

THE MORALS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME:

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF MIDDLESEX,

At the Visitations

HELD AT ST. PAUL'S, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON,

ON THE 27TH & 28TH OF MAY, 1867.

BY THE VENERABLE

JOHN SINCLAIR, M.A., F.R.S.E.

ARCHDEACON OF MIDDLESEX,

VICAR OF KENSINGTON, &c.

London,

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE;

HIGH STREET,	TRINITY STREET,
Oxford.	Cambridge.

1867.

A
CHARGE,

§c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE temporal throne of the Roman Pontiff has for some years past been in a tottering condition, and would at once be overturned by his own misgoverned subjects, if they were not in dread of foreign intervention. But with regard to the lofty spiritual pretensions of the Papacy the case is different. These are put forth in their most exaggerated form, with an overbearing confidence calculated to astound and overawe the weak-minded.

The efforts of the Propaganda have for some years past been specially directed to this country. Money is nowhere wanting for Popish objects,—chapels, colleges, schools, and monastic institutions of all kinds, are rising up in every quarter of the kingdom. Even members of our own body have allowed themselves to be perverted. And already the Papal Hierarchy is triumphantly anticipating

the subjection of this country to the Apostolic See, and the exertion of its world-wide influence for the dissemination of Romish doctrine. "England," says Dr. Manning, in a recently published sermon, "England is the head of Protestantism; the centre of its movements, and the stronghold of its powers. Weakened in England, it is paralyzed every where; conquered in England, it is conquered throughout the world: once overthrown here, all is but a warfare of detail. All the roads of the whole world meet in one point, and this point reached, the whole world lies open to the Church's will. It is the key of the whole position of modern error."

Without enlarging on the various schemes of pacification and re-union with Rome, in which we are exhorted to accept of all or nearly all the errors that Rome has ever propounded, I may assume that there never was a time when it was more necessary, not only for ourselves, but for our people, to keep in mind what Popery is in respect of *doctrine*, *worship*, and *morals*.

On the numerous errors in *doctrine* and *worship*, of which the Romish Church is notoriously guilty, I have already spoken more than once from this place. Indeed all these corruptions have been abundantly exposed in widely circulated sermons, tracts, and treatises. But with regard to *morals*, I have long been of opinion that the principles inculcated by Popish teachers in writings widely

circulated and continually quoted as of the highest authority in that Church, are not sufficiently held up to reprobation; and that we thus put aside a formidable weapon, offensive and defensive, which the God of truth and purity has put into our hands, and of which, for the security of our people, it is our duty to avail ourselves¹. I propose, therefore, in this address, to illustrate the morals of the Church of Rome, by extracts from the writings of grave and learned casuists of that communion. I shall choose my authorities from various parts of Popish Christendom, and from various periods of its history: but you will find that all unite to form one compact phalanx of casuistical morality; and that the Church of Rome in this our day of boasted enlightenment is awfully responsible for them all.

Casuistry was little known in ancient times. We do not find it in the works of Plato or Aristotle, of Cicero or Epictetus, or of the earliest Christian moralists. This science, falsely so called, seems to have originated in the practice of auricular confession, and to have been introduced in times of barbarism and ignorance. In the confessional the most secret actions, and even thoughts, of every person who could be

¹ There are, no doubt, recently published works on this subject, written with much learning and ability; as, for instance, those of Mr. Paroissien, Mr. Meyrick, and Mr. Connelly; but they have not received the attention they deserve. The author cordially acknowledges his obligations to them.

suspected of departing in the smallest degree from the rules of Christian purity, were to be revealed to the confessor. It was the business of the confessor to inform his penitents whether, and in what respects, they had violated their duty, and what penance it behoved them to undergo, before he could absolve them.

Casuistry, however, is both futile and mischievous. Its object is to direct by precise rules what it belongs to feeling and conscience only to judge of. How is it possible to ascertain by rule the exact point at which in every case a delicate sense of justice begins to run into a frivolous and weak scrupulosity? Who can tell the exact point at which secrecy and reserve begin to grow into dissimulation? How far an agreeable irony may be carried, and under what circumstances a slight exaggeration begins to degenerate into a detestable lie? With regard to all such matters, what would hold good in any one case would scarcely do so exactly in any other, and what constitutes the propriety and happiness of behaviour varies in every case with the smallest variety of situation. Books of casuistry therefore are of little use to the penitent who should consult them in any difficulty, even supposing their decisions to be just. No doubt these books pretend to solve a vast multitude of the most difficult cases; one writer alone, whom I shall have occasion to quote, has actually

solved above six thousand. But the variety of possible circumstances is infinite; and therefore it is mere chance, if among these 6000 multifarious solutions we find a case exactly suited to our purpose. A man really anxious to do his duty must be very weak if he can imagine that he has much occasion for such guidance; and with regard to one who is negligent of his duty, the style of those writings is not such as is likely to give him greater strictness of principle. "None of them," says an eminent metaphysician of the last century, "tend to animate us to what is generous and noble. None of them tend to soften us to what is gentle and humane. Many of them, on the contrary, tend rather to teach us to chicanery with our own consciences, and, by their vain subtleties, serve to authorize innumerable evasive refinements with regard to the most essential articles of duty. The frivolous accuracy which they attempted to introduce into subjects which do not admit of it, almost necessarily betrayed them into those dangerous errors, and at the same time render their works dry and disagreeable, abounding in abstruse and metaphysical distinctions, but incapable of exciting in the heart any of those emotions which it is the principal use of books of morality to excite."

You will not be surprised that I should choose Romanism for the subject of this address; and

that having repeatedly warned you against neology and infidelity, I should now direct your attention to the opposite extreme.

I now proceed to show, that there is no commandment of the Decalogue, which a member of the Church of Rome, upon consulting grave and learned casuists of that communion, will not find himself enabled with a safe conscience to set aside.

Let me premise, however, that the Romish casuists do not all belong, as is sometimes erroneously imagined, to the Order of Jesuits. They have belonged to all religious Orders throughout Papal Christendom during upwards of three hundred years. Some were cardinals; some bishops; some professors of theology; some confidential advisers of Roman pontiffs. Alphonso de Liguori, a recently canonized prelate, gives the following triumphant enumeration of casuistical teachers,—*Regulares, Presbyteri, Episcopi, doctrinæ præstantia, ingenii acie, morum sanctitate conspicui; Angli, Galli, Hispani, Germani, Itali; Deus bone! quam inter se moribus atque indole discrepantes; Augustiniani, Dominicani; Scotistæ, Jesuitæ*².

Another point which I desire to premise is, that the Church of Rome has not only to answer generally for the teaching of the casuists, but is especially responsible for the moral principles of

² Theol. Moral., Cap. viii. 24.

the Jesuits. No doubt, in 1773 the Order was suppressed and abolished by Pope Clement XIV. among other reasons, "for propagating maxims that were scandalous and manifestly contrary to good morals." But in 1815 Pope Pius VII. issued a bull, reversing the decision of his infallible predecessor, re-establishing the Company of Jesus, and empowering them "freely and lawfully to educate youth in the principles of the Catholic faith, to form them to good morals, to erect colleges and seminaries, to hear confessions, and to preach the word of God." Of the large powers thus conferred by the Holy See the revived Society of Jesus has most diligently and successfully availed itself. The Jesuits have established numerous schools and colleges, not only throughout Papal Christendom and in Ireland, but even in Great Britain. Their influence is rapidly increasing throughout the whole Church of Rome. They direct the conscience of the Emperor of Austria; they are responsible for the recent concordats: and they have entirely governed the reigning Pontiff ever since his flight to Gaeta. And it deserves especial attention, that, according to Cardinal Wiseman, St. Alphonso de Liguori, their zealous partisan, has within the last few years been solemnly pronounced by the Romish Church the authorized exponent of what is right and wrong in human actions. In a life of Alphonso, edited by the Cardinal, we read the following

declaration : “ The works of S. Alphonsus not only do not contain any proposition whatever which can be called schismatical or scandalous, but also none which are either pernicious, erroneous, or rash ; the morals therefore of this saintly Bishop cannot be censured without setting up as a censor of authority itself ; without, in fine, censuring the decision of the Holy See.”

In illustrating the extent to which the casuists of Rome have tampered with the Decalogue, I begin with the second table of the law, and with the eighth commandment, which, as it establishes the rights of property, seems peculiarly difficult to explain away. But the task presents no difficulty whatever to the bold and ingenious doctor whom, in the first instance, I shall introduce to you as an authority. I refer to Antoninus Diana, a native of Palermo, born in 1595, who, though decidedly Jesuitical in his principles, was not himself a Jesuit. His voluminous works went rapidly through no fewer than seven editions ; he was “ consulted as an oracle,” not only by his own countrymen, but by foreigners even from the new world. He was Counsellor of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, *Sancti Officii Consultor*, in the kingdom of Sicily, and long held the high appointment of Examiner of Bishops, *Episcoporum Examiner* at Rome, where he enjoyed the entire confidence of three successive Popes, Urban VIII., Innocent X., and Alexander VII. The work which I am about

to quote, entitled “Practical Solutions of the most select cases of Conscience.” *Practicæ resolutiones lectissimorum casuum*, forms a highly authoritative and most elaborate compendium of Romish morals.

This “Examiner of Bishops” commenting on the sin of theft, informs us that “a man of respectability,” *vir honestus*, “to whom mendicancy would be highly painful, and who has no other means of supplying his necessities, is at liberty to steal.” *Vir honestus cui gravissimum esset mendicare, neque alia suppeteret ratio accipiendi necessaria, posset ea clam rapere*³.

Again, Diana insists, that although the owner of property should suffer grievously from numerous acts of petty larceny, yet, unless the thieves have stolen in concert, they are not guilty of mortal sin, because the mischief done by each is inconsiderable; *quia singuli*, he says, *leve damnum inferunt*.

He then proceeds to a very curious inquiry, what is the smallest sum a man must steal in order to be guilty of a mortal sin: and he determines that a man of opulence must steal about sixty Roman coins, a man of moderate fortune about twenty; and a poor man about seven. “It is alleged,” he adds, “by Rodriguez, that no theft amounts to a mortal sin, unless at least two golden pieces have been stolen: in which opinion, as regards the wealthy peculator, Sylvester coincides;

³ Ed. Antverpiæ, p. 338.

although Bannez considers both these authorities in this instance too indulgent,—*Hi nimis hic laxi sunt* ⁴.”

It thus appears that the Examiner of Bishops is not inordinately severe on those who take their neighbour's property. I have now to add, that he is not wanting in indulgence towards those who keep it. Not only does he specify a number of cases in which restitution is not required, but he lays down the general rule, that persons holding property by a doubtful title, may give themselves the benefit of that doubt. For they have possession in their favour: and possession is nine points of the law. *Melior est conditio possidentis* ⁵.

Another high authority for theft is Herman Busenbaum, a German Doctor of Divinity, who in a work published under the attractive title of “The Marrow of Moral Theology,” lays down, for the guidance of servants, some maxims as to honesty, which ought certainly to excite the vigilance of their employers. “If any servant prudently presumes that his master would be perfectly satisfied, or knows that if his master were asked, he would certainly give (the thing stolen) the servant does not greatly sin in stealing it ⁶.” I consider Busenbaum amongst the highest of Popish authorities. His “Marrow of Moral Theology” gained at once the most extraordinary popularity through-

⁴ P. 339.

⁵ P. 672, § 1.

⁶ Tom. ii. lib. iii. pars 1, tr. 5, c. 1.

out Papal Christendom. No fewer than fifty editions were rapidly disposed of; no doubt his doctrine with regard to regicide was condemned by the Parliaments of Toulouse and Paris; but his work retained its influence. It was enlarged by a learned French Divine, La Croix, and finally republished with an appendix by no other than St. Alphonso de Liguori himself; who dedicated the book to Pope Benedict XIV., and received in return a flattering letter of commendation.

St. Paul lays down the rule; *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*⁷. This exhortation to work honestly in order to have the means of charity, is ingeniously extended by Busembaum into a permission to work, either honestly or dishonestly for that purpose. Having laid down the maxim, that “an extremely poor man may steal what is necessary for the relief of his own want,” the Doctor continues; “And what any one may steal for himself, he may also steal for any other extremely destitute individual.” Busembaum proceeds to mention other approved writers, who advance still further in the same direction. “Lessius,” he says, “Dicastille, and Tamburin inform us, that he who should prevent another from stealing what he thus required, may be lawfully put to death by the needy purloiner”⁸.

⁷ Eph. iv. 28.

⁸ Ibid.

In the writings of Liguori the evasions of the commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*, are more systematically stated than even by Diana or Busembaum. He defines theft to be "the secret and unjust abstraction of what belongs to another, when the owner is reasonably unwilling." "*Invito rationabiliter domino*. Here in each case the question immediately arises, is the owner reasonable or unreasonable in his unwillingness to part with his possessions? Liguori states no less than five cases in which this unwillingness would be unreasonable, and in which the thief would be either wholly justified, or only guilty of a venial sin. By a venial sin, according to this high authority, we are to understand a sin which does not deprive of grace, and though it diminishes our love to God, does not diminish God's love to us⁹. One of the five cases in which theft is only a venial sin is extremely curious. "What if a nobleman," says Liguori, "is very much ashamed to beg or to work, can he make provision for himself out of other people's goods?" *An potest alienis sibi providere?* "The Salamanca doctors," he proceeds, "say No, with Soto and Prado; on the ground that this must rather be accounted a grave than an extreme necessity: temporal goods being ordained only for preserving life, not for sustaining honour. But Viva says, Yes;

⁹ Hom. Apost., tract. iii. 66.

and Roncaglia and Mazzotta, as well as Lessius, Palao, and Dicastille in Croix; so do Bannez and Serra. And this seems to me the more probable opinion, if he is so ashamed of begging that he would rather die than beg." Here we are reminded of a well-known passage in Holy Scripture, *I cannot dig*, says the unjust steward, *to beg I am ashamed*. "Ashamed to beg!" we may conceive Liguori to exclaim, "then you are at liberty to steal; the theft will only be a venial offence. It may diminish your love to God, but it will not diminish God's love to you¹."

Enough has now been quoted with reference to the eighth commandment. Let us next proceed to ascertain whether the sixth has been as successfully superseded by Roman Catholic moralists. In reference to this commandment, I find the following maxim in a summary of Moral Theology by the learned Portuguese, Henry Henriquez, who was alternately a Jesuit and a Dominican, and died in 1608. "If an adulterer," he says, "even a priest, reflecting upon the danger, has entered the house of an adulteress, and being attacked by her husband, kills his aggressor in the necessary defence of his life or limbs, he is not to be regarded as irregular." *Si occidat invasorem pro necessaria vitæ aut membrorum defensione non videtur irregularis*².

¹ See Meyrick on S. Alphonso's "Theory of Theft."

² Lib. xiv., de Irregularitate, c. 10, § 3.

Stephen Fagundez, Professor of Theology at Lisbon, in 1645, in his celebrated work on the precepts of the Decalogue, goes beyond Henriquez, and does not hesitate to sanction in certain cases the crime of parricide. "Christian and Catholic sons," he informs us, "may accuse their father of the crime of heresy, if he attempts to turn them from the faith, although they may know for certain, that he will be burned to death for it. And not only may they refuse him food, should he attempt to turn them from the Catholic faith, but they are also justified in killing him." *Poterunt juste occidere*³.

Liguori, in his commentary on the sixth commandment, discusses at some length the curious question, "What must be the value of the article stolen, to justify the owner in killing the thief?" *Quantus debeat esse valor rei, ut liceat furem interficere*. He decides at once that the article must be "of great value." But then, what value is to be accounted "great?" In reply, he quotes the decision of Pope Alexander VII., that it is unlawful to kill a thief for the sake of one golden piece. He next adverts to Soto and others, who affirm that a thief must not be killed on account of less than four or five golden pieces. It may however be objected that even four or five golden pieces do not amount to a sum "of

³ Tom. i. lib. iv. c. 2, n. 7, 8.

great value.” He therefore has recourse to the remark of Cardinal Lugo and the Salamanca doctors, that owing to the depreciation of money, five golden pieces in the days of Soto were of greater value than ten in later times⁴. This is the kind of infinitesimal preciseness, which moral rules do not admit of, but in which casuists delight.

The following passage from Father Launy, deserves especial attention: “An ecclesiastic or a monk may slay any one who threatens to accuse publicly his community, or even himself, of scandalous offences, provided there be no other means of preventing the scandal; as, for instance, when the accuser, unless promptly put an end to, would immediately proceed to publish his accusation. For, as it would be justifiable for the accused party, whether layman or ecclesiastic, to kill a person aiming at his life, so is it equally justifiable to kill a person aiming at the destruction of his honour, or the honour of the fraternity he belongs to⁵.”

In one of the narratives of remarkable crimes, compiled from official records by Anselm von Feuerbach, chief justice of Bavaria, and published in 1839, the licence here given to murder by Father Launy, receives a startling application.

A Jesuit priest, named Francis Riembauer,

⁴ Lib. iv. tract iv.

⁵ T. v. Disp. 38, n. 118.

whose mistress, Anna Eichstaedter, had repeatedly extorted money by threatening to denounce him as a seducer and the father of her child, resolved at last to anticipate her accusation by putting her to death. "I often reflected," he says, in his confession some years afterwards, "on the principle laid down by my old tutor, Father Benedict Sattler, in his '*Ethica Christiana*,'—a principle which he often explained to his young clerical pupils, that it is lawful to deprive another of life, if that be the only means of preserving one's own honour and reputation. For honour is more valuable than life, and if it be lawful to protect one's life by destroying an assailant, it must obviously be lawful to use similar means to protect one's honour."—"My case," he adds, "appeared to me to fall precisely within this principle." Accordingly, when Anna Eichstaedter came once more to threaten him, he cut her throat with a razor; but he afterwards, as he himself declares, took comfort in reflecting, that while her blood still issued from the wound, and before life was quite extinguished, he had the privilege, as a priest, of pronouncing absolution upon his victim. The wretched murderer's comment on the transaction was:—"The end was good—the only means was by her death. Therefore, I cannot believe that it was a crime."

It would be difficult to imagine a more striking instance of a mind perverted by casuistry than

the case of this Jesuit priest. According to the Bavarian rules of evidence, his guilt could not be established without confession; but he actually persevered during an imprisonment of four years in maintaining his innocence. He endured no less than ninety-nine formal examinations, besides being confronted "on innumerable occasions," as the chief justice expresses it, with separate witnesses. The depositions against him filled no less than forty-two folio volumes. His denials were confirmed by the most solemn asseverations that language could supply. On one occasion, after having examined him for eight successive hours, the judge suddenly raised a cloth, under which lay a human skull. "This," he said, "is the skull of Anna Eichstaedter, still remarkable by these rows of beautiful teeth." The prisoner started, but soon resumed his tranquillity, and exclaimed, addressing the skull, "O, if you could speak, you would prove my veracity." It was only when his health began to fail, that a full confession was extorted from him.

I am grieved and ashamed to add, that according to the Bavarian chief justice, himself a Roman Catholic, the "*Ethica Christiana*" of Father Sattler, in six large volumes, was in 1839, when the foregoing narrative was published, a favourite text-book in many places of ecclesiastical education, throughout the south of Germany.

The foregoing quotations abundantly demon-

strate the fatal success with which the eighth and sixth commandments have been explained away by Romish casuists. Proceeding now to the ninth, which forbids lying, false-witness, equivocation, and mental restriction or reservation, I may remark, that according to some Romanists the stubborn veracity and straight-forwardness of an Englishman render him incapable of doing justice to foreign moralists, or of appreciating those nice distinctions on which the obligation to speak the truth depends. Accordingly it is perhaps in reference to this commandment that to English eyes and ears Romish morality appears to greatest disadvantage.

I may here begin by quoting the most renowned of Spanish casuists, Francis Suarez, who, if his works were only as valuable as they are voluminous, would be an inestimable writer. In the second of the twenty-three folio volumes of his works, he makes this surprising announcement :—"It is not intrinsically wrong to use equivocation, even in making oath; false-swearing therefore is not always perjury." *Non est intrinsecè malum uti amphibologia, etiam jurando: unde nec semper est perjurium* ⁶.

It has been objected to the renowned Jesuit, Thomas Sanchez of Cordova, my next authority,

⁶ Operis de Virtute et Statu Religionis, tom. ii. Lugduni, 1614. (Moguntiaë, 1623. Ed. Coll. Sion.) Lib. iii., de Juram. præcept. et Peccatis contrar. c. 9, assert. 1, n. 2.

that his disputation on holy matrimony, intended as a manual for confessors, is deserving of severe animadversion, but no objection, that I know of, has been made to his decision in the following very delicate case. "A man urged to take a woman for his wife, whom he is not compellable to marry, may swear that he will take her, by making the mental reservation within himself, 'If I am obliged,' or, 'If she should afterwards please me.'"

Again, in another passage, the same high authority gives a more sweeping sanction to false-swearing. "A man," says he, "would not sin mortally, who, influenced by his reverence for an oath, and from scruple, should feign to swear, so that the bystanders and the notary might think that he actually did so." *Ita ut astantes et tabellio intelligerent eum jurare.*

Leonard Lessius allows, if possible, still greater latitude to perjury. His words are, "From what has been said it follows that there is no obligation to swear according to the meaning of the judge, but equivocation and mental reservation may be used." *Ex dictis sequitur primo, non teneri jurare ad mentem judicis, sed posse uti amphibologia vel mentali restrictione.* This wholesale advocate of equivocation is a very high Romish authority. So precocious were his talents, that as a boy he was called the "prophet," and as a young man, "the prince of philosophers." He acquired

such extraordinary celebrity during the thirty-eight years of his professorship of Theology at Louvain, that Pope Urban VIII. paid "splendid testimony" to his merits; and it is stated that on his death his hair, his nails, and the fingers with which he wrote his admirable works, were zealously contended for by the devotion of his followers.

Diana also gives some curious reservations, under which a man may swear to a known falsehood without incurring the guilt of perjury. He may for instance swear that he has not been at a place falsely supposed to be infected, although in fact he has just arrived from that very place: or again, having fallen into the hands of banditti, he may swear that he will pay a ransom, which he has no intention to give: when he makes a *cessio bonorum*, he may swear that he has not concealed any of his effects, provided he has only hidden what his necessities require. An adulteress may swear that she has not admitted an adulterer, meaning on a different day from that on which she actually admitted him. "To use equivocations of this kind," says Diana, "even with the sanction of an oath, is not a mortal sin." *Eljusmodi equivocationibus uti, addito etiam juramento absque causâ, non est peccatum mortale*⁷.

We have not yet made reference to the fifth

⁷ P. 26.

commandment, which, you will observe, is very summarily disposed of by the learned Charles Anthony Casnedi. So far from requiring the son to honour and support his parents, and prolong their lives, he is careful to instruct his young disciple how far and under what circumstances he may desire his father's death. "I may," he says, "desire my father's death either as an evil to my father (in which case the desire is unlawful) or as an advantage to myself, in which case it is permissible; provided I rejoice simply in the *good* which I derive from my father's death, and not in his death by which I procure the good^s."

In reference to the seventh commandment I may observe, that there is scarcely any abomination which these fomentors of evil do not justify or extenuate. In the works of Antoninus Diana alone there are passages relating to adultery, fornication, and lasciviousness of every kind, which almost exceed belief.

And it is a melancholy fact, that, hateful as are the maxims of Romish casuists on this subject, the questions which it is the duty of confessors to ask are still more atrocious. No wonder that such men as St. Thomas Aquinas, John Gersom, and St. Carlo Borromeo should acknowledge the repugnancy with which a confessor, still retaining some sense of decency, must give utterance to

^s Crisis Theologica, tom. v. 1719, Disp. 13, par. 4, n. 169.

interrogatories suggestive of so much evil. Some of you may still remember the astonishment and horror of the British public when the writings of Peter Dens, the standard work on morals in certain Roman Catholic seminaries of Ireland, were first exposed to animadversion some years ago.

St. Alphonso de Liguori, on the authority of Francolini, actually justifies the printing of obscenities, on the ground that they are not more offensive to decency than the questions which confessors are bound to put to young persons. *Pueris et puellis hujusmodi fœditatum prorsus ignaris, et utiliter ignaris.*

It may be said that the commandments above treated of all belong to the *second* table of the law, and that it is the *first* table which Ecclesiastical writers may be expected to consider especially sacred and inviolable. I proceed, therefore, to show, that the first table is as boldly set aside by Romish doctors as the second.

Is love declared to be the fulfilling of the law? Does our blessed Lord sum up the first four commandments in the precept, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?* This plain rule is thus ingeniously superseded by Doctor Gordon, Rector of the Colleges of Toulouse and Bourdeaux, and Confessor to Louis XIII.: "Having thus," he says, "established the obligation of this commandment (the love of God), we must next inquire when it is binding. I think," he con-

tinues, "that the time when this precept is binding cannot easily be pointed out. Unquestionably it is binding; but at what precise *time* is uncertain." *Certum quidem est esse obligationem, sed de tempore definito satis incertum*⁹.

Busenbaum gives a similar exemption respecting the duty of loving God: provided the sacrament of penitence be piously received, and adds with great triumph: "This is the privilege of the new grace which Christ has imparted, that by virtue of the sacrament of penance, justification may be obtained even without love." *Et hoc est privilegium novæ gratiæ, quam addidit Christus, ut etiam sine amore possit vi sacramenti obtineri justificatio*¹.

Again, Is idolatry forbidden by the first table of the law? The most extravagant idolater could not desire a more unrestricted licence for the transgression of the second commandment, than he receives from the renowned Gabriel Vasquez. This author, who is held up to admiration by Antoninus Diana, as "the Phoenix of minds, and as *instar omnium*, gives the following decision: "All inanimate and irrational things may be legitimately worshipped." And again, "Why may we not safely adore and worship together with God,

⁹ Theol. Moralis Universa Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1634 (Ed. Bibl. Acad. Cant.), tom. ii. lib. vi. quæst. 13, c. 4, art. 2, n. 8.

¹ Theol. Moralis (Ed. Mus. Brit.), tom. vi. lib. vi. pars 11, tr. iv. c. 1, dub. 2, de Contritione, quæst. 119, n. 865.

any thing whatsoever of this world? For God is in it according to His essence."

Again, are the crimes of Ecclesiastics especially a violation of the first table of the law? Antonio Escobar y Mendoza, a learned Spaniard, generously allows them all the immunity they could desire. This indefatigable Jesuit, with the benevolent view of "smoothing the way to salvation," published no less than sixteen volumes folio on morals and divinity. And certainly in the following passage he "smoothes the way" for a Popish Priest, in spite of *all* the commandments. "A man of a religious order," he says, "who for *a short time* lays aside his habit for a sinful purpose, is free from heinous sin, and does not incur the penalty of excommunication."

We have here a large measure of indulgence; but a question might arise, for what period exactly a priest might assume the proposed incognito. Escobar therefore most considerately adds: "I am of this opinion, and I extend that *short time* to the space of *one hour*." *Idem sentio, et breve illud tempus ad unius horæ spatium traho.* "A man of a religious order, therefore," he continues, "who puts off his habit for this assigned space of time, does not incur the penalty of excommunication, although he should lay it aside, not only for a sinful purpose, as to commit fornication, or to thieve, but even *ut incognitus ineat lupanar*²."

² Universæ Theologiæ Moralis receptiores absque lite sen-

The same indulgent opinion is expressed almost in the same words by Antoninus Diana.

Again, Is blasphemy a breach of the first table of the law? Diana, on the authority of Ricciulus, gives express directions how to blaspheme without sin. The common swearer, he observes, has only to omit the final letter of the word which in Italian signifies God, namely, Dio, and he is not in that case liable to censure. *Omissâ litterâ O, non est censendus blasphemus hæreticalis* ³.

But blasphemies are often uttered in a state of intoxication, and the convenient rule established by the confidential adviser of three successive Pontiffs might through inadvertency be forgotten or overlooked. Diana, therefore, considerably insists, that habitual blasphemy committed in a state of drunkenness is excusable, although foreseen, nay, even intended by the blasphemer. *Blasphemia non est reservata quæ profertur in ebrietate, etsi esset prævisa, immo et intenta* ⁴.

Nor is this all: Diana gives a further security to the blasphemer. He informs us that blasphemy is not to be regarded as a public, and therefore mortal sin, unless the blasphemous words are uttered in presence of at least six persons not belonging to the family. *Non censetur publica,*

tentiæ problematicæ disquisitiones, tom. i. probl. 44, n. 213. Lugduni, 1652 (Ed. Bibl. Acad. Cant.).

³ Blasphemia, No. ii. p. 60.

⁴ P. 61.

nisi profertur saltem coram sex qui non sunt de familiâ: “for,” says he, “what is said before five only, is almost said in private.” *Nam penè occultum dicitur quod sit coram quinque*⁵.

Once more, Is it inconsistent with the first table of the law to describe the God of truth as addicted to equivocation? John Marin, in his work on Moral Theology, published at Venice in 1720, makes this startling declaration; “God can speak equivocally for a righteous purpose, and a righteous purpose is often found⁶.”

The foregoing quotations are but a very small portion of those I might bring forward from the same and other authors nearly as distinguished in Roman Catholic theology. I now proceed to remark that the casuistic rules and maxims I have laid before you, however dangerous to good morals, would be less alarming, if their evil tendency were not fearfully aggravated by two Popish doctrines which apply equally to the entire Decalogue, and at one fell swoop relieve those who adopt them from all scruple of conscience in breaking either the greatest or least of the commandments. I refer to the doctrine of *probability* and to the doctrine of *obedience*.

The doctrine of probability may be thus explained. In ordinary speech, when an opinion

⁵ Diana, p. 61.

⁶ Theol. Spec. et Moralis, tom. ii. Venetiis, 1720. Tr. 14, de fide Divinâ, disp. v. § 1, n. 9.

seems more likely to be true than false, it is called a probable opinion : but in the language of Rome an opinion is said to be probable, even when it appears more likely to be false than true ; provided only that it is not palpably false, but has some tolerable show of evidence or argument in its favour. And Romish Doctors maintain, that when two courses are open to you, although the opinion that the one course is right appear to you more probable than the opinion that the other is so, you are at liberty, notwithstanding, to take either course, and to choose the less probable in preference to the more probable opinion. This latitudinarian doctrine, it must be evident, gives those who embrace it a most convenient liberty of action, and is therefore strenuously asserted by the casuists of Rome. Hear the learned Henry Henríquez : “A scrupulous man continues safe, when he prefers, in opposition to his own scruples, the opinion which he considers probable or likely to be true, although he may think another more likely. And the confessor, suppressing his own opinion, should conform himself to that of the penitent, by which the latter is excused from sin before God’.”

To the same effect is the decision of Valerius Reginald ; a renowned moralist whose *Præcis Fori Pœnitentialis* was first published at Lyons in 1620.

⁷ Summæ Theologiæ, tom. i. Venetiis, 1600. Lib. xiv., de irregul. c. 111, n. 3.

“We are not forbidden to adhere to that which we verily believe probable and safe, because the contrary may appear more probable and more safe.” *Illud quod bonâ fide putamus probabile tutumque esse, non prohibemur amplecti, eo quod contrarium ipsius videatur probabilius et tutius*⁸.

“It would,” says Stephen Fagundez, in his *tractatus in quinque ecclesiæ precepta*, “It would be an insupportable burden upon the consciences of men, and liable to many objections, if we were compelled to follow and examine the more probable opinions, and therefore learned men and discreet confessors, rejecting their own more probable opinion” (*relictâ propriâ opinione probabiliori*), “may guide the consciences of their penitents according to the opinion of the latter, which they consider probable.”⁹

To these testimonies I must add the judgment of Diana. “It is lawful,” says he, “to give up the more probable and safe opinion, and to follow one that is probable and less safe.” *Licet relictâ opinione probabiliori et tutiori, sequi probabilem et minus tutam*. And he assigns the reason: *prudenter agit qui ex opinione probabiliori operatur*.

⁸ Praxis Fori Pœnitentialis. Lugduni, 1620. Coloniae Agr., 1622. Tom. i. lib. xiii. c. 10, § 1, n. 96.

⁹ “Intolerabile esset onus conscientiarum, ac multis scrupulis expositum, si opiniones probabiliores sequi et investigare teneremur; et ideo viri docti et confessarii prudentes possunt, relictâ propriâ opinione probabiliori, consulere conscientiiis pœnitentium juxta illorum opinionem, quam probabilem judicant.” Præcept. 2, lib. iii. c. 4, n. 3.

The grounds on which the opinion of one grave and learned doctor is held by Romish casuists to be sufficient, are the following: "A person," we are told, "who is especially devoted to the study of a given subject, would not embrace an opinion if he had not good and sufficient reasons." And again, "A probable opinion is that which has weight and foundation; now the authority of a wise and pious man is not a trifle, but is rather a matter of serious consideration."

It follows therefore, that if you are only able to allege such high authorities as Diana, Suarez, Busembaum, Peter Dens, or Liguori, you are perfectly safe. If you can only prove that any one of these eminent authorities has given his sanction to the act of theft or robbery; of equivocation, lying, or perjury; of fornication or adultery; of manslaughter, regicide, or murder; of idolatry or profaneness, which you design to commit, you are then entitled to commit it; no confessor will venture to refuse you absolution. If he refuse, he refuses at his peril; he will be guilty of a mortal sin. For what says the learned Father Bauny? "When the penitent acts upon the authority of a probable opinion, the confessor *must* absolve him, even though his own opinion differ from that of the penitent. To refuse absolution to a penitent for an act committed in pursuance of a probable opinion, is an offence in its very nature mortal."

Thus far with reference to the doctrine of

probability. I need not detain you long with the other Popish doctrine, that of *obedience*, which I mentioned as aggravating the dangerous tendency of the loose maxims inculcated by the Church of Rome. The extent to which baptized persons ought to yield obedience to the infallible successor of St. Peter is thus announced by the most renowned of all advocates of the Papacy. "The Church," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "is inviolably bound to believe that to be morally good which the Sovereign Pontiff commands, and that to be morally bad which he forbids." As the whole Church is bound to obey the Pope, so each individual member must yield obedience to a confessor. "Let him that desires to grow in godliness," says St. Philip Neri, "give himself up to a learned confessor, and be obedient to him as to God. He that thus acts is safe from having any account to render of all his actions. The Lord will see to it, that his confessor leads him not astray¹."

On this principle, Cardinal Wiseman, relieving individuals from all personal responsibility, insists on "the obligation" of every baptized man, "to submit himself to the direction of another in whatever concerns his soul." Here the Cardinal follows Liguori, who pledges himself that "none shall fail of salvation who observe this rule of obedience." And since his Eminence affirms that

¹ Quoted by Liguori, and by Connelly, p. 6.

no man can censure the moral teaching of this Saintly Bishop (Liguori), without setting up as a censor “of authority itself; without, in fine, censuring the decision of the Holy See,” we can easily conceive what kind of confessor the Cardinal had in view; doubtless, some disciple of the “Saintly Bishop;” some eulogist, like him, of the casuistic advocates of probability. I cannot here find words more appropriate than those of our own Jeremy Taylor: “A probable Doctor may rescind all the laws of Christendom, and expound all the precepts of the Gospel in easy senses, and change discipline into liberty, and confound interests, and mingle all things, sacred and profane. Because if any one says it is lawful, all that have a mind to do evil things may choose him for their guide, and his opinion for their warranty².”

In the foregoing discussion, you will observe, my Reverend Brethren, that I have remarked upon the moral axioms, not of ordinary teachers, writing on their own responsibility, but of select champions, publishing their mischievous dogmas under the highest ecclesiastical sanctions,—a “Saintly Bishop,” an “Oracle of the Church,” a “Juvenile Prophet,” a “Prince of Philosophers,” an “Examiner of Bishops,” a “Phoenix of Minds,”—professors of Christian ethics in the most celebrated Popish universities, Cardinals, beatified saints, as well as confidential advisers of Christ’s Vicar upon earth. Liguori complains that when

² Works of Bishop Taylor, vol. xiii. p. 79.

the Lutherans and Calvinists *in Catholicam ecclesiam debacchari cœpere*, they were actually so ridiculous, as to accuse the casuistical theologians of relaxing the rules of morality. In his voluminous works he is continually quoting the very worst among the authors I have referred to, as “pious, learned, and saintly men;” he declares that during previous centuries the Church had been exceedingly assisted, *vehementer adjuta*, by their diligence. He says we must either affirm the reading of the casuists to be useful, and their authority of no small account, or else confess that all the Bishops, Cardinals, and Pontiffs during upwards of three hundred years were beside themselves. *Fateamur necesse est Episcopos, Cardinales, Pontifices a trecentis amplius annis insanisse*. He especially exposes the absurdity of attributing to Benedict XIV. (*Pontifici post avorum memoriam doctissimo*) the patronage of lax authors. He shows that the strictest of Romish writers are perpetually quoting the laxest of the casuists—the Sanchezes, the Tamburinis and the Vivas. He contends, that if all the casuists are to be discarded because certain of them have in certain passages been in error, all the Fathers must be set aside. *Proh stultissimam consecutionem! quæ si vim habere dicatur, patres omnes improbandos esse, abjiciendosque cur non dicamus*³? To sum up all, he declares, that if we do not hold the casuists in reverence, the

³ Cap. vii. p. 121.

inevitable result will be, that we shall deliver up the Church to be destroyed, and all things sacred to be trodden under foot by Lutherans, Calvinists, and other pests of that description. *Lutheranis, Calvinianis, et ceteris ejusmodi pestibus, Romanam ecclesiam proscendendam sanctaque omnia proculcanda demus, necesse est*⁴. So much for the assertion that the Church of Rome is not responsible for the moral teaching of the casuists.

Before concluding these remarks, I am bound to admit that, as there was a temporary reaction against the Jesuits in the days of Clement XIV., so also there was a temporary reaction against the casuists, in favour of decency and good morals, during the pontificate of Innocent XI. That Pontiff, so notorious for his personal immorality, appears to have been startled by the then recently published Provincial Letters of Pascal; and he condemned by a special Bull no fewer than sixty-five pre-eminently scandalous maxims inculcated by Popish moralists.

It must, however, have been distressing and humiliating for Innocent and his conclave to be under the necessity of solemnly condemning such atrocious abominations as the following—abominations published by distinguished members of their own communion: That a judge may pronounce a decision contrary to his own opinion; *juxta opinionem etiam minus probabilem*:—that a son, having regard to the great

⁴ Ibid.

riches he will thereby acquire, may rejoice at the murder of his parent, committed by himself in a state of drunkenness; *licitum est filio gaudere de parricidio parentis a se in ebrietate perpetrato*:—that a mother in no case incurs the guilt of homicide by procuring an abortion; *ac consequenter dicendum erit in nullo abortu homicidium committi*:—that, as regards our duty towards our neighbour, the inward sentiment of love is not required, outward acts being sufficient; *præcepto proximum diligendi satisfacere possumus per solos actus externos*:—and further, that a servant does not incur the guilt of mortal sin by aiding and abetting his master in the violation of the seventh commandment, provided he is influenced by dread of grievous mischief to himself; as for example, *ne a domino male tractetur, ne torvis oculis aspiciatur; ne domo expellatur*. I think you will agree with me, that the worst of Heathen moralists would have blushed to be under the necessity of warning his disciples against maxims such as these. The warning, however, although it ought to have been needless, was ineffectual. In the case of mental restriction or reservation, we have a singular instance of the success with which even an obnoxious decision of the Holy See itself can be defeated by casuistical ingenuity. No sooner was mental reservation condemned by Innocent, than the casuists divided it into two sorts, pure and not-pure. A pure mental reservation is, when the speaker gives no indication whatever that he is imposing upon the

party to whom he speaks. A not-pure mental reservation is, when the speaker gives some intimation, however slight or unintelligible, of the deception he is practising: a nod, a wink, or a cough is sufficient. The casuists contended that, although a pure mental reservation was forbidden by his Holiness, a not-pure mental reservation was allowed. It had long before been related of St. Francis of Assisi, that as he was one day walking, an individual passed by, whom he immediately recognized. Scarcely was this individual out of sight, when some pursuers came in quest of him, and asked St. Francis whether he had passed by. The Saint did not wish to say "Yea;" his conscience forbad him to say "Nay." In this dilemma he threw his arms into the air, brought his hands together, and in so doing pointed with his finger down his sleeve. He then answered with a safe conscience, "He has not passed *this* way." In a certain sense the answer was true. The individual in question had not gone down the Saint's sleeve. It was therefore, as Romish casuists alleged, a case of not-pure mental reservation, and consequently was allowable. So easily, on the essential point of truthfulness, was the Bull of Innocent defeated. I might advert to other similar evasions⁵. The Bull has since fallen almost entirely into oblivion. Some of you may have never heard of it, nor seen it quoted. How melancholy the reflection, that, as Pius VII., by reviving the Order of Jesuits in 1815,

⁵ See Meyrick on Liguori's Theory of Theft.

undid the good work of Clement XIV., so the same Pontiff about the same time undid the good work, such as it was, of Innocent XI., and by canonizing Liguori, gave the sanction of the Holy See to those triumphant eulogies on the casuists, which I have read to you from the pages of that "Saintly Bishop."

1. Such, my Reverend Brethren, are the morals of the Church of Rome. And the first inference I would draw from this fact is, that since these are not the morals of the Bible, the Church of Rome is a corrupt communion, and its pretensions utterly unscriptural and untenable. It is not without indignation as well as pity, that we contemplate any individual who has been trained up among us from his youth, and has learned Christian ethics from St. Paul, from St. Peter, and above all from the Saviour of men, resolving deliberately to join the Church of the casuists, and close the word of God for ever, in order to put his conscience in the keeping of some confessor, who draws his moral teaching from such authors as I have quoted.

2. Another point which I would urge is, the danger of auricular confession. All the frightful evils I have been exposing have originated in this plausible institution. The interrogatories of the confessor are destructive of all modesty and ingenuousness; and in proportion as we are compelled to know what is contained in Popish directions for the confessional, we shall regard with greater sympathy the millions of youthful victims to whom questions are required to be addressed,

respecting which even the greatest of Roman casuists, Liguori himself, admits that young persons of either sex may be altogether ignorant of them, and be the better for their ignorance : *Prorsus ignari, et utiliter ignari.*

3. It has been observed by philosophical moralists (Adam Smith in particular), that the only way in which the moral sentiments of mankind can be seriously perverted, is by false views of religion. The doctrine of retribution necessarily implies that every one shall receive hereafter, *according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* The Romish casuists, as we have seen, would admit bad men on easy terms into Heaven. And it must be our constant care to warn our people against similar delusions ; against any doctrine, from whatever quarter, which would make *Christ the minister of sin.* The most vehement, the most ostentatious Protestant profession, is by no means an infallible security against the antinomian tendencies of our fallen nature. Christ is our Mediator with God to obtain our justification. No act or merit on our part can have any share whatever in that great work of propitiation. But on the other hand, Christ is God's mediator with us, to re-establish the Divine authority in our hearts. This is a trust reposed in Him by the Father, and He will not betray it. He will not allow the casuistry of Popery or of Protestantism to set aside the Decalogue.

When, therefore, we are preaching the efficacy of

faith, we are bound to show that the only faith to be relied upon is a faith that worketh by love, purifieth the heart, and keepeth the commandments of God. Or again, when we are enlarging on the privileges of Baptism, we must make it clear, that unless Baptism leads to holiness, unless the promise of obedience leads to actual obedience, the ceremony is nugatory, and worse than nugatory. When, moreover, we are administering the Holy Communion to a dying person who receives it for the first time, we must give him fully to understand that this ordinance is no *viaticum*, no substitute for extreme unction, no passport to Heaven; and that it implies qualifications in the receiver, without which it is worse than useless. And, lastly, when you are discussing from the pulpit or in the sick chamber, the efficacy of a death-bed repentance, let there be no mistake. Be sure to show, with all possible emphasis and clearness, that repentance, to be effectual, implies a change of heart; that without this change of heart, no degree of fear, no extremity of sorrow, no assumption of confidence, no transport of joy, can avail; and that, try as we may, we never can invalidate those formidable truths, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord* ⁶; and that, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required* ⁷.

⁶ Heb. xii. 14.⁷ Luke xii. 48.

