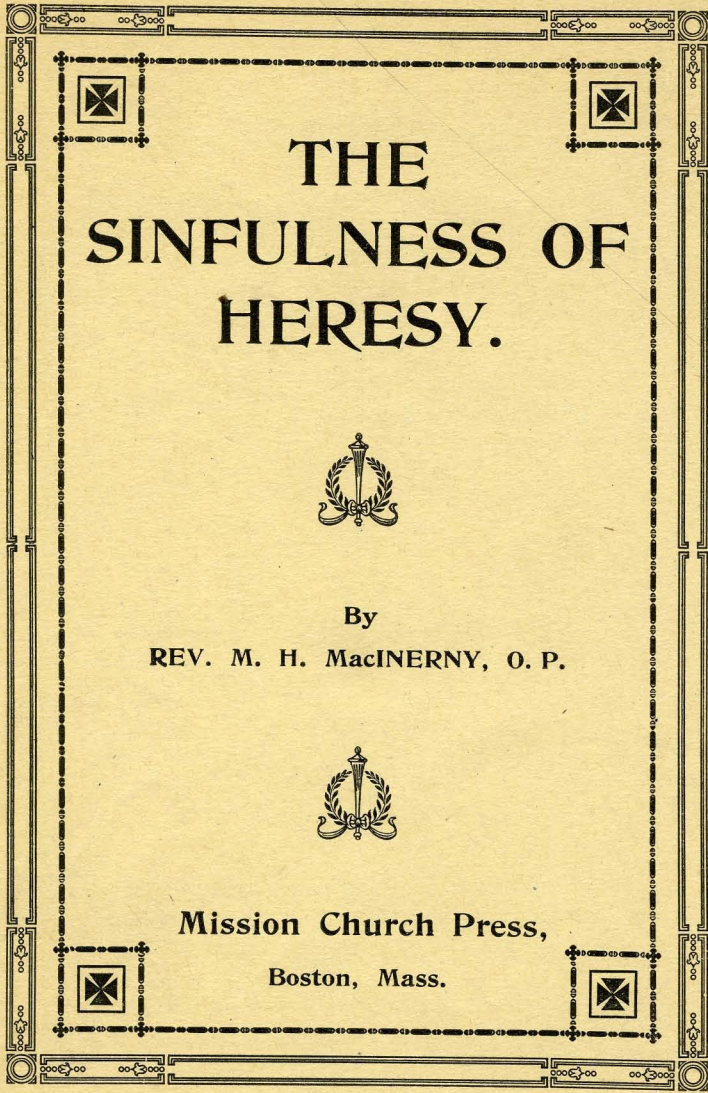


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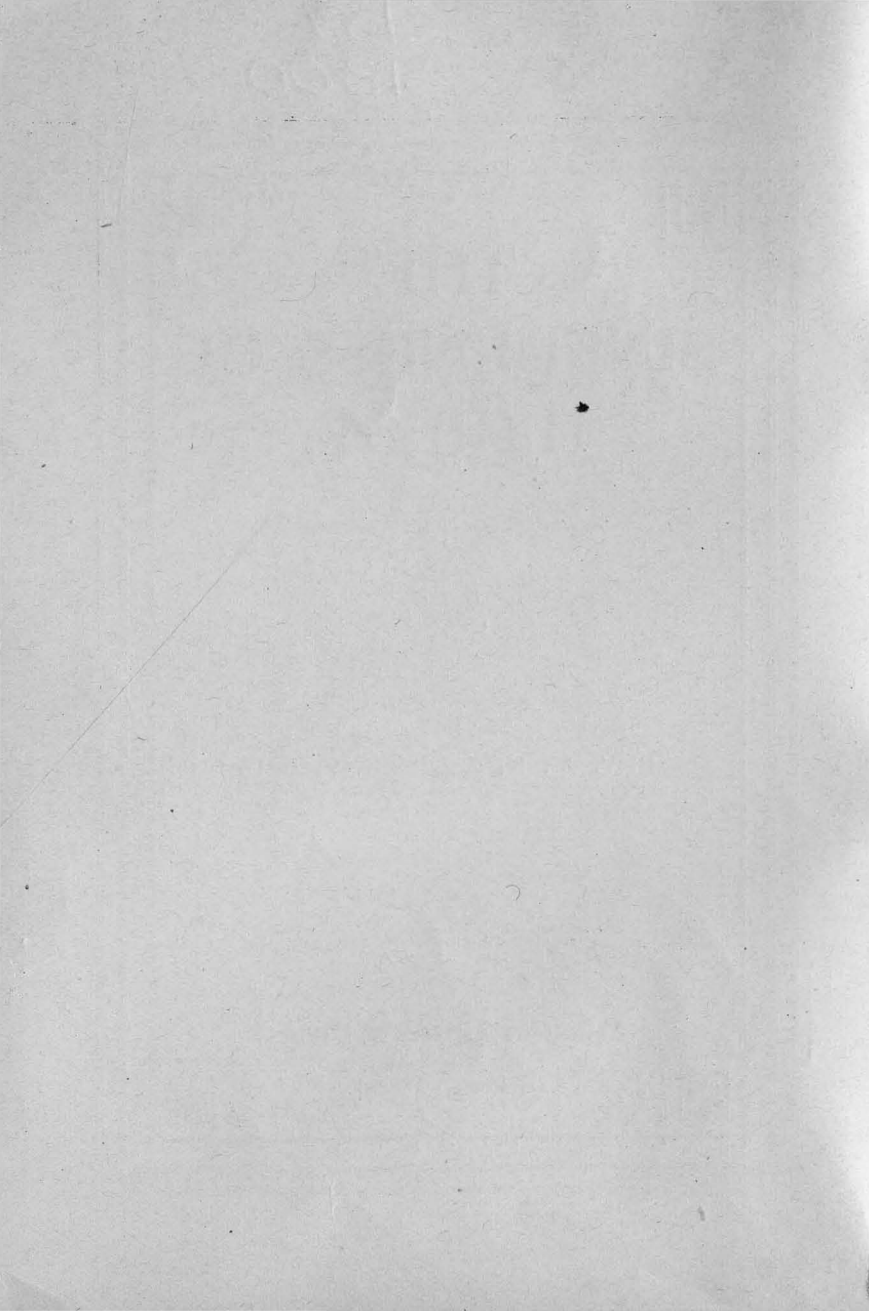


By

REV. M. H. MacINERNY, O. P.



Mission Church Press,  
Boston, Mass.



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✠ WILLIAM CARDINAL O'CONNELL,

*Archbishop of Boston*

Deacidified

# The Sinfulness of Heresy

By REV. M. H. MacINERNY, O. P.

## Foreword.

“My Brother in Christ, this book has been placed in your hands, and you will have time to read it carefully by yourself, and to think over it calmly. But, at the very outset, let me beseech you to ask the guidance of God. No harm can come of it, if you do that; no good can follow without that guidance.”—(Rev. T. P. Garnier.)

## Two Truths Ignored.

If we have to name any Christian truths which seem to have fallen completely out of the consciousness of our separated brethren, we should unhesitatingly instance these two—the unity of the Church and the sinfulness of heresy. These two sacred truths are, so to speak, the complement and counterpart of each other. They are distinctly and repeatedly inculcated, in a variety of forms, by Our Divine Lord and His Apostles. They are truths so plainly taught as to strike the least observant reader of the New Testament. Yet they are quite ignored and forgotten by the non-Catholic world of to-day.

## Religious Journalese.

In the newspaper press we may often find a palmary instance of the oblivion into which these

vital truths have fallen. Thus, it is nowise unusual for journalists and newspaper correspondents to refer to "the Church" when they really mean "the Catholic Church plus all the sects together." The Christian Church, in the loose view of these writers, is the assemblage of all religious denominations that bear the Christian name. The unity of the Church must have faded utterly from such men's minds, otherwise they would never use such an expression as "the Church" when they wish to include, not only the true Church of the living God, but also the chaotic multitude of discordant sects that lie outside her pale. This modern notion of "the Church" is assuredly a crude one. It is both lax and illogical. It stands condemned by the inspired teaching of the New Testament, as well as by the uncompromising doctrine of the illustrious Fathers of the early Church. A "church" composed of several hundreds of jarring sects, all teaching contradictory doctrines, would have been regarded by the Apostles and the Fathers as a veritable monstrosity.

#### **A Fundamental Doctrine of Christianity.**

"The unity of the Church," observes Professor Stanton Devas, "is, perhaps, of all her characteristics, the most important and august. In the solemn and effectual prayer of her Founder, it is made the very note and evidence of her divinity: 'I pray for those also who, through their word, shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and

I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' And the Apostle, amid his bonds, exhorted his converts to be true to their vocation, to be one body and one spirit, as became those who confessed one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Here is a principle fundamental and unchangeable; there were not to be two Churches and two Christs, but one; not two folds and two shepherds, but one."(1)

There cannot possibly be more than one true Church of Christ in the world. All other Christian bodies are mere sects, plunged in schism or heresy, usually in both. The unity of the Church is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion; it is a doctrine sadly obscured in non-Catholic minds, owing to the prodigious multiplication of sects under the ægis of Protestantism. The same cause has inevitably led to an almost total oblivion of the sinfulness of heresy and schism among modern sectaries. The endless vagaries of the sects, their negations and contradictions, their erratic tenets, and no less erratic denials—these are looked upon as legitimate differences of opinion. Nowadays the advent of a new religion excites no more surprise than the advent of a new green-grocer.

### **The Modern Babel.**

What is Protestantism but an indescribable Babel of sects, an inextricable tangle of heresies and schisms?

(1) "Key to the World's Progress," popular edit., p. 60.

About the middle of the 17th century the learned Dr. Walton thus described, in his biting way, the rank luxuriance of heresy in the pastures of English Protestantism,—

“Aristarchus formerly could hardly find seven wise men in Greece; but amongst us [English] are hardly to be found so many ignorant persons; for all are teachers, all divinely instructed! there is no fanatic or clown, from the lowest dregs of the people, who does not give you his own dreams for the word of God. For the bottomless pit seems to have been set open, from whence a smoke has risen which has obscured the heavens and the stars, and locusts are come out with stings, a numerous race of sectaries and heretics, who have renewed all the old heresies, and invented monstrous opinions of their own. These have filled our cities, villages, camps, houses; nay, our churches and pulpits too, and lead the poor deluded people with them to the pit of perdition.” (Præf. ad Proleg. in Bibl. Polyglotta.)

Dr. Walton was editor of the famous Polyglot Bible, and afterwards Anglican Bishop of Chester. His training and environment prevented him from perceiving that if the Anglican Church had not first fallen into heresy and schism, the “numerous race of sectaries and heretics,” whose vagaries roused his indignation, would never have arisen. These sectaries were the natural offspring of a schismatic and heretical mother. They were, moreover, the inevitable product of the Protestant rule of faith; they were the inevitable outcome of the “glorious privilege of private judgment,” as applied to the “Bible alone.”

Things have not improved since Dr. Walton’s time. Heresies and sects have grown and multiplied from his day to our own. “England alone,” says a leading article in “The Times,” of January 13, 1884, “is reputed to contain some seven hundred sects, each of



whom proves a whole system of theology and morals from the Bible." This state of things gave occasion to the Frenchman's gibe that "England is a country which possesses hundreds of religions, but only a single sauce."

### **A False Rule of Faith.**

To enumerate all the Protestant sects that have arisen in various countries since the days of Luther would be wholly impracticable. All these wretched divisions and heresies have been directly produced by the consistent following of the Protestant rule of faith. In other words, the Bible, privately interpreted, has been the prolific source of errors and heresies innumerable. It follows, then, that the Bible privately interpreted, cannot possibly be the Rule of Faith appointed by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, the grand object of whose teaching was to bring all men to "meet in the unity of the faith . . . that henceforth they might not be, as children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but, maintaining the truth in charity, might grow up in all things unto Him who is the Head," etc. (Ephes. iv., 11-14.) (2)

### **Unscriptural and Ruinous.**

The irony of the situation is that the Protestant rule of faith is nowhere to be found in the Bible itself. Nowhere do the Inspired Writings tell us that

(2) See Allnatt, "The Church and the Sects," 1st series, p. 65.

the Bible, as interpreted or misinterpreted by each individual, is to be the final court of appeal in religious questions. Surely the fact that Protestantism has been shattered into countless fragments by the principle of private judgment—surely that incontestable fact ought to enable sensible men to see that the principle in question is a suicidal one. No candid person can deny that Protestantism has been dynamited by its own fundamental principle. The Bible, as interpreted by private judgment, has wrought more havoc and disorder than a lyddite shell in the ranks of Protestantism.

### **Anarchy in Religion.**

The principle of private interpretation has logically and necessarily resulted in religious anarchy—anarchy in religious belief, no less than in modes of worship. The sects have been so oblivious of the sinfulness of heresy on all sides, that scarcely a single doctrine of Christianity is held in common by them all. A Protestant clergyman once tried to discover what doctrines are held in common by all Protestants. He began by stripping off the truths which are not held by every sect, so as to arrive at the residuum which all admit. He wrote:—

“Are Presbyterians Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such do not believe in Episcopacy. Are Independents (Congregationalists) Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in any established line of ministry. Are Anabaptists (Baptists) Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in Infant Baptism. Are Quakers Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in any Sacraments. Are the Swiss Calvinists Protest-

ants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in the Atonement. Are the new school of German Lutherans Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in Original Sin. Are Socinians (Unitarians) Protestants?—Yes.—Then Protestants, as such, do not believe in our Lord's Divinity. . . .

“We have now seen that, of all the articles of the Apostles' Creed, Protestants are only agreed in believing two—namely, the first, that there is one God; and the last, the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting. Nay, I might, without any injustice go further. Socinians (Unitarians) cannot be said really to hold the first article, because if they deny God the Son, they clearly deny God the Father as Father; and the Universalists do not hold the last clause, because they deny the eternity of punishment, which is implied in it. The Resurrection of the Body, then, is all that Protestants, as Protestants, of all sects and sorts, agree in believing—I mean of matters contained in the Apostles' Creed, and in the sense of that Creed.”(3)

### German Protestant Unbelievers.

We may safely affirm that nowadays even the Resurrection of the Body is no longer believed in by “Protestants of all sects and sorts.” In Germany there are quite a host of Protestant theologians who, with Professor Harnack at their head, deny the supernatural altogether. Harnack denies that Christ is the Saviour of men; he rejects the Divinity of Christ, the miracles of Christ, and the Resurrection of Christ. Refusing to believe in the supernatural, Harnack and his school are, perforce, obliged to deny that the Bible is the inspired Word of God; they are, perforce, obliged to disbelieve in miracles and prophecy, as well as in the Sacraments of the Christian religion. Professor Harnack's attitude towards the Christian re-

(3) Quoted by Charles T. Gratty, F.S.A., “The Revival of the Catholic Faith in England,” pp. 19, 20.

ligion is that of a thorough-going Rationalist: yet Harnack's theological views constitute the "massgebende Theologie"—the standard theology—of modern Protestant Germany. That fact alone speaks volumes for the unbelieving temper of the Protestant clergy of Germany.

Another highly significant fact is this: Of all the Protestant faculties of theology in the German Universities, there are only two—namely, those of Erlangen and Rostock—in which the Divinity of Our Lord is taught. In all the other Universities of Germany, at least in all that are provided with Protestant faculties of theology, the Divinity of Christ is openly rejected and denied by the Lutheran professors of theology.

Professor Harnack and his followers are sceptical enough, in all conscience; but we learn, with a shock of surprise, that there is another school of German Protestant theologians still more radical, more rationalistic and unbelieving, than even Harnack and his numerous disciples. Some of the more advanced of the Lutheran pastors go so far as to deny the existence of a personal God; others are Pantheists; others sneer from their pulpits at the practice of prayer, and so on. (4)

We may safely assume that these sceptical professors and pastors are far from entertaining any real belief in so highly miraculous an event as the general

(4) See "Der Deutsche Protestantismus zu Beginn des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts," by Dr. Philipp Huppert, pp. 8, 26, 68, et passim.

resurrection of all men at the Last Day. If the German theologians disbelieve in the raising of Lazarus—if they reject even the Resurrection of Our Lord—they are not likely to believe in the possibility of so stupendous a miracle as the resurrection of all mankind on the Last Day. The final resurrection was the only point upon which Protestants seemed unanimous, as we have seen; but that unanimity is now incontestably a thing of the past. Hence we may unhesitatingly affirm that not one single article of the Apostles' Creed is unanimously accepted any longer by "Protestants of all sects and sorts." It is, indeed, impossible, or well-nigh impossible, to discover any Christian truth which is held in common by the entire Protestant world. The principle of private judgment has reduced Protestantism to a chaos such as this earth of ours never witnessed before.

### **American Unbelief.**

The downgrade of Protestantism was well illustrated in a recent examination of candidates for the Presbyterian ministry in New York. Three would-be ministers, who openly and persistently denied some of the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith, were admitted and licensed as Presbyterian ministers by the authorities of that denomination at a special meeting held in New York last June. The three candidates had openly expressed their disbelief in the Resurrection of Our Saviour, as well as in the Divine Birth of Christ, the raising of Lazarus and the transmission of

original sin. The three unbelievers are now "ministers in good standing" in the Presbyterian denomination, and their admission was hailed as "a triumph of liberalism." Liberalism is frequently a synonym for infidelity.

In the May (1909) issue of the "Cosmopolitan," Mr. Harold Bolce gives a long and detailed statement of the heterodox views which are being taught in the (mainly Protestant) Universities of the United States. In those Universities it is daily taught in hundreds of classrooms that the Decalogue is no more sacred than a syllabus; that the home, as an institution, is doomed; that there are no absolute evils; that immorality is simply an act in contravention of society's accepted standards; that democracy is a failure, and the Declaration of Independence only spectacular rhetoric; that the change from one religion to another is like getting a new hat; that moral precepts are passing shibboleths; that conceptions of right and wrong are as unstable as styles of dress; that wide stairways are open between social levels, but that to the climber children are encumbrances; that the sole effect of profligacy is to fill tiny graves; and that there can be, and are, holier alliances without the marriage bond than within it. One professor has even gone so far as to maintain the daring thesis that "anything tolerated by the world in general is right."

#### **The Climax.**

Things have come to such a pass in Protestantism that atheism itself no longer appears sinful to a certain

type of Protestant mind. Twenty-six years ago, after declaring his personal conviction of the existence of a Deity, Mr. Norman Pearson immediately added, "I see nothing in the least immoral in an opposite belief!" (5) Doubtless the latter part of Mr. Pearson's statement would awaken many an approving echo in Europe and America to-day. Surely the sinfulness of unbelief must have vanished utterly from men's minds when they can discover "nothing in the least immoral" in an unblushing confession of atheism!

### Marvellous Catholic Unity.

Happily, there are many millions of the best and most enlightened of mankind who still adhere firmly to "the faith once delivered to the saints." (6) The Church of the living God still exists in undiminished vigor, and the gates of hell have not prevailed against her. She still is, and will ever be, "the pillar and foundation of the truth." (7) She has ever possessed the abiding presence of her Divine Founder, in accordance with His solemn promise, "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (8) She has likewise enjoyed the constant guidance of the Divine Spirit of Truth; to her alone the Redeemer promised that "The Spirit of Truth shall abide with you for ever: He shall guide you into all truth." (9) The marvellous unity of belief

(5) "The Nineteenth Century," August, 1883.

(6) Jude 3. (7) 1 Tim. iii., 15. (8) Matt. xxviii., 20.

(9) John xiv., 17; xvi., 13.

which exists among her children—though these belong to every nation, tribe, and tongue under the wide canopy of heaven—stands out in strong contrast to the disunion and anarchy which prevail among the sects. In the Catholic Church alone has the Saviour's prayer for unity found its fulfilment—"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." (10)

### **Tributes of Non-Catholics.**

Thoughtful men of the world are profoundly impressed by the spectacle of Catholic unity. Thus, Matthew Arnold writes:—

"If there is one thing specially alien to religion, it is divisions; if there is one specially native to religion, it is peace and unity. Hence the original attraction towards unity in Rome, and hence the great charm for men's minds of that unity, when once attained. I persist in thinking that Catholicism has, from this superiority, a great future before it; that it will endure while all Protestant sects dissolve and disappear."

In like manner, the great German philosopher, von Hartmann, clearly recognized the immeasurable superiority of the Catholic Church over her sectarian rivals:—

"If there should really be a Church that leads to salvation, no matter how, then, at all events, I will search for an immovable Sovereign-Church, and will rather cling to the Rock of Peter than to any of the numberless Protestant sectarian churches." (11)

"In these days" [writes Professor H. Thurston Peck, of Columbia College] "when doctors of divinity devote their en-

(10) John xvii., 21.

(11) "Der Krisis des Christenthums," p. 98.



ergies to nibbling away the foundations of historic faith, and when the sharpest weapons of agnosticism are forged on theological anvils, there is something reassuring in the contemplation of the one great Church that does not change from age to age; that stands unshaken on the rock of its convictions, and that speaks to the wavering and troubled soul in the serene and lofty accents of Divine authority." (12)

### **The Catholic Church's Divine Credentials.**

"Divine authority"—the whole situation is summed up in that single phrase. The Catholic Church possesses Divine authority; all other so-called "churches" are mere man-made sects. The Catholic Church, in her teaching capacity, is the living representative of Jesus Christ in the world; she is His mouthpiece; through her voice He speaks in clear and unflinching accents to the children of men. The Catholic Church has received from her Divine Founder His authority, His doctrine, His sacraments, along with the assistance of the Divine Spirit of Truth to keep her infallible in her teachings. To despise the Church is to despise Christ; to separate from the Church is to separate from Christ; to remain estranged from the Church is to remain estranged from Christ; to disbelieve in the Church's teaching is to disbelieve in the doctrine of Christ, and to incur eternal condemnation. Unbelief that is wilful and perverse can expect no mercy, for Christ has expressly said, "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

All this is abundantly clear from the declarations of Our Lord and of His inspired Apostles. To the first

(12) "The Bookman," vol. iv., p. 240.

pastors of the Church and to their successors throughout the ages, the Redeemer promised the abiding guidance of the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit of Truth shall abide with you for ever: He shall guide you into all truth." (John xiv., 17; xvi., 13).

St. Paul was inspired by the Holy Ghost to describe "the Church of the living God" as "the pillar and foundation of the truth." 1 Tim. iii., 15.)

"As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you," said the Saviour to His Apostles. (John xx., 21.)

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii., 18-20.)

"Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned." (Mark xvi., 15, 16.). "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." (Matt. xviii., 18.). "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me., (Luke x., 16.)

"I will give unto thee (Peter) the Keys [the symbol of Supreme Government] of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on

earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven." (Matt. xvi., 19.) "Thou art Peter [Kepha], and upon this Rock [Kepha] I will build my Church, and the gates of hell [Satan and his hosts] shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," etc. (Matt. xvi., 18-19.).

"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. Amen I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven," etc. (Matt. xviii., 17, 18.).

The Apostles faithfully re-echo these maxims of their Divine Master. Opposition to the Church in her teaching capacity is the same as opposition to the Church's Divine Head and Founder. "We are of God," says St. John; "he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." (1 John iv., 6.) And St. Paul tersely says: "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God." (1 Thess. iv., 8.).

### **Christ's Promises Fulfilled in the Catholic Church.**

Now, the Catholic Church is the only True and Original Church, which Christ Himself founded, and to which the foregoing promises were made. She alone has had a Visible Existence in all ages, from the time of Christ to the present hour. She alone can "unroll the catalogue of her Bishops," as Tertullian phrases it, and prove their continuous succession from the Apostles of Christ. She alone has taught and

baptized all those nations of the world which have ever yet received the Christian Faith—including all those which now profess some of the myriad conflicting forms of Protestantism. The nations which are now Protestant apostatized, in the sixteenth century, from that Catholic Faith to which they had originally been converted from their heathenism; they apostatized from the Catholic Church by which, and into which, they had been baptized.

The Catholic Church alone has been, in all ages, "the Light of the world;" she has ever been "a city set on a hill, that could not be hid;" she alone has been "the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth," rendering it conspicuous, and the knowledge of it attainable to all mankind. This Catholic Church—of which the See of Peter was ever the acknowledged centre—alone has been, and still is, the "One Fold under One Shepherd." The Catholic Church—of which the successor of St. Peter is the Visible Head—is that great and illustrious body or society of Christians whose exhibition of supernatural and majestic unity has profoundly impressed the world, besides presenting a striking contrast to the disunion and disorder of the separated sects. The Catholic Church alone possesses—and alone claims to possess—the supreme and unerring Teaching Authority, without which no such unity could be guaranteed or preserved.

### **Protestantism is Spurious Christianity.**

On the other hand, it is clear as noonday that no Protestant sect or conglomeration of sects can be the

One, True and Original Church founded by Christ for the propagation and extension of His one true Faith and religion throughout the whole world, and for the preservation of the same Faith and religion throughout all the ages. None of the Protestant sects is as yet 400 years old. They all owe their origin, in the first instance, to the apostate pseudo-Reformers who broke away from the Church of God in the sixteenth century, and forthwith proceeded to set up religions of their own.

None of the Protestant sects has ever pretended to be the One, Visible, Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Christ Our Lord. It was not by any Protestant body that the Commission given by Christ, "to teach and baptize all nations," was fulfilled; in fact, it is notorious that no single nation of the earth was ever yet converted from heathenism by Protestant agency, or to the profession of Protestant Christianity.

So far are the adherents of Protestantism from presenting a spectacle of religious unity, either at home amongst themselves, or in the missionaries whom they send to the heathen—so far are Protestants from constituting "One Fold," "One Body," "One Faith," etc., that their incurable divisions have become a by-word among the nations. From the first they have failed to present a spectacle of religious unity; to-day they offer only a spectacle of religious anarchy. Their profound religious discords and dissensions have all arisen from that

first and fundamental principle of their religion, namely, "the liberty of private judgment." This ill-omened principle has resulted in the formation of innumerable sects, hopelessly divided against one another in Faith and Communion. These anarchical and incurable dissensions have been, almost from the first year of the existence of Protestantism, and in every country where Protestantism has shown itself "an opprobrium and disgrace to the very name of Christianity." (13)

### Unity Strictly Inculcated by Christ and His Apostles.

Protestantism is quite the reverse of what the true Church of God must be, according to the emphatic pronouncements of Jesus Christ and His Apostles. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold," says our Saviour; "them also I must bring, and there shall be One Fold and One Shepherd." (John x., 16.) The Catholic Church is visibly and manifestly One Fold under One Shepherd; but only in the veriest irony could the same description be made to apply to Protestantism.

The illustrious Apostle of the Gentiles beseeches the Ephesians to be—

"Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; one body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in us all." (Ephes. iv., 3-6.)

St. Paul exhausts the language of entreaty in his

(13) This and the four preceding paragraphs are adapted from Allnatt's work, "Which is the True Church?" pp. 18-32.

appeals to Christians to preserve unity. To the Philippians, for instance, he addresses this pressing exhortation:—"Only let your conversation be worthy of the Gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you, or, being absent, may hear of you, that you *stand fast in one spirit, with one mind*, laboring together for the faith of the Gospel." Further on, he again beseeches them to maintain the unity of faith: "Fulfil ye my joy, that you *be of one mind*, having the same charity, *being of one accord*, agreeing in sentiment." (Phil. i., 27; ii., 2.)

The Apostle bids the Corinthians remember that we, being many, are . . . *one body*;" he warns them that "God is not the God of *dissension*, but of *peace*;" and concludes with this earnest injunction: "For the rest, brethren, rejoice, be perfect, take exhortation, *be of one mind*, have peace; and the God of peace and love shall be with you." (14)

St. Paul's constant solicitude for unity displays itself once more in his letter to the Ephesians. To his converts at Ephesus the Apostle explains that Our Lord has given prophets and apostles, evangelists and doctors and pastors to His Church. And St. Paul immediately adds the reason why Jesus Christ left in His Church a succession of orthodox pastors and teachers. The reason was mainly this—to preserve the faithful in unity and truth: that we may "*all meet unto the unity of faith; and . . . that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro*,

(14) 1 Cor. x., 17; xiv., 33; 2 Cor. xiii., 11.

*and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*" (Ephes. iv., 13, 14.)

In fervid and impressive language the same great Apostle adjures the Corinthians to beware of religious dissensions:—"Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you *all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" (I. Cor., i., 10.). He reminds them that "in one Spirit we were all baptized *into one body*, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free." "You are the body of Christ," he tells them—meaning that they had become members of Christ's mystical body, which is the Church. "God hath tempered the body together," the Apostle adds, "that there might be no schism in the body." (I Cor. xii., 13-27.)

To the Colossians, the Apostle writes:—"If so ye continue in the Faith, grounded and settled, and immovable from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard," Jesus Christ will "present you holy and unspotted and blameless" before His Heavenly Father. (Col. i., 22, 23.). The Thessalonians receive from the same illustrious Apostle a similar exhortation to constancy in the profession of the One True Faith:—"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle." (2 Thess. ii., 14.). Finally, the Apostle bids his Galatian converts remember that "*You are all one* in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii., 28.).



These reiterated precepts and admonitions from the pen of the inspired Apostle are simply echoes of Our Lord's own teaching. In the sublime and most touching prayer which Our Blessed Saviour addresses to His Heavenly Father, when His agony was about to begin, He implored that unity might always prevail amongst His true followers, in such sort that their Visible Unity might be a standing proof of His Divinity:—

“Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, whom Thou hast given Me; *that they may be one*, as we also are. . . . And not for them [the Apostles] only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me: *that they also may be one in Us*: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. I in them, and Thou in Me: *that they may be made perfect in one*: that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou also hast loved Me.” (John xvii., 12-23.)

The Church's unity being thus made the very evidence of her Founder's Divinity, it is not surprising that those who choose for themselves a separate doctrine or separate authority, leaving the straight path of orthodoxy, have always been regarded by the faithful as involved in the extremity of wickedness. These fallen Christian teachers have been denounced as ministers of Satan by the Apostles as well as by the illustrious Fathers of the early Church; and the strongest epithets to show abhorrence of such men have Scripture warrant. For it is the evil mission of heretics to make a breach in that order which the providence of God has placed in the world to be the special witness of His handiwork. By darkening the light of the One Faith and One Mediator, heretics

have darkened the evidence for the Divinity of Christ and the Trinity of the Godhead. They have sought to rend and tear the mystical Body of Christ, the Church being recognized as the body of which Christ is the Head.”(15)

### **Christ Condemns Heresies.**

The strongest expressions in reprobation of heresy have Scripture warrant. Our Lord Himself warns us, in the clearest and most trenchant language, to beware of false teachers of religion. He likens the professors of false doctrines to cruel and merciless wolves: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matt. vii., 15.)

The “false prophets” against whom Our Lord so strictly warns us are obviously the agents of heresy and unbelief. Such is unmistakably the opinion of St. Jerome, who has well been styled “the greatest Christian scholar of his time;” such is likewise the general verdict of commentators on the Sacred Text. According to St. Jerome and countless other Christian scholars, the “false prophets” whom Jesus Christ so scathingly denounces are heretics, propounders of false and corrupt doctrines; they are false teachers who affect a mission from God which they have not, like the “lying teachers,” whom St. Peter condemns, in language of appalling severity, in his Second Epistle.

(15) Adapted from Professor Stanton Devas, “Key to the World’s Progress,” popular edit., p. 60.

St. Jerome and commentators generally, as we have seen, understand the expression "false prophets" to refer to heretics; and, as a modern Biblical scholar observes, "everyone knows what a sanctimonious appearance heretics generally assume, both in words and manner, in order to deceive the unwary, and lead them away from the Faith." (16)

Elsewhere Our Lord foretells that "many false prophets shall arise, and shall seduce many." (Matt. xxiv., 11.) Here, again, He manifestly refers to the heretics who were to afflict the Church in later ages. Some of these false teachers confess the Divinity of Our Lord, but reject some of the sacred truths which He has revealed, and which His Church proposes for our acceptance. Other heretics strive to degrade Jesus Christ to the level of a mere man, as do many of the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Congregationalists, not to speak of the Unitarians, whose *raison d'etre* is the denial of Our Lord's Divinity. These false teachers are disseminators of error. They corrupt the sacred truths of Christianity. They are "false prophets," against whom the Divine Founder of Christianity bids His true followers be on their guard.

St. Paul repeatedly admonishes the faithful to shun "false prophets," who reject or falsify some of the sacred truths of the Christian revelation. So does St. Peter, in a memorable chapter of his Second Epistle; so, likewise, does the Beloved Disciple, St. John, who

(16) Archbishop MacEvilly, "Exposition of the Gospels," vol. I., pp. 139-140.

calls them Antichrists. St. Paul predicts the coming of heretical teachers, and stigmatizes them in scathing language: "I know that, after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. And of your own selves will rise up men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx., 29, 30.)

Among the apostles of error whose coming is thus predicted by Our Lord and St. Paul, we may reckon Ebion, Cerinthus, the Nicolaites, and the whole tribe of the early Gnostics. To the same class belong such heretical teachers as Arius and his numerous following of Arian and Semi-Arian misbelievers. The same category also includes the whole swarm of Protestant sectaries, from Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Henry VIII., down to Johanna Southcote and Elijah Dowie.

#### **The Wickedness of Unbelief.**

When about to ascend to His Father, Jesus Christ gave His Apostles this sublime commission: "All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.) On the same occasion, as St. Mark tells us, Our Lord said to His Apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark xvi., 15, 16.)

This latter passage is explained and commented upon by an eminent Scripture scholar in these terms:—

“‘He that believeth not’ the Gospel preached by the Apostles and their legitimate successors ‘shall be condemned’; it matters not whether he be rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, king or subject. Infallible truth is pledged to it. The Judge of the living and the dead has decreed it. The Saviour of all mankind has made it an indispensable condition for all, in order to be partakers of the fruits of His Redemption, that they must have faith—faith conceived only from the preaching of those legitimately sent. If the preaching of others would suffice to engender faith, why should the preaching of the Apostles be necessary to reach every creature? On this account it is, the Apostle tells us, that, while faith comes from hearing, it is from hearing those only who are legitimately sent. To those alone who have a legitimate mission from the Apostles, and their successors in God’s Church, can the words apply: ‘How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace; of them that bring glad tidings of good things.’” (Rom. x., 15.) (17)

### “The Heathen and the Publican.”

In expounding the precept of fraternal correction, Our Lord declares that, in the last resort, the delinquent must be cited before the Church, and then, “if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.” (Matt. xviii., 17.) This condemnation applies *a fortiori* to cases of obstinate heresy. The adherents of heresy, when reprovved for their misbelief, generally refuse to “hear the Church;” in most cases, they obstinately prefer their own erroneous notions to the teaching of “the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.” If an ordinary delinquent is to be classed with

“the heathen and the publican” by reason of his refusal to abide by the Church’s judgment in regard to his offence, how much deeper is the guilt of him who openly rejects the moral or dogmatic teaching of the Divinity-guided Church of Jesus Christ? If it be wrong to reject the Church’s verdict in regard to an individual offence, it is surely a far more heinous crime to reject the teaching of the Universal Church upon questions of faith or morals. Heretics notoriously decline to “hear the Church” on the gravest of all questions. Therein lies their condemnation.

### **St. Peter Condemns Heresy.**

The Prince of the Apostles faithfully re-echoes the sentiments of his Divine Master in reference to false teachers and their doctrines. In language that is absolutely terrific, he stigmatizes the heretics who were to arise at a later time, and warns Christians to be on their guard against them:—“There were also false prophets among the (Jewish) people,” he says, “even as there shall be among you lying teachers who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them: bringing upon themselves swift destruction.” (2 Pet. ii., 1.)

In this scathing sentence we have a descriptive definition of heretics. As Tertullian says, heretics are Christians who deliberately choose false doctrine, either instituting sects themselves, or receiving the false doctrine of sects already founded. The great African apologist adds that a heretic is condemned

by the very fact of his choosing for himself, since a Christian has no such liberty of choice, but is bound to receive the doctrine which the Apostles received from Christ.(18)

It is idle for people to pretend that they "believe in the Lord," when they deny doctrines which the Lord has revealed, and which His Church proposes for our belief. Hence St. Peter says that heretics "deny the Lord who bought them," inasmuch as they deny some of His Divine teachings, and apostatize from His Church. In reference to these "lying teachers," the Apostle further says:—

"And many shall follow their riotousnesses, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you. Whose judgment now of a long time lingerteth not, and their perdition slumbereth not. . . . The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be tormented; and especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government, audacious, self-willed, they fear not to bring in sects, blaspheming."

In this fearful indictment of heresy, there is scarcely a sentence that is not a summary of some chapter of Reformation history. To those who are acquainted with the facts of Protestant history, to those who know the licentious doctrines and practices of the pseudo-Reformers and their immediate followers, it must often seem as if St. Peter possessed a prophetic knowledge of the Lutheran revolt against the Church of God.

Further on, the Apostle pens this appalling denunciation of false teachers:—

(18) Tertullian "De Præscript," 5, 6; also "Cath. Dictionary," s.v. "heresy."

"These men, as irrational beasts, naturally tending to the snare and to destruction, blaspheming those things which they know not, shall perish in their corruption, receiving the reward of their injustice; counting for a pleasure the delights of a day, [they are] staines and spots, sporting themselves to excess, rioting in their feasts with you: having eyes full of adultery and of sin that ceaseth not: alluring unstable souls, having their heart exercised with covetousness, children of malediction. Leaving the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam of Bosor, who loved the wages of iniquity."

Of these apostles of error, St. Peter further says:—

"These are fountains without water, and clouds tossed with whirlwinds, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved. For, speaking proud words of vanity, they allure by the desires of fleshly riotousness those who for a little while escape, such as converse in error: promising them liberty, whereas they themselves are the slaves of corruption. . . . It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice than, after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog has returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet., chapter 2.)

### "Ministers of Satan."

The great Apostle of the Gentiles is equally uncompromising in his denunciations of the spokesmen of heresy. "Such false apostles," he says, "are deceitful workmen, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed as the ministers of justice;" but their "end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. xi., 13-15.)

To the Galatians he addresses a peremptory warning, bidding them beware of false religionists, whose



insidious errors would pervert the Gospel of Christ: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema! As we said before, so now I say again: If anyone preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema!" (Gal. i., 8, 9.)

### **"Adultery, Heresies, Murders."**

Further on in his Epistle to the Galatians, the inspired Apostle places heresy in the same category with murder and lasciviousness. In the Authorized Version this memorable passage runs as follows:—

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness—Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies—Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. v., 19-21.)

### **"Speaking Lies in Hypocrisy."**

In his letters to St. Timothy, the Apostle sternly condemns the false doctrines of fallen Christian teachers. Such false apostles were active in St. Paul's day, and he prophesies that other heretical teachers would ply their evil trade in ages to come: "Now the Spirit manifestly saith that in later times (19) some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and

(19) This is the sense of the Greek original.—See Van Steenkiste, "Commentarius in S. Pauli Epistolas," vol. 2, p. 324.

having their conscience seared." (I. Tim. iv., 1-3.)

After emphasizing various points of doctrine and practice, the Apostle adds: "These things teach [thou] and exhort—If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the sound words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to that doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but sick about questions and strifes of words: from which arise envies, contentions, blasphemies, evil suspicions, conflicts of men corrupted in mind, and who are destitute of the truth." (I. Tim. vi., 2-5.)

In his Second Epistle, St. Paul warns Timothy to "shun profane and vain babblings, for they grow much towards ungodliness. And their speech spreadeth like a canker: of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have erred from the faith, saying that the resurrection is past already, and have subverted the faith of some." In reference to the same heretical teachers, the Apostle instructs St. Timothy to "admonish them that resist the truth; if, peradventure, God may give them repentance to know the truth, and [if perchance] they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive at his will." (II. Tim. ii., 16-18, 25-26.)

According to the inspired doctrine of St. Paul, therefore, heretical teachers are slaves of the devil, "held captive at his will;" they are veritable "ministers of Satan;" their heresies are on the same plane of wickedness with adultery, lasciviousness, and murder.

In this Epistle, the great Apostle once more foretells the coming of wicked men who shall deform the religion of Christ and lead souls to destruction. In language that reads like a summary of early Protestant history, St. Paul denounces the coming "reformers":—

"Know also this, that in later days (20) shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked—without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness—traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasure more than of God; having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Now these avoid. For of these sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women loaden with sins, who are led away with divers desires, ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth.

"Now, as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest to all men, as theirs also was. . . . Evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, erring and driving into error.

"For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine: but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables." (2 Tim., ch. iii.)

Finally, to the Bishop of Crete the Apostle writes his trenchant instruction: "A man that is a heretic avoid, after the first and second admonition, knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment." (Tit. iii., 10.)

(20) This is the sense of the original Greek. The Rhemish version, in this instance, is much less happy than usual. St. Paul's phrase may refer to any period subsequent to the date of his writing. The same remark applies to the analogous phrase in 1 Tim. iv., 1.—See Van Steenkiste, "Comment. in S. Pauli Epistolas," vol. ii., pp., 324-384.

Such heretics are stigmatized by the great Apostle as "disobedient, vain talkers, and seducers." They "must be reprov'd," he adds; for they "subvert whole houses, teaching the things which they ought not to, for filthy lucre's sake." He commands Titus to "re-buke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith," and that "they may not give heed to commandments of men who turn themselves away from the truth."

If ever there was a commandment imposed by "men who turn themselves away from the truth," it is surely the commandment to frame a religion for oneself out of the pages of the Bible. That "commandment" was promulgated by Luther, who had derived it from John Huss. It is a "commandment" that has shattered Protestantism into a thousand fragments; it is, moreover, an injunction based upon a mistranslation and misinterpretation of Our Lord's words to the Jews, in reference to "searching the Scriptures."

In this very Epistle St. Paul's language is the reverse of complimentary to those who "search the Scriptures," but yet wrest them to their own destruction: "To them that are defiled, and to unbelievers, nothing is clean; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess that they know God; but in their works they deny Him; being abominable, and incredulous, and to every good work reprobate." (Titus, chap. i.)

## The End of Apostates.

The inspired author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has some terrific sentences in reference to the fate of apostates: "It is impossible for those who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have, moreover, tasted the good work of God, and the powers of the world to come, *and are fallen away*, to be renewed again to penance, crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery. For the earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briars is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt." (Heb. vi., 4-8.)

The same inspired writer categorically declares that "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi., 6.) By "faith" he obviously means the true faith. All heretics and misbelievers claim to have faith of a kind; yet, throughout the New Testament, their "faith" is repudiated as insufficient, and their unbelief branded as ripe for condemnation.

## What is Wilful Heresy?

It will be proper to note here, once and for all, that the misbelief which Our Lord and His Apostles condemn is unbelief that is wilful, obstinate, and perverse. If a person believes a false doctrine through no fault

of his own, obviously he cannot be condemned for such erroneous belief. Heresy, then, is of two kinds: it is either material or formal. To be in formal heresy is to maintain some pernicious error through one's own fault; material heresy means adhesion to religious error through mere ignorance. Formal heretics are Christians who deliberately choose false doctrine, or who culpably adhere to the false doctrines of the sects. Christians who reject some article of faith through mere ignorance, or who belong to some heretical sect through simple ignorance, are in material heresy, and are so far blameless.

The heresy which is so scathingly condemned by Our Lord and His Apostles is always formal, culpable heresy. Such heresy may be defined as the obstinate rejection of any revealed truth proposed to us by Holy Church. God alone can know whether or not the heretical opinions of any individual are wilful and culpable. Still, we like to think, with Professor Devas, that among Protestants "it is the exception, and not the rule, that heresy or schism is the responsible act of the individual dissident." In his Allocution of December, 1854, Pius IX. explained how "it is held as certain that those laboring under invincible ignorance of the true religion are not in this matter blameworthy in the eyes of God. And who is the man so presumptuous as himself to lay down, according to national, local, or personal character, and a host of other circumstances, the limits of this ignorance?"

We like to think that, in the case of multitudes of Protestants, heresy is a mere irresponsible inheritance, not a wilful act of unbelief. We gladly grasp at the welcome possibility that such Protestants are only in name and appearance outside the membership of the Visible Church, but are in reality invisible members. Still, God knoweth the heart; He alone knows whether individual Protestants are in good faith or in bad; He alone knows whether any given individual remains outside the Church's fold through his own fault or not.

Deliberate and formal breach of unity remains what it always was; deliberate and formal heresy has ever been, and still is, a heinous crime. Against its authors and abettors the Church ceases not, and never will cease, to pronounce her anathema.(21) Her anathema is simply an echo of the anathema which her Divine Founder and His Apostles have launched against all wilful heresy.

### **St. John Condemns Heresy.**

Even St. John, the apostle of charity, becomes unwontedly stern when he has to speak of heretics: "Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any man come to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him,

(21) Prof. Stanton Devas, "Key to the World's Progress," p. 61.

'God speed you.' For he that saith unto him, 'God speed you,' communicateth with his wicked works!' (II. John, 9-11.)

The ancient heresy which denied the reality of Our Lord's human nature seems less pernicious than the modern one which denies His Divinity. Yet the adherents of the ancient error were thus denounced by the inspired Apostle: "Many seducers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a seducer and an Antichrist." (II. John, 7.)

In the Apocalypse, St. John describes his prophetic vision of the fifth Angel who "opened the bottomless pit, and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth. And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power." (Apoc. ix., 2, 3.) By these "locusts with stings" (verse 10) some commentators understand heretics, who torment and infect the souls of men, stinging them, like scorpions, with the poison of their heresies. We have seen how the learned Brian Walton regarded the English sectaries of his time as the "locusts with stings" foretold in the Apocalypse.

### **St. Jude Condemns Heresies.**

The greater part of St. Jude's inspired Epistle is devoted to the stern denunciation of heretics and their methods. St. Jude at times reproduces, almost word



for word, the terrific indictment formulated against heretics by the Prince of the Apostles. "I was under a necessity to write unto you," says the Apostle to the faithful, "to beseech you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. For certain men are secretly entered in (who were written of long ago unto this judgment), ungodly men, turning the grace of Our Lord God unto riotousness, and denying the only Sovereign Ruler, and our Lord Jesus Christ." The ancient heretics denied Christ by denying His Divinity, or His human nature; modern heretics deny Him by rejecting His Divinity, or disbelieving in some of His doctrines, or refusing to belong to His Church.

Of such heretics St. Jude says: "These men also defile the flesh, and despise dominion, and blaspheme majesty. . . . These men blaspheme whatever things they know not; and what things soever they naturally know, like dumb beasts, in these they are corrupted. Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and after the error of Balaam . . . and have perished in the contradiction of Core." Heretics follow the way of Cain by murdering the souls of their brethren; the way of Balaam, by setting out to oppose and inveigh against the people of God; and the way of Core or Korah, by their opposition to the lawful pastors of the Church of God.(22)

St. Jude continues his tremendous condemnation of heretics thus: "These are spots in their banquets,

(22) See note on this verse in Rhemish Testament.

feasting together without fear, feeding themselves, clouds without water which are carried about by the winds, trees of the autumn unfruitful, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own confusion; wandering stars, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever. . . . These are murmurers, full of complaints, and their mouth speaketh proud things, admiring persons for gain's sake. . . .

“We told you that in the last time there should come mockers, walking according to their own desire in ungodliness. These are they who separate themselves, sensual men, having not the Spirit.

“But you, my beloved, building yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting.”

