

cannot but think that, in bringing the subject of Irish tolerance before the Almighty Father, we ought to have some regard to the fact that down to the present day, as between the two religions, the offence has been in the proportion of perhaps a hundred to one on the Protestant side and the suffering by it on the Roman side. At the present hour, I am pained to express my belief that there is far more of intolerance in action from so-called Protestants against Roman Catholics than from Roman Catholics against Protestants.'

JUBILEE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

POPE PIUS'S ENCYCLICAL LETTER

(Concluded from last week.)

THE KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF CHRIST.

Under these circumstances, Venerable Brethren, it is this end which all the solemnities that are everywhere being prepared in honor of the holy and Immaculate Conception of Mary should have in view. No homage is more agreeable to her, none is sweeter to her than we should know and really love Jesus Christ. Let then crowds fill the churches—let solemn feasts be celebrated and public rejoicings be made: these are things eminently suited for enlivening our faith. But unless heart and will be added, they will be all empty forms, mere appearances of piety. At such a spectacle, the Virgin, borrowing the words of Jesus Christ, would address us with the just reproach: 'This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me' (Matth x v., 8).

For to be right and good, worship of the Mother of God ought to spring from the heart; acts of the body have here neither utility nor value if the acts of the soul have no part in them. Now these latter can only have one object, which is that we should fully carry out what the divine Son of Mary commands. For if true love alone has the power to unite the wills of men, it is of the first necessity that we should have one will with Mary to serve Jesus Christ our Lord. What this most prudent Virgin said to the servants at the marriage feast of Cana she addresses also to us: 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye' (John ii, 5). Now here is the word of Jesus Christ: 'If you would enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matt xix., 17). Let them each one fully convince himself of this, that if his piety towards the Blessed Virgin does not hinder him from sinning, or does not move his will to amend an evil life, it is a piety deceptive and lying, wanting as it is in proper effect and its natural fruit.

If anyone desires a confirmation of this it may easily be found in

The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception

of Mary. For leaving aside tradition which, as well as Scripture, is a source of truth, how has this persuasion of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin appeared so conformed to the Catholic mind and feeling that it has been held as being one, and as it were inborn in the soul of the faithful? 'We shrink from saying,' is the answer of Dionysius of Chartreux, 'of this woman who was to crush the head of the serpent that had been crushed by him and that Mother of God that she had ever been a daughter of the Evil One' (Sent. d. 3, q. 1). No, to the Christian intelligence the idea is unthinkable that the flesh of Christ, holy, stainless, innocent, was formed in the womb of Mary of a flesh which had ever, if only for the briefest moment, contracted any stain. And why so, but because an infinite opposition separates God from sin? There certainly we have the origin of the conviction common to all Christians that Jesus Christ before, clothed in human nature, He cleansed us from our sins in His blood, accorded Mary the grace and special privilege of being preserved and exempted, from the first moment of her conception, from

All Stain of Original Sin.

If then God has such a horror of sin as to have willed to keep free the future Mother of His Son not only from the stains which are voluntarily contracted but, by a special favor and in prevision of the merits of Jesus Christ, from that other stain of which the sad sign is transmitted to all us sons of Adam by a sort of hapless heritage: who can doubt that it is a duty for every one who seeks by his homage to gain the heart of Mary to correct his vicious and depraved habits and to subdue the passions which incite him to evil?

Whoever moreover wishes, and no one ought not so to wish, that his devotion should be worthy of her and perfect, should go further and strive might and main to imitate her example. It is a divine law that those only attain everlasting happiness who have by such faithful following reproduced in themselves the form of the patience and sanctity of Jesus Christ: 'for whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren' (Romans viii., 29). But such generally is our infirmity that we are easily discouraged by the greatness of such an example: by the providence of God, however, another example is proposed to us, which is both as near to Christ as human nature allows, and more nearly accords with the weakness of our nature. And this is no other than the Mother of God. 'Such was Mary,' very pertinently points out St. Ambrose, 'that

Her Life is an Example to All.'

And, therefore, he rightly concludes: 'Have then before your eyes, as an image, the virginity and life of Mary from whom as from the mirror shines forth the brightness of chastity and the form of virtue' (De Virginit. l. ii., c. ii.).

Now if it becomes children not to omit the imitation of any of the virtues of this most Blessed Mother, we yet wish that the faithful apply themselves by preference to the principal virtues which are, as it were, the nerves and joints of the Christian life—we mean faith, hope, and charity towards God and our neighbor. Of these virtues the life of Mary bears in all its phases the brilliant character; but they attained their highest degree of splendor at the time when she stood by her dying Son. Jesus is nailed to the cross, and the malediction is hurled against Him that 'He made Himself the Son of God' (John xix., 7). But she unceasingly recognised and adored the divinity in Him. She bore His dead body to the tomb, but never for a moment doubted that He would rise again. Then the love of God with which she burned made her a partaker in the sufferings of Christ and the associate in His passion; with him moreover, as if forgetful of her own sorrow, she prayed for the pardon of the executioners although they in their hate cried out: 'His blood be upon us and upon our children' (Matth. xxvii., 25).

A HELP TO VIRTUE.

But lest it be thought that we have lost sight of our subject, which is the Immaculate Conception, what great and effectual succour will be found in it for the preservation and right development of those same virtues. What truly is the point of departure of the enemies of religion for the sowing of the great and serious errors by which the faith of so many is shaken? They begin by denying that man has fallen by sin and been cast down from his former position. Hence they regard as mere fables original sin and the evils that were its consequences. Humanity vitiated in its source vitiated in its turn the whole race of man; and thus was evil introduced amongst men and the necessity for a Redeemer involved. All this rejected it is easy to understand that no place is left for Christ, for the Church, for grace or for anything that is above and beyond nature; in one word the whole edifice of faith is shaken from top to bottom. But let people believe and confess that the Virgin Mary has been from the first moment of her conception preserved from all stain; and it is straightway necessary that they should admit both original sin and the rehabilitation of the human race by Jesus Christ the Gospel, and the Church and the law of suffering. By virtue of this Rationalism and Materialism is torn up by the roots and destroyed, and there remains to Christian wisdom the glory of having to guard and protect the truth. It is moreover a vice common to the enemies of the faith of our time especially that they repudiate and proclaim the necessity of repudiating all respect and obedience for

The Authority of the Church,

and even of any human power, in the idea that it will thus be more easy to make an end of faith. Here we have the origin of Anarchism, than which nothing is more pernicious and pestilent to the order of things whether natural or supernatural. Now this plague, which is equally fatal to society at large and to Christianity, finds its ruin in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception by the obligation which it imposes of recognising in the Church a power before which not only has the will to bow, but the intelligence to subject itself. It is from a subjection of the reason of this sort that Christian people sing thus the praise of the Mother of God: 'Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee' (Mass of Immac. Concep.). And thus once again is justified what the Church attributes to this august Virgin that she has exterminated all heresies in the world.