

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 22.—April, 1885.

I.

CONVERSIONS TO ROMANISM.

THE remarkable swerve of Anglican Protestantism toward religious beliefs which it dismissed as superstitious in the sixteenth century, is one of the great intellectual paradoxes of our day. It seems hard to understand that it should have taken place in a nation which is still the most Protestant in the world, as judged by the census of its population, which has no toleration in its highest literature for papal modes of thought, which refuses to return a single Roman Catholic to Parliament out of its four hundred and eighty-four English constituencies, and which uses its diplomacy to weaken the influence of the papacy in all the Roman Catholic countries of Europe. It is still more remarkable that the religious reaction of the last forty years has occurred in a nation not given to speculative excesses, not characteristically logical in its methods of inquiry, rather bounded, indeed, in all directions by the limitations of tradition and practical need. It is still more strange that Englishmen should be led to seek shelter from their intellectual difficulties in the bosom of a church which, in spite of its immense pretensions, has become dead and inept as a power of thought, and has long since lost all intellectual hold over the Catholic nations of the world.

The facts are not at all what we should have expected. Conservative instinct, reinforced by the strength of existing relations, was altogether against change. It is hard to tear up the fibres of custom, to snap asunder the bonds of hereditary faith and domestic attachments, and to surrender, perhaps, the fairest prospects in life. There must have been a long agony of doubt and reluctance, a dividing asunder of soul and spirit, as well as a hard struggle with social interests, before men of acute and practiced intellects—some of them of rare speculative intellect, distracted, perhaps, by the very activity

V.

WORKING ORDERS UNDER VOWS IN PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

OBERVE the duplicity of this topic. On its face it is abstract and general. It suggests the discussion, on purely Scriptural, historical, and moral grounds, of the lawfulness or propriety of the assumption of special vows by persons within the Protestant or Evangelical Churches, who have resolved to devote themselves to some definite religious or benevolent work.

But in effect it is concrete and particular. It has reference to an actual case, a recent occurrence. It means that we intend to consider and criticise the admission of a young clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church, by "simple vows,"* to a Society called the Order of the Holy Cross, which is working among the tenement-houses of New York.

We cannot avoid this specific reference of the subject. For, in the first place, the Anglo-Saxon mind is so essentially practical that it refuses to reason without illustrations. It declines to discuss *in thesi*. It always asks, "Who is the man?" And if the Anglo-Saxon preacher denounce a sin, the Anglo-Saxon hearers always say, "That means Brother B. or Sister D."; or if he praise a virtue, they say, "That means me."

And, in the second place, the consecration of this young clergy-

* The distinction between solemn and simple vows is one which all ecclesiastical writers recognize, although hardly any two of them agree in defining it. Perhaps it may be briefly expressed by saying that a simple vow implies a surrender which is conditional and revocable (although no conditions may be definitely stated), whereas a solemn vow is absolute and irrevocable. For example, a simple vow of poverty separates the person making it from the privilege of using his property, but a solemn vow deprives him forever of all dominion over property. According to Roman Catholic theologians, a special dispensation from the Pope is necessary to release a man from a solemn vow; and, of course, if this be so, no Protestant community can go beyond simple vows. This distinction explains the apparent inconsistency of calling a vow "for life" revocable. When the conditions have changed, when the purpose for which it was made no longer exists, when its fulfilment is no longer possible, the same authority which sanctioned it can release from it. Thus, for instance, the Presbyterian Church allows, under certain circumstances, the demission of the ministry, which has been assumed under vows commonly understood to be for life. Vide *Encycl. Britann. Art. Monasticism*, Herzog, *Real Encyk. Art. Gelübde*, Catholic Dictionary, Addis and Arnold, *Art. Vows*.

man to the Order of the Holy Cross is so striking an event, has been so prominently brought before the public, and so vigorously denounced and defended, involves so many burning practical questions, and touches such vital interests of society and the church, that it positively demands our consideration.

The point at issue here is something vastly more important than any mere question of ecclesiastical polity. The relation of this Order to the constitution of the Church within which it has been established, its legitimacy under Episcopal rule, the right of a Diocesan Bishop to admit one of his clergy to such a fraternity, and to administer the special vows by which its members have chosen to bind themselves, are not fitting subjects for discussion in this place. We respect the courtesies of the occasion. We earnestly disclaim any intention of meddling in family affairs. Such intervention is proverbially dangerous; and in this case it would have the still greater fault of being superfluous. For the Church within whose jurisdiction this matter falls, is generally regarded as at once liberal and conservative, careful in judgment and temperate in action. It embraces a sufficient diversity of opinions to ensure a full and thorough presentation of every side of any given question; and we may feel both a pleasing sense of propriety and a reasonable assurance of safety in leaving the ecclesiastical aspect of this case to the wisdom of a multitude of authorized counsellors.

But the broader aspect, the bearing of this case upon the large problems of Christian right and duty, the significance of this public consecration as a solemn and deliberate human act, performed by men who have the same life, the same purpose, the same religion as our own,—these are things which we are not only privileged, but also bound, to consider. If we are awake; if we have any sense of the mighty, impending struggle between Christianity and Atheism; if our eyes are opened to see the rift,—not wide as yet, but deep, and swiftly yawning to an impassable abyss,—between the church and the poorer classes; if we realize the fatal consequences of such a separation, and the urgent need of new and larger efforts to make our religion at once more broadly human and more truly humane; if we have heard and felt the bitter, piercing cry of the outcast multitudes of the great city, we must look with earnest attention at these young men who are going out, in the faith of the Cross, to meet the poor and the degraded.

They are not the only ones. Many have gone before them. Good and true men of other churches have been toiling faithfully for years among the tenement-houses; and God forbid that we should be cold

in our regard, or parsimonious in our honor, for them. But still the laborers are few; still our plans and organizations are mournfully ineffective. Let us confess it honestly. We stand upon our central hill of vantage, and look out with compassionate anxiety upon the border of rags and wretchedness that encircles the goodly city. We know that something more must be done. But we do not know exactly what. Here comes a reinforcement, a company with a strange uniform and peculiar code. What shall we think of them? What shall we say to this Order of the Holy Cross?

Their dress at once attracts our notice and awakens our prejudice. It has unpleasant associations. We cannot forget history. Emerson may say

"I like a cowl,"

but upon the whole most of us are rather inclined to hate it. When we see a tonsure we think of the filth of mediæval abbeys. When we see a knotted girdle we remember the Inquisition and the fires of Smithfield. And yet John the Baptist wore a girdle, and the Apostle Paul shaved his head. Dress is not even skin-deep. The philosophy of clothes is the shallowest of all philosophies. A long robe with a rope around the waist may seem to us detestable; we may even, in moods of special severity, go so far as to call it ridiculous, and say with truth that an ulster with a belt would be better. But after all, each of these ungainly garments has a man inside of it; and a *man* cannot be finally disposed of by a joke on his dress.

Sweeping and rabid denunciation against the Order is out of place. For there may be something here at work which is genuine and holy, precious and essential to the life of Christianity. It will not do for us, in brushing away a fly from the eyebrow, to put out the eye. It will not do for us, in our hatred of the form of monasticism, to condemn the spirit of consecration.

Shallow, æsthetic admiration is equally foolish and unfitting. For there may be something here at work which is deceitful and dangerous. We do not want to open our doors to any miserable old ghost of the dark ages merely because it wears a quasi-apostolic garb. We do not want to turn back the hands upon the dial-plate of Christianity merely because we think the figure five is more picturesque than the figure ten. We do not want to welcome back the Mendicant Friars merely because they say, "We are following the example of Christ."

We must scrutinize and discriminate. We must separate substance from form. We must lift the veil of profession and look in the face of reality. We must arrive at principles. We must take note of

tendencies. We must drop in our precipitant which shall separate the evil from the good. We must make a fair judgment, free from prejudice.

This is hard, because so much depends upon the way in which the case is put. For instance, suppose we say this: Two young men, led by the spirit of devotion, resolve to give themselves to work among the poorest and most degraded classes; and therefore they solemnly renounce comforts and pleasures that are lawful, and bind themselves to that mode of life in which they believe they can best fulfil their noble task. Who shall despise or reproach them?

But again, for instance, suppose we say this: Two young men, misled by the spirit of self-righteousness, and desiring to exalt themselves to a position of peculiar sanctity in the church, solemnly denounce things which are sanctioned in the Scriptures, and by a public act of spiritual snobbery set themselves above their fathers and mothers, and all other plain Christians, by forming themselves into a Holy Order. Who shall defend or approve such a pair of prigs?

You see if we can put the case in either of these two forms it settles itself. But unfortunately we cannot do this unless we voluntarily make ourselves blind. No eloquence of defence can persuade us that there is nothing here beyond a new manifestation of the simple spirit of self-sacrifice. The emphasis upon certain words is too peculiar to pass unnoticed. Nor can any earnestness of protest convince us that there is nothing more here than a new outbreak of the pride, and bigotry, and folly of the old, corrupt, monastic orders. We know something of these men. We know their sincerity, their humility, their unselfishness, their deep desire to help the downcast and uphold the Christ. We owe them something better than a jest or a sneer. Not justification, for to their own masters they must stand or fall; not prediction, for the wisdom of their plans must be tested in the long run by their success or failure; but consideration, thoughtful, candid, and sincere, is what we owe and what we propose to pay.

In this brief paper it will be impossible to do more than touch three of the most important points. The fact of the vows; the substance of the vows; the form of the vows.

(I) We observe, first, that the members of this Order have taken vows. A vow is a promise made to God. It may be secret or open. In the latter case the man before whom the vow is made must be regarded simply as the witness, or recorder, of it. For example, the marriage vow is made not to the minister but to God. The minister only witnesses it and acts upon it.

The Bible does not institute or ordain vows; but it undoubtedly

sanctions them and makes laws for their regulation.* In the Old Testament we find the case of Jacob† as illustrating a vow of devotion (*Neder*); the case of the Rechabites‡ as illustrating a vow of abstinence (*Isar*); and the case of Joshua at Jericho§ as illustrating a vow of destruction (*Cherem*). The vow of the Nazarites had a much deeper and broader meaning than any of these. It signified the consecration of the personal life to God, and the conquest of self by ascetic discipline.¶ The sixth chapter of the book of Numbers gives the law for the Nazarite of days. The three cases usually quoted as Nazarites for life, are those of Samson, Samuel, and St. John the Baptist. In the New Testament we find the example of St. Paul¶ as a proof that the use of vows was not abolished or condemned, but recognized as lawful under Christianity.

The practice of making vows is founded in human nature. A man desires to pursue a certain course; to make some offering of gratitude or devotion; to renounce, either for his own protection from temptation, or for the good of others, certain things to which he has a natural right; he feels the weakness of his own will and his proneness to forsake the line of duty at the call of impulse; and so he binds himself by a solemn promise to God, and he asks his fellow-man, one for whom he has the highest reverence and regard, to witness and record the vow.

The rightfulness of this is acknowledged by almost all Christians,** and is recognized in such forms as the vow which is required of parents at the sacrament of baptism, the vow which must be taken as a precondition of ordination to the ministry, and the total abstinence pledge, which, although not required by the Church, is universally admitted to be lawful in all cases, and in many cases most desirable.

Any argument which can be formed against the taking of vows in general will inevitably apply to these vows in particular.†† And, in fact, the only premises upon which opposition can be based are destructive of the whole framework of society and the visible church.

It may be said that everything that the Christian has belongs to God, and therefore vows are superfluous and essentially insulting.

* Leviticus xxvii., Numbers xxx., Deuteronomy xxiii. 21-23.

† Genesis xxviii. 18-22.

‡ Jeremiah xxxv.

§ Joshua vi. 17.

¶ Philo on Animals fit for Sacrifice. Lightfoot, Exercit. in 1 Cor. xi. 14.

¶ Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 24.

** St Augustine urges Christians to make use of vows. "Non sitis pigri ad vovendum: non enim viribus vestris implebitis." Calvin and Luther both admit their lawfulness and their usefulness for restraint and discipline.

†† It is interesting to observe that Dr. Köstlin, who argues sweepingly against vows in Herzog (Real Encyk., vol. v., p. 48), brings the same objections to bear against the total abstinence pledge as against the vows of celibacy.

But this is like Emerson's objection to gifts on the ground that if my friend loves me he owes me everything that he possesses. This is one of those asinine paradoxes which the shallow sage delighted to dress out in leonine garb and send roaring through Yankeedom. It is safe to say that no man ever lived who had a more accurate sense of personal property than Emerson. His friends did not long remain under the delusion that all that he had was theirs. As an excuse for not giving it all was very well; but as a profound truth it was a lie. So of the men who object to a Sabbath-day because all time is now holy, all belongs to God. We observe that the holiness, being spread out so wide, becomes very thin,—too thin,—and instead of having perpetual Sabbath, they have none at all. So of the men who object to particular promises of devotion or consecration to God, on the ground that all our possessions belong to him already. We observe that their conception of the Divine ownership is hardly as vivid as that of the human stewardship; and their logic usually runs on this wise: "All that I have belongs to God. Therefore, it would be absurd for me to give anything to Him. Therefore I will keep it all, and use it as I please until He calls for it." These theories of absolute devotion have a snare in them, because they are in fact only theories, and the devotion which is needed is practical. The man who says, "I will give one-tenth of my income to God," and keeps his word, is worth far more to the Church and to the world than the man who says, "All my income belongs to God," and spends nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of it on himself. Besides, admitting, as we must, the truth of God's entire ownership in all that the Christian has and is, the vow is only the definite acknowledgment of this truth in a particular case and for a particular purpose.

Again, it may be said that, since the spirit of devotion is the essential thing, the vow is unnecessary and childish. Why not make the sacrifice, the offering, the renunciation, and say nothing about it? If we will do the thing, what need of the promise? Because, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, making the promise will help us to do the thing. Because in a sacrifice which involves continual effort, continual resistance, continual self-denial, a solemn engagement is a great safeguard. Because we are all more or less childish, and need to bind ourselves by every possible tie to that which we have chosen as the good. With God, to resolve is to do. With man, to resolve is to struggle. No help is to be despised or discarded.

It is high time that we all should recognize and reject the folly of transcendental talk in religious matters. The Scriptures and our Church deal with man in his premillennial state, a being corporeal as

well as spiritual, childish, imperfect in many respects, to be developed and perfected by ordinances adapted to his present condition.

The true church is invisible, but there must also be a church visible. The true worship is with the heart, but there must also be a worship with the lips. The true devotion is spiritual, but it may be greatly helped by definite and audible vows. It has been thus helped, from the time of David, down to that of the last band of Christian youths in a theological seminary, that have solemnly bound themselves to God and to each other for the work of Home or Foreign Missions in a particular field.

(2) We observe, second, the fact that these young men of the Order of the Holy Cross have by their vows renounced certain things to which they have a natural right. These things are three: the possession of property, marriage, and the exercise of independent action within a certain sphere. In other words, they have promised to obey their lawful superiors and the rules of the Society to which they belong; to lay aside all thoughts of matrimony; and to remain poor among the poor. And this they have done voluntarily, with a desire to increase their usefulness in a noble and self-sacrificing work,—a work surrounded with the bitterest hardships, filled with the most loathsome details, and exposed to constant perils of contagion and death, as any one who has been among the festering tenement-houses of New York must know. Contempt for these men, we who live in comparative ease and safety can hardly feel. But none the less are we bound to interrogate the methods which they have adopted.

Against the vow of ecclesiastical obedience we cannot consistently protest. It is a common complaint in all the churches that the needful bonds of organization and discipline are becoming far too loose to be truly efficient. They are secretly disregarded or openly despised. That orderly compactness of form, that thorough unity of effort, those direct and vigorous movements which can only be secured in anybody by the due co-ordination and subordination of the parts, are sacrificed to a larger license of the individual. The authority of the body ecclesiastic over its members is slighted and contemned. And the Presbyterian Church (to speak within the limits of our own knowledge) is in danger of drifting into a condition which may be described as a state of anarchy tempered by annual mass-meetings. It reminds one of the famous inscription on Guilford common: "In this place every one shall do as he pleases. If he won't he shall be made to." In view of these facts, it may be asked whether a clear exposition of the Form of Government, chapter xv., section xii., is not devoutly to be wished for.

Against the vow of poverty we can hardly urge any very strenuous objections. For the besetting sin of our age and city is undoubtedly the love of money; and not even the clergy are entirely raised above the possibility of temptation in this respect. If a man says, "I feel that I am in peculiar danger of yielding to an abuse of wine; I am so situated that even the suspicion of this would utterly destroy my usefulness; I wish to take a pledge of total abstinence,"—we say, lawful and right! If a man says, "I feel that I am in danger of caring too much for money; I am so placed that, the moment I do this, I shall forsake my work; and even to be suspected of it would make me an object of envy and hatred to the poor, who really care more for money than the rich; I will put all this out of question by a vow of poverty,"—why should we not say, right and lawful? If Christians could give away everything in the first century, why not in the nineteenth?

But with the vow of celibacy the real difficulty begins. For here we touch the most sacred of human relations. Undoubtedly marriage may be abused. And undoubtedly the abuse of it, as of every other good thing, is sin. But we cannot say that an excessive tendency to marriage is one of the besetting sins of the youth of the present day. The tendency is rather in the other direction. The gilded young men avow a preference for a life of single luxury. Uxoriousness is extremely unfashionable. It is rare, nowadays, to find a man who is "too much married."

It needs, therefore, that we should teach, seriously and earnestly, that marriage is an holy estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, sanctioned by our Lord at Cana of Galilee, and made the symbol of the mystical union of Christ and his Church.

There is no higher condition in this world than that of the true man joined to the true woman by an indissoluble and vital bond wherein

"Each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will they grow,
The single, pure and perfect animal,
The two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke—
Life."*

But may not a man lawfully renounce this high privilege and these pure joys, for reasons which seem to him good and sufficient? Undoubtedly; and so long as he keeps them to himself, no inquisitive bench of elders or vestrymen, no self-appointed committee of female

* The Princess; Alfred Tennyson. London, 1848; p. 161.

matchmakers, has the right to ask him why. But when he announces the reason, then it becomes public property, and the wisdom of it is at once open to question.

These young men of the Order of the Holy Cross say: "Marriage would greatly hinder us in our peculiar work. We are willing to endure hardships and perils and revolting circumstances which we could not bear to ask a tender and delicately nurtured woman to endure. The care of a wife and a family would inevitably distract our minds from that complete and strenuous devotion to our work which is necessary for success. St. Paul says: 'He that is married careth for the things of this world, how he may please his wife. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.'*" We think that it is needful for us to renounce all thoughts of marriage in order that we may give ourselves entirely to our hard task."

Thus they argue; and there is much truth in what they say. But we may answer that men have no monopoly of devotion. It is certain that tender women are no less willing to endure trials and to renounce comforts. Indeed they show a capacity for patient suffering and self-sacrifice which is altogether super-masculine and angelic. Even at this day, women of the gentlest birth and breeding are spending their sweet lives in the midst of the darkest and foulest haunts of vice and misery, laboring to help and save those for whom Christ died. Would not such a woman be an helpmeet for the man consecrated to work among the poor and outcast? Would not her companionship be a strength and a support to him? Could he not do his work a thousand times better with her aid?

And to this they reply: "Perhaps; if we could find her. But then the children,—would you be willing to have your little ones grow up in such a place?" We stammer; we are silent; we hardly dare to answer, for the question is a hard one. Everything for Christ? Yes; *but would we be willing?*

Let us turn the conversation a little. These vows of celibacy are inseparably connected with monastic institutions. Have they not always been disastrous failures? Have not the monks of every age, from the days of Paul the Hermit and Pachomius down to the days of the monasteries on the banks of the St. Lawrence, been corrupt nuisances? Are you not bringing back into the bosom of the Protestant Church a source of evil that it once cost her rivers of blood and untold sufferings to get rid of?

* 1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.

To this they reply, "No! Almost every nation of Europe owes its first reception of the Gospel to celibate missionaries. Monks kept learning and religion and charity alive through the dark ages. There was mixed good and evil in the system. We have discarded the evil. We would restore the good. We are founding not a monastery, but a working order. Observe the difference."

Certainly we will observe it,—if we can see it. In fact, we will observe it very carefully indeed, for we begin to detect a flavor which is not unfamiliar. We will examine the letter of these vows somewhat more closely.

(3) The moment we read them critically we can see, third, that in the very heart of them, without rhyme or reason in the purpose for which this order is established, without any conceivable connection with the good grounds on which it has been defended, altogether gratuitously and superfluously, a most pestilent old heresy is embedded. Mark the second of these vows:

Quoth the Bishop: Will you diligently serve God for the remainder of your life in a virgin state, striving to follow the example of perfect purity of our virgin Lord in all your thoughts, words, and deeds, as the vow of religious chastity demands?

Answereth the Novice: I will, the Lord being my help.

Here is the snake's head. Here is the

"Monster of so frightful mien,
"As, to be hated, needs but to be seen."

Drag him out to the light, and let us look at him. Observe the foolish, unfounded intimation that our Lord Christ remained unmarried in order to set us an example of the virgin state; the self-righteous assumption that those who do not marry are therefore more like Him; the degrading assertion that chastity* means celibacy, and the necessary inference that married love is unchaste. 'Tis the miserable old Essenic, Therapeutic, Montanist, Manichæan, Ascetic, Monastic falsehood come back again to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon;

"With eyes downcast as it were meek";

feeding upon itself; torturing the flesh; virtually denying the Incarnation; defiling the sanctities of home; cutting the world in two with

* It has been suggested, in defence of this vow, that the common and classic usage of the word chastity is limited to the unmarried state, and therefore that the language here employed cannot be interpreted as a slur upon matrimony. This defence might avail if it were true, but, in fact, the word chaste is used by the highest authority to apply to the married state. ["*Castæ matres*," Virgil, A., 8, 665. "*Castæ Maritæ*," Ovid, F., 2, 139. "The young women to love their husbands, to be discreet, *chaste*," Titus ii. 5. Milton, Par. Lost, IV., 461. Tennyson, Godiva, 53, "So she rode forth, clothed on with Chastity." Jeremy Taylor: "Chaste marriages are honorable and pleasing to God."] This miserable little vow sets itself right across the current of human instinct, as expressed in the stream of human speech.

its deadly dualism, and giving half of it over to the Devil without revoke; trampling upon the holiest affections; forsaking the most hallowed ties; and in the end, at its best, producing a type of piety which is as far from the true ideal as Abelard is from Christ, as Purgatory is from Paradise.

This is not the renunciation of a lawful privilege in the spirit of self-sacrifice; it is the denunciation of a sacred ordinance in the spirit of self-righteousness. It is the setting up of a false, unscriptural, inhuman standard of piety. It is the filthy cave of the hermit, the proud pillar of St. Simon Stylites, the gashed and wounded body of the Indian Fakir. It is the superstitious offering of a mutilated humanity on the cruel altar of an unfatherly Divinity, the darkening of the sun at noonday, the casting of the Devil's incense into the fire on the hearth, the degradation of the home to the level of the licensed brothel.

These be strong words. Are they not too strong, too violent? Are we to suppose that those who are connected with this Order of the Holy Cross, either as actively engaged in it, or as passively sanctioning it, have any such thoughts in mind as those which we have been execrating?

No,—not for a moment,—not even the faintest adumbration of them. They would disavow and reject such doctrines with scorn. Nevertheless, here is the snake's head; and, unless it is cut off, the tail "must follow as the night the day." "*Chastity is Celibacy.*" The wonder is that they did not see it. The wonder is that this poisonous word could ever have slipped past those keen eyes that watch so wisely and so diligently over the welfare of the church. Were they blinded by love and sympathy? Were these earnest young men (whose devotion we honor, whose unselfishness we covet) so fired with zeal, so swept away with eagerness for their work, that they did not stop to think of the hideous blot they were casting on their own escutcheon, the dishonor they were putting upon the parental love which bore and nourished them, by the utterance of this foolish, hateful word?

Hear what St. Paul says, brethren of the Holy Cross! "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled."* Or, if you had rather listen to an uninspired father, hear what Clement of Alexandria says:†

"Yes, the Christian marries if he is so commanded by the Word; have not the apostles set us the example? The true man does not show his strength in a lonely

* Heb. xiii. 4.

† Clement, Strom. VII. 12. Quoted by DePressensé, "Early Years of Christianity, Life and Practice," etc., p. 482.

life. He is truly heroic who, in marriage, and in the duties of a family, and the care of a home, rises above mere pleasure and pain, abides closely united to God by love, arming himself against all the temptation that may come to him through wife and children, servants and goods. The celibate escapes the most difficult of ordeals; he is occupied only with himself; hence his great inferiority to the man who, instead of being absorbed wholly in seeking his own salvation, can devote himself also to the good of his house. The father of a family gives us some faint image of the Providence on which all things depend."

Lay these words well to heart. Go on with your noble work, and would God there were more to emulate your devotion. Remain poor and unmarried, if it seems that by this sacrifice of yourselves you can do more good for others. But come back quickly before God and the Church, and recant this miserable, heretical, pernicious, inhuman vow which identifies chastity with celibacy.

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