose from her seat, and, assuming a dignified and commanding attitude, with all her soul flashing in her eyes, she said, “Brother, I cannot but be gratified at this intelligence; but never – never will I change my purpose. No offer you can make me, no prospect you can hold out, no glittering coronet, no splendid palace, no luxurious ease, can ever make me unfaithful to my vows. Here I will remain. Take my fortune, if you choose, but leave me my Charles! I can be happy with him in a lowly cottage, undisturbed in the enjoyment of my religious faith and conscious of his sincere affection. I would be wretched in a palace allied to a man whose religion I could not respect, even though I were surrounded with all that wealth can purchase. No, no I here I will remain.”

The brother could not but admire the heroic conduct and unwavering fidelity of the lady. He found that all his efforts were fruitless, and he at length ceased his importunities. He did not leave the village as soon as he had intended, still cherishing the secret hope that further reflection would induce his sister to yield to his entreaties. But, though he frequently alluded to it tenderly, he discovered that her purpose was fixed. What could he do but rashly abandon her or reluctantly yield? He loved her too well to do the former, and could hardly do the latter.

The report of this unexpected change of fortune did not throw Charles and his father’s family into transports of joy, but they received it with calm satisfaction, and no more; and this elevated them much in the esteem of the Italian gentleman. “I cannot help it; I must consent;” he said, at last; and, to the unutterable gratification of all, he expressed his acquiescence.

Why should we longer detain the reader? The marriage-day arrived. Charles and Julietta became man and wife on the same day with Bernhard and Amelia, and the pastor’s house was the place of rejoicing and felicitation for a large company of cheerful guests and endeared friends.

A few days after, Charles and his wife repaired to the sphere of their employment at the academy, and diligently discharged their duties. The brother returned to Italy, and in the course of a year came back again and faithfully delivered her portion of the fortune into her hands. They then retired from the active duties of teaching, and spent a happy and useful life in doing good to the poor around them, in the practice of every Christian virtue, and

in the enjoyment of the confidence of all men; but, above all, of the favor of an all-wise and beneficent Providence.

The End.

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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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