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THE LIFE OF FATHER FABER.*

In the life of Father Faber there was no sudden and violent change from the excitement of worldly affairs to the quiet of the cloister, no striking intervention of divine Providence, such as that which in a single day converted Ignatius from a courtier to a saint. He suffered, it is true, from spiritual conflicts and that rupture of natural ties which for so many converts to the faith is little short of a species of martyrdom; but the tender piety which beams from all his maturer devotional works seems to have filled his heart from boyhood, and his progress from heresy to faith was like the gradual development of a seed planted in his breast in early youth. Yet it is hardly in the Faber family that we should have looked for a phenomenon like this. They were of Huguenot origin, and proud of their religious ancestry; and their exiled forefathers, who settled in England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, we may fairly presume were honored in the family as confessors of the faith. The grandfather of the subject of these pages was the Reverend Thomas Faber, vicar of

Calverley, in Yorkshire. Frederick William was born at the vicarage, on the 28th of June, 1814. His father, Mr. Thomas Henry Faber, was soon afterward appointed secretary to the Bishop of Durham, and removed with his family to the episcopal domain of Bishop Auckland. Durham had not yet lost its dignity as a County Palatine, and in the glories of the ancient city, where the bishop held his court with all the pomp and something of the power of royalty, there was much to impress a warm poetical imagination, like that of young Faber. The poetical faculty was afterward fostered by the beautiful scenery of the Lake country, when he was sent to school at Kirkby Stephen, in Westmoreland. There it was his chief delight to ramble alone among the hills and meres, and fancy the chases filled again with deer, the forests resounding with the hunter's horn, the ruined halls and castles resonant with feast and song, and the deserted abbeys vocal with prayer and chant. He shows his familiarity with this region in some of his published verses. Subsequently, he studied at Harrow, under Doctor Longley, afterward Archbishop of Canterbury, by whose kindness and influ-

* *The Life and Letters of Frederick William Faber, D.D., Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri.* By John Edward Bowden, of the same Congregation. Baltimore: John Murphy & Co. 1869.

REPLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLIES TO THE POPE'S LETTER.

“TO PIUS IX., BISHOP OF ROME :

“In your encyclical letter, dated Sept. 13th, 1868, you invite ‘all Protestants’ to ‘embrace the opportunity’ presented by the council summoned to meet in the city of Rome during the month of December of the current year, to ‘return to the only one fold,’ intending thereby, as the connection implies, the Roman Catholic Church. That letter has been brought to the notice of the two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Those assemblies represent nearly five thousand ministers of the gospel, and a still larger number of Christian congregations.

“Believing, as we do, that it is the will of Christ that his church on earth should be one; and recognizing the duty of doing all we consistently can to promote Christian charity and fellowship, we deem it right to say in few words why we cannot comply with your invitation, or participate in the deliberations of the approaching council.

“It is not because we reject any article of the Catholic faith. We are not heretics; we receive all the doctrines contained in the ancient symbol known as the Apostles’ Creed; we regard as consistent with Scripture the doctrinal decisions of the first six œcumenical councils; and because of that consistency we receive those decisions as expressing our own faith. We believe the doctrines of the Trinity and Person of Christ as those doctrines are set forth by the Council of Nice, A.D. 325; by that of Chalcedon, A.D. 451; and by that of Constantinople, A.D. 680.

“With the whole Catholic Church, therefore, we believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

“We believe that the Eternal Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; and so was, and continues to be, both God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever. We believe that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Prophet of God, whose teachings we are bound to receive, and in whose promises we confide. He is the high-priest

of our profession, whose infinitely meritorious satisfaction to divine justice, and whose ever-prevalent intercession is the only ground of our justification and acceptance before God. He is our King, to whom our allegiance is due, not only as his creatures, but as the purchase of his blood. To his authority we submit; in his care we trust; and to his service we and all creatures in heaven and earth should be devoted.

“We believe, moreover, all those doctrines concerning sin, grace, and predestination, known in history as Augustinian. Those doctrines were sanctioned by the Council of Carthage, A.D. 416; by a more general council in the same place, A.D. 418; by Zosimus, Bishop of Rome, A.D. 418; and by the third œcumenical Council at Ephesus, A.D. 481. It is impossible, therefore, that we should be pronounced heretical without including the whole ancient church in the same condemnation. We not only ‘glory in the name of Christians, but profess the true faith of Christ, and follow the communion of the Catholic Church.’ Still further to quote your own words, ‘Truth must continue ever stable and not subject to any change.’

“Neither are we schismatics. We believe in true ‘Catholic unity.’ We cordially recognize as members of Christ’s visible church on earth all who profess the true religion, together with their children. We are not only willing, but earnestly desire, to maintain Christian communion with them, provided they do not prescribe as a condition of such communion that we should profess what the word of God condemns, or do what that word forbids. If any church prescribes unscriptural conditions of fellowship, the error and the fault are with such church, and not with us.

“But, although neither heretics nor schismatics, we cannot accept your invitation, because we still hold the principles which prompted our ‘ancestors,’ in the name of primitive Christianity, and in defence of the ‘true faith,’ bravely to protest against the errors and abuses which had been foisted upon the church—principles for which our fathers were, by the Council of Trent, representing the church over which you pre-

side, excommunicated and pronounced accursed. The most important of those principles are the following :

"FIRST. That the word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The Council of Trent, however, demands that we receive, *patri pietatis affectu*, the teachings of tradition as supplementing and interpreting the written word of God. This we cannot do without incurring the condemnation which our Lord pronounced on the Pharisees when he said, 'Ye make void the word of God by your traditions.'

"SECOND. The right of private judgment. When we open the Scriptures, we find them addressed to the people. They speak to us ; they command us to search their sacred pages ; they require us to believe what they teach, and to do what they enjoin ; they hold us personally responsible for our faith and conduct. The promise of the inward teaching of the Spirit to guide men into the knowledge of the truth, is made to the people of God ; not to the clergy exclusively ; much less to any special order of the clergy alone. The Apostle John says to believers, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things ; and the anointing which ye have received of him abideth with you, and ye have not need that any man teach you.' (1 John ii. 20 and 27.) The Apostle Paul commands us (the people) to pronounce accursed an apostle, or an angel from heaven, who teaches anything contrary to the divinely authenticated word of God. (Gal. i. 8.) He makes the people the judges of truth and error as accountable to God only ; he places the rule of judgment in their hands, and holds them responsible for their decisions. Private judgment, therefore, is not only a right, but a duty, from which no man can exonerate himself or be exonerated by others.

"THIRD. We believe in the universal priesthood of believers ; that is, that all men have, through Christ, access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Eph. ii. 18.) They need no human priest to secure their access to God. Every man for himself may come with boldness to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. iv. 16.) 'Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, . . . and having a High-Priest over the house of God, we may all draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water,' (Heb. x.

19-22.) To admit, therefore, the priesthood of the clergy, whose intervention is necessary to secure for the people the remission of sins and other benefits of redeeming grace, we regard as involving either the rejection of the priesthood of Christ, or a denial of its sufficiency.

"FOURTH. We deny the perpetuity of the apostleship. As no man can be a prophet without the spirit of prophecy, so no man can be an apostle without the gifts of an apostle. Those gifts, as we learn from Scripture, are plenary knowledge of the gospel, derived by immediate revelation from Christ, (Gal. i. 12,) and personal infallibility in teaching and ruling. What are the seals of the apostleship, we learn from what St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, in wonders, in mighty deeds.' (2 Cor. xii. 12.) Modern prelates, although they claim apostolic authority, do not pretend to possess the gifts on which that authority was founded ; nor do they venture to exhibit the 'signs' by which the commission of the messengers of Christ was authenticated. We cannot, therefore, recognize them, either individually or collectively, as the infallible teachers and rulers of the church.

"Much less can we acknowledge the Bishop of Rome to be Christ's vicar upon earth, possessing 'supreme rule.' We acknowledge our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the only head of the church, which is his body. We believe that although now enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he is still present with his people on earth, whom he governs by his word, providence, and spirit. We cannot, therefore, put any creature in his place, or render to a man the obedience which is due to Christ alone.

"As the Church of Rome excommunicates all those who profess the principles above enumerated ; as we regard these principles to be of vital importance, and intend to assert them more earnestly than ever ; as God appears to have given his seal and sanction to these principles by making the countries where they are held the leaders in civilization—the most eminent for liberty, order, intelligence, and all forms of private and social prosperity—it is evident that the barrier between us and you is, at present, insurmountable.

"Although this letter is not intended to be either objurgatory or controversial, it is known to all the world that there are doctrines and usages of the church over which you preside which Protestants believe to be

not only unscriptural, but contrary to the faith and practice of the early church. Some of those doctrines and usages are the following, namely, The doctrine of transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass; the adoration of the host; the power of judicial absolution, (which places the salvation of the people in the hands of the priests;) the doctrine of the grace of orders, that is, that supernatural power and influence are conferred in ordination by the imposition of hands; the doctrine of purgatory; the worship of the Virgin Mary; the invocation of saints; the worship of images; the doctrine of reserve and of implicit faith, and the consequent withholding the Scriptures from the people, etc.

"So long as the profession of such doctrines and submission to such usages are required, it is obvious that there is an impassable gulf between us and the church by which such demands are made.

"While loyalty to Christ, obedience to the holy Scriptures, consistent respect for the early councils of the church, and the firm belief that pure 'religion is the foundation of all human society,' compel us to withdraw from fellowship with the Church of Rome, we, nevertheless, desire to live in charity with all men. We love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. We cordially recognize as Christian brethren all who worship, trust, and serve him as their God and Saviour according to the inspired word. And we hope to be united in heaven with all those who unite with us on earth in saying, 'Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' (Rev. i. 6.)

"Signed in behalf of the two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

"M. W. JACOBUS, PH. H. FOWLER,
"Moderators."

We will preface our remarks upon the foregoing document by a few words of explanation to our European readers respecting the bodies whose joint manifesto it is.

The Presbyterians of the United States are quite distinct from the Congregationalists of New England, the descendants of the English Puritans, although the two fraternize together to a great extent. The Presbyterian Church is the daughter of the Kirk

of Scotland, having its home in the Middle States, whence it has spread through the country, especially toward the West. Its government is more vigorous than that of any other church except the Methodist, and its doctrinal strictness surpasses that of all other large societies. Its clergy number about five thousand, having, we believe, somewhere near a half a million of communicants, and three or four times as many members in a looser sense. It is, on the whole, the first denomination as regards respectability, taking the country generally, and in all its periods of history; and, if we reckon its allies, the Dutch Reformed and Congregationalist societies, with it, as representing the Calvinistic phase of Protestantism, this is the system which has possessed the same vantage-ground in the British colonies of the United States that the Episcopal Church has taken in England.* Some thirty years ago, the Presbyterian body split into two great divisions by means of a dispute about rigid and moderate Calvinism, and rigid or lax enforcement of the Presbyterian polity. The two General Assemblies which recently met in this city adopted a plan of reunion which will probably receive general acceptance, and fuse the Old and New School Presbyterians together again in one body. The letter to the pope proceeds from the two assemblies, acting through their respective moderators in virtue of a resolution which passed both houses, which explains the fact that it is signed by two distinct presiding officers. With these few prefatory remarks, we pass to the consideration of the document itself.

We are very glad that the Presby-

* Besides the great bodies above mentioned, there are in the United States eight or ten other societies resembling the Presbyterian Church in order and doctrine, and numbering some hundreds of thousands of communicants.