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ON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Translated from the Latin of F. A. LAMPE, S. T. P.

[Continued from page 241.]

HAVING occupied so much time in considering the distinguishing title of the third person of the Sacred Trinity, we will now proceed to prove, *that He constitutes a true person, distinct by his personal attributes and works, both from the Father and the Son.*

I. The first argument in confirmation of this position is derived from the characteristic name of which we have been speaking. This name, whenever it is applied to an incorporeal substance, designates a rational being, possessed of understanding and will.

This name, moreover, is employed in such connexion with the names of the Father and the Son, that if it can be proved that these are persons, it will in like manner follow that the Holy Spirit is a person.

Thus, in Matt. xxviii. 19. baptism is directed to be administered in the name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, whence it is evident, that this name belongs to the third per-

*“ Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them. Here the personal pronoun *μοι*, and the verb *προσκέλευμαι*, used in the first person, do not permit us to understand any other than the Holy Spirit. By the pronoun we are taught, that He was the author and end of this separation; by the verb, that He had before manifested his design to the teachers of Antioch,*

[*To be continued.*]

FOR THE EVANGELICAL GUARDIAN AND REVIEW.

Some considerations explanatory of the promise of long life in the fifth commandment of the Decalogue, and illustrating that principle asserted in the second, of God's “visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.”

THE greater part of common readers of the Scriptures are prone to entertain confused notions of a prolongation of man's natural life being promised, in some way, in this commandment, to the individual who has been piously educated, and has approved himself as a dutiful and obedient son to his parents: but not being able to attach precise and definite ideas to the expressions in the text, content themselves with vague and indistinct fancies of some mysterious blessing with regard to life, to result from filial duty, without, however, daring to image to themselves, in any positive form, wherein it consists. The Westminster Assembly, wise and good men, say, that the words of the precept contain *a promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment.* This simply

recites a principle which is common to all the duties of the Christian life. They all imply some blessing; and, among others, a continuance of life, as far as it shall serve for God's glory, and the ultimate interest of the individual. But this commandment has evidently a reference to the peculiar blessing of the people of Israel, as a chosen nation, to whom the *promised land* was assigned, as a perpetual possession, under the special condition of their continuing obedient to the law, and walking in all the commandments of God, as delivered by Moses, and handed down, by a most holy tradition, from parent to son; the forms of which were prescribed with great precision, as forming part of the law of the land. *And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates.* And this exactness of Israelitish education was a principal ground on which the laws of parental authority, and of filial duty, equally rested; and on which the crime of disobedience was so severely punished, and the blessings of filial piety so superlatively magnified. It deserves particular notice, that the whole Mosaic law is prescribed imperatively in the second person, and in the singular number; because its obligation was especially extended to every individual, and the duty and piety of individuals constituted the prosperity of the nation by their protracted residence in the land that had been promised, on this condition, to their fathers. If it should be asked why this blessing of the long continuance of the nation on the promised land, was annexed peculiarly to the fifth law of the decalogue, and to the virtue of filial duty and obedience? It is, perhaps, because domestic instruction and discipline, and the *traditional virtue* of families, if I may call it so, was considered as the securest basis of the *public virtue*, which is always the most certain and impregnable bulwark of the national existence and prosperity. It was peculiarly the condition of the existence and prosperity of the nation of Israel. In every nation they form the firmest foundations of civil society. The whole

import of this law, and its consequent promise, may be embraced in the following proposition,—That while domestic piety and virtue are maintained, they are the surest pledges of the prosperity of that chosen people, and of their *long and happy continuance in the land which the Lord their God had given them*. It is a national promise and precept, only addressed to each individual, as constituting a part of the nation whom God had selected for handing down to posterity the purity of his worship, and the holiness of his law.

From the preceding reflections a general consequence results, of much importance to be well considered by individuals, and by the great communities of mankind. The dispensations of divine Providence, commonly proceed upon the *general laws* which God has established in the system of nature. Hence, no single virtue, nor even any settled course of virtues, forms any infallible security for individual length of life; but for the permanence of nations, the general existence of virtue among any people, and especially the flourishing state of the domestic virtues, furnishes the most secure and lasting basis.—In this great political maxim we find the most reasonable interpretation of this often mistaken law of the decalogue, and of the reason which the divine Legislator has annexed to give it the greater force.

In the same principle of nationalizing the promises and threatenings, the blessings and the maledictions announced to Israel, in the progress of their history and their laws, we find a natural and easy solution of many difficulties which occur to the commentator, and especially to the ordinary reader, in interpreting the civil and religious institutions of Israel. This remark may be happily exemplified in the conclusion of the second law of that comprehensive decalogue, which embraces the fundamental principles of the whole legislation of that wonderful people. *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy to thousands of those that love me, and keep my commandments.* This principle of visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the

children, seems, at the first view, to bear a hard aspect upon the benevolence of divine Providence, when it is regarded as an individual example of the equity of his law; but when we extend our view to the universal system, and the relations of society, as established by God, it loses all that aspect of severity, as soon as we regard in it the course of nature, and the almost necessary order of human things. The corruptions of the parent race we usually see increased in their descendants; and they extend an incipient influence even to the third, from novel habits and ideas beginning to be introduced, and continually grafting new follies upon old errors. Thus vice increases with the progress of time, and in a period of great decline in the manners of a nation, the physical evils which grow out of the moral corruptions of the state, become augmented with every succeeding race. This order of nature both explains and justifies the denunciation of visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. The corrupted current of society, grows continually stronger through the force of pernicious example, united with defective instruction; and the civil disorders and calamities which it draws after it, or are involved in it, increase with ominous and threatening aspect. This awful current is constant, with only, now and then, some feeble rippings in the stream, if I may speak so, or alternate vibrations from better to worse, or the contrary, in the state of society; till, in nations rapidly verging towards their fall, they seldom pass the third or the fourth generation, till they are ripe for some fatal or exterminating judgment, to crush, or root out from their country, a sinful people, who are said, in the passage, by their impious works to *hate* God. The period limited to the third and fourth generation, is a satisfactory proof that the whole precept and blessing has a national aspect. None of the nicest observers of human nature have been inclined to restrict or extend the penalties of personal vice to three and four of the immediate descendants of the guilty individual from whom they are sprung; but the universal testimony of history renders it probable that nations rarely survive that period, after the extreme declension of the public

manners, before they sink under some fatal catastrophe. Volcanoes swallow them up, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah; republics often degenerate into despotisms; and despotisms sink under the arm of foreign power.

I contemplate, with satisfaction, the denunciations of holy Writ, so worked up into the constitution of nature, that they partake of its invariable course; and the evils inflicted on corrupted states, become thereby identified with its eternal laws. The prediction of them, therefore, cannot be interpreted, by infidelity, as a gloomy ebullition of priestly zeal; nor can they ultimately fail of their accomplishment, to the great dishonour of religion, through any ignorance of the moral or physical system of the universe, imputable to the prophet or the priest. I love to trace, in the holy Scriptures, their perfect accordance with the system of nature.

A similar conclusion is applicable to the succeeding branch of the sentence: *showing mercy to thousands of those who love me, and keep my commandments.* The contrast expressed in this proposition, to the preceding, is never made a ground of objection to the ways of Providence, which appear here in so benignant a light. And, from the experience of nations in all ages, it has grown to be a political maxim of the first importance, founded in human nature, and the very constitution of civil government, that *virtue*, and *religion* which fosters *virtue*, is the firmest basis of states. In conformity with this principle, we find that all the republics of antiquity; and to go still higher, that all the kingdoms and states whose origin has been preserved in history, have had their foundations laid, and their nascent constitution nursed by the priests of religion. Civil order commences in the order and piety of families; and an excellent family discipline is the surest pledge of the durability and felicity of nations. As long as it is preserved in its purity and energy, if it were to a *thousand generations*, so long the republic will flourish and be happy. Such are the *rational* principles on which these commandments, and the whole fabric of human duty, rest.

If it be asked here also, why these great political maxims are referred to the second law of the decalogue, a law directly aimed against *idolatry*? It is easy to answer, that this crime, under the *theocratic* constitution of Israel, was the explicit and bold rejection of their national religion, and opened the door to all manner of licentiousness and impiety. It was refusing to have God to reign over them. It was, literally, the death of the republic.

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REVIEW.

Sacramental Addresses and Meditations, intended to aid devotion, and to exhibit the consoling and purifying influence of the Cross of Christ. By the Rev. HENRY BELFRAGE, Minister in Falkirk. First American from the second Edinburgh edition. New-York, J. Eastburn & Co. 12mo. pp. 360.

THE ceremonial part of revealed religion, adapted as it is to our animal nature, whilst it affords a striking instance of divine condescension, at the same time offers a most powerful temptation to our carnal minds to substitute it for the truth as it is in Jesus. A vast majority of those who have enjoyed in past times, and of those who now enjoy the light of revelation, have been zealots for religious forms and rites, whilst negligent of the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. Forgetting, however, that these forms and rites are of no avail in the sight of God, unless the heart be right with him, even where there is an external obedience to the laws which command them, these persons not only neglect to cultivate the particular frame of mind required by God, without which the performance of these forms and rites is solemn mockery of God, but with that hardihood which sin alone can