

Christian Visitor.



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BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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THE DEAD.

The dead are everywhere!
 The mountain side, the plain, the woods profound;
 All the wide earth—the fertile and the fair—
 Is one vast burial ground.

Within the populous street,
 In solitary homes,—in places high,
 In pleasure domes, where pomp and luxury meet,
 Men bow themselves to die.

The old man at his door;
 The unweaned child murmuring in worldless song;
 The bondmen and the free, the rich, the poor,
 All—all to death belong!

The sunlight gilds the walls,
 Of kingly sepulchres enwrought with brass;
 And the long shadow of the cypress falls
 Athwart the common grass.

The living of gone time
 Builded their glorious cities by the sea,
 And awful in their greatness sat sublime,
 As if no change could be.

There was the eloquent tongue;
 The poet's heart; the sage's soul was there;
 The loving women with their children young,
 The faithful and the fair.

They were, but they are not;
 Suns rose and set, and earth put on her bloom,
 Whilst man, submitting to the common lot,
 Went down into the tomb.

And still, amid the wrecks
 Of mighty generations passed away,
 Earth's honest growth, the fragrant wild flower decks
 The tomb of yesterday.

And in the twilight deep,
 Go veiled women forth, like her who went,
 Sister of Lazarus, to the grave to weep,
 To breathe in low lament.

The dead are everywhere;
 Where'er is love, or tenderness, or faith,
 Where'er is pomp, pleasure, pride; where'er
 Life is, or was, is death.

Interesting from Malta.

This island, so distinguished for its connection with an interesting portion of the life of Paul, and by its later history, has recently become one of the most important points in the Mediterranean, from its evangelical relations to Italy. The "Indicator," a neat and able and religious monthly paper published in that island, has reached us by a recent arrival; and we have examined with much satisfaction, the numbers from August to January last. Our readers will remember the institution opened by Dr. Achilli in Malta, about a year ago, for the evangelical instruction of converted Italian priests. One of the most distinguished members of it is Dr. De Sanctis; and we cannot give a more correct acquaintance with the outline of his history, his character and position, than by trans-

lating from a letter we find in the Indicator of Jan. 1st, as follows:

LETTER TO THE VICAR-GENERAL OF ROME.

To the most eminent Cardinal Patrizi, Vicar General of Rome,—Luigi De Sanctis, formerly a parish priest in Rome, and now, by the grace of God, minister of the Italian Church—safety and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is a matter of duty for a parish priest who leaves his church, to render an account to his bishop, of the reasons why he has abandoned that portion of the flock submitted to him; and I wish not to be negligent of my duties. I have chosen to give my account to you through the press, because, having understood that my leaving the Roman Church has produced a great noise, not only in Rome, but wherever the news has been received, I wish to render public the reasons which constrained me to abandon Rome; for if any weak minds have been scandalized by it, they may believe what they read, and seriously reflect on the dangerous state of those who remain in that Church.

But I shall first set down certain principles in which we all are agreed, that the force of my conclusions may not be avoided. 1st principle—Man was created by God, and received from him an immortal soul; 2nd—After a short life that soul must enter eternity, to be either with God or far from him; 3d—To enter into happiness with God, he must have done the will of God in life; 4th—God has revealed his will by means of the patriarchs and prophets, his divine, only begotten Son, and his apostles—which will is exactly enregistered in the holy canonical books of the Old and New Testaments; 5th—Therefore true religion is that which is found in those holy books; and whatever religious system is not in the Bible, can be nothing but falsity and a lie: and whoever follows it is out of the way of salvation.

These principles were fixed in my heart from my earliest youth; but I deceived myself in drawing consequences. I believed that the Roman Catholic Church had drawn its system from the Bible: but after I had received the degree of Doctor in Theology, wishing to prove to my pupils that the religious system of Rome was that of the Bible, I began accurately to study that book divine, and to my greatest surprise, I not only did not find the dogmas of Rome, but those entirely opposite. Astounded by this discovery, I wished to turn back; but I had gone too far; I wished to return to my former simplicity, and sought to drive from me the thought that Rome was in error, and opened the Bible again and read those passages when compared have a sense very different from that which Rome attributes to them, my confusion increased. To these internal combats were added certain external circumstances, which more than ever opened my eyes. I then brought into more direct contrast the doctrines of Rome with those of the Protestant Church, and compared each with the Bible; and behold a very brief compendium of the result which I obtained.

I saw the Protestants scattering Bibles every where, with the greatest expense and labor; and I read the bulls of the Popes, who seek by every means to prevent Christians from reading the Holy Scriptures. Here then are two doctrines diametrically opposite to each other: the Protestants teach that the Bible ought to be read, and co-operate that it may be read; the Pope teaches that it ought not to be read, and rolls all his thunders against those who desire to read it in an intelligible language. Which of these two is right? Let us see what says the infallible oracle of God, Jesus Christ continually referred

men to the Holy Scriptures, and wished not only that they should read, but meditate on them with all attention; and said to the Pharisees: "Search the Scriptures." The people of Barea were praised by the apostles, &c. &c. Paul said to Timothy: "And do thou continue," &c. 2 Tim. 3, 14-17. "This same doctrine is plainly taught in many places in the Holy Scriptures, among which see. Ex. 13: 8, 9; Deut. 4: 2 and 6, 5-8; 17, 18, 19; 27: 1, 9-8; 11; 18-28; 27: 17-19; 24: 13, 14; and 30: 5, 6; Rom. 15: 4; 1 Tim. 13-16; without mentioning many other passages in which God teaches the same doctrine.

On this point, then, the Church of Rome is in contradiction to God, while the Reformed Church in teaching that it is necessary to read the divine word, and by providing, by means of the Bible societies, that all shall read it, does exactly what God himself teaches, and carries into effect his instructions. Let no man say to me that these proofs are not clear enough to show a precept placing all Christians under obligation; for, to deny the true and formal precept of God to read the Bible, is to deny that the sun has light and to place one's self in contradiction with all the Fathers of the Church, and the Roman Church, in denying this precept, contradicts herself since she teaches that the Holy Scriptures ought to be interpreted according to the exposition of the Holy Fathers, while the Fathers have interpreted, in no other manner the texts cited, but by the precept to read the Bible, which was made for all Christians; and perhaps there is no truth on which all the Fathers are so well agreed, for there is none who thought the contrary, or who has not found in the above texts a true precept.

"Observe," said a Roman theologian to me, when in my youth I expressed these my sentiments, "the Church does not prohibit the reading of the Bible absolutely, but the reading of the Bible translated by heretics, because they have corrupted it." How insulting this assertion is, clearly appears in what is done by Protestants and Roman Catholics; the Protestants print and distribute indiscriminately the translations of De Sacy, Martini and other Roman Catholics; and Rome indiscriminately condemns all those translations; the Protestants challenge Rome to show them the places in which they have falsified the Bible; and Rome is silent, because she cannot show a single one. In the thirteenth century, that is to say, three centuries before Luther and Calvin came into the world, Rome already thundered against the Bible.

"But the Bible," says Rome, "does not contain all that is necessary to salvation." (Council of Trent, Session 4th.) The Protestants say: "All that is necessary to salvation is to be sought in the Bible, and not elsewhere." Who are in the right? God says: "you shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." Then that which God has caused to be written is sufficient for salvation. [The same evidence is then drawn by the writer from Galatians 1: 8, 9.—Tr.] Here again I find the Protestants in the right.

"But the Scriptures are obscure," says Rome. "Scripture," says the Reform Church, "is most clear in all that which concerns eternal salvation. Let us see what it says on that subject.

In the 18th Psalm, according to the Vulgate, it is written: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," &c. In the 118th Psalm, verse 105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path;" and in the 130th verse "Thy word enlightens and instructs the

simple;" Peter urges us to attend to the words of the prophets, as to a lamp in a dark place.—If the Scripture is obscure, say Paul, it is so to those to whom the God of this world has blinded the eyes.

And I have found the Bible obscure, when I have sought to find in it the Mass, auricular confession, the celibacy of the priests, purgatory, indulgence, the primacy of the Pope, and all those wares of the Roman Church; but I have found it plain enough, when I have looked for the sacred laws of God, my Redeemer, Jesus Christ, at once God and man, the pardon of sins and justification by faith in Jesus Christ and other things necessary to salvation.

To say, then, that the Bible is obscure is openly to contradict the testimony of God himself; and therefore the Reformed Church, which asserts the clearness of the Bible in what relates to our eternal salvation, has the testimony of God in her favor, while Rome has it against her.

There is another difference between the Protestant Church and the Church of Rome, relative to the Scriptures; Rome says: "The Scriptures are not the only rule of faith, and that controversies should not be judged by them." The Reformed Church says: "The Scriptures are the only rule of faith, and all controversies in matters of faith ought to be decided according to the Scriptures." Now which of the two churches shows most respect for God and his holy Word, the Reformed Church, which places the Word of God as the foundation of its faith or the Roman Church, which lays the word of man in its place? The Reformed Church, which calls upon God, by means of his Word, to decide controversies in matters of faith; or the Roman Church, which, abandoning the Word of God, judges them herself in her own manner? "To the law and to the testimony," &c., says the Prophet. What would be said if the Auditor of the Apostolic Chamber should publish an order of all the judges in the pontificate to try no more causes by the code, but to pronounce judgement hereafter according to the decisions of the Roman tribunals, because the code is obscure incomplete, insufficient, ambiguous, full of blunders, and has a hidden meaning, which nobody can understand, and that the Italian language cannot express the sense of the legislator? If such an order were published, it would be said that the Auditor of the Reverend Apostolic Chamber, saving respect to his office, had become an idiot.

Now such, only worse, is the reasoning of Rome on the Holy Scriptures. The Bible, she says, is obscure and insufficient, because controversies of faith cannot be decided by the Scriptures alone, because about one hundred and fifty volumes must be consulted, which are the works of the Fathers, and about seventy more, which are the acts of councils and the bulls of popes, to find the decision of a controversy, and when you have gone through all these, with a patience that will consume your life, you will stand aghast at the contradictions which destroy one another, among those immense works.

Your Excellency, I have no hope of converting you; it would be the first example, so far as I know, of a Cardinal known to be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ; but I am bound to perform my last duty to you, viz., that of a eulogist rendering an account of his actions to his bishop. I shall then turn to you periodically with my letters, in which I shall simply expose to you the doctrines of Rome in manifest opposition to the holy Word of God, and to the doctrines of the Italian Church, to which, by the