

Poetry.

A CHILD'S ANSWER.

I met a fairy child whose golden hair
Around her sunny face in clusters hung,
And as she wove her king-cup chain, she sung
Her household melodies—those strains that bear
The hearer back to Eden. Surely ne'er
A brighter vision blest my dreams. "Whose child
Art thou?" I said, "sweet girl," in accents mild.
She answered, "mother's," when I questioned "Where
Her dwelling was"—again she answered "Home."
"Mother" and "Home!"—O blessed ignorance!
Or rather blessed knowledge! what advance
Farther than this shall all the years to come
With all their lore, effect? There are but given
Two names of higher note, "Father" and Heaven."

ROYAL SUPREMACY.

You, my dear Sir, as a Roman Catholic residing in France as it now is, feel considerable difficulty in understanding how a sovereign can be—what we affirm our own most gracious Queen to be—supreme governor under Christ of a National Church. From personal intercourse with you, and with others of your country, I know this to be the case. You cannot comprehend, you say, how a Queen can have any ecclesiastical authority. I do not, indeed, believe that you would go so far as to approve the language which, as our King James I. tells us, was applied to his predecessor Queen Elizabeth by the Jesuit Sanders, who dared to assert that "the supremacy of a woman in Church matters is from no other than the devil;" or that you would adopt the words of one of your French divines, a vicar-general of a bishop, of the present day, who, in his directory for your clergy, is so far forgetful of the apostolic command, not to "speak evil of dignities," as to describe the illustrious wearer of the British crown as "une femme à la fois reine et papesse." But I know you and your countrymen generally are now strongly opposed—however in the times of your Fleury's and Dupins, De Marcas and Bossuets, the case might have been otherwise—to our English opinions on this subject; and as I am firmly persuaded that your objections to them arise in a great degree from misapprehension of their true nature, I shall, with your leave, endeavour to explain to you what our opinions really are.

We believe, then, that sovereign powers are Vicegerents and Ministers of Almighty God; for so we are taught by Him in Holy Writ. We know from the same sacred source, that it is our duty to submit to civil authorities, to pay them tribute, to pray for them, "that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty;" for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God. If, indeed, they should so far forget their duty as to command us to do any thing plainly contrary to the Word of God; if they should order us to commit idolatry, or not to pray to God, or not to receive His sacraments, rather than be guilty of these sins we should prefer the furnace with the three children of Babylon, and the den of lions with Daniel, and the rack with the Maccabees. Yes, we obey Cæsar for God's sake, but we cannot disobey God for Cæsar's; but in all his lawful and not unlawful commands we obey Cæsar, because we cannot disobey God.

True, you will reply, in all temporal matters, by all means; but there you must stop. No, we answer, we cannot stop here; for God commands us to proceed further. If Sir, we consider what civil powers are commanded by God to do for Him, we shall soon perceive that our duty to them extends beyond these limits. Sovereigns (and when I speak of sovereigns I include all governing powers, whether monarchical or others) are God's "ministers" to us "for good," not only of our bodies, but our souls; and it would be very degrading to them, and very irreverent to Him, Whose ministers they are, to suppose that their care is to be limited to the temporal wants of their subjects. No; here is the true dignity, the glorious prerogative of the magisterial office; it extends to the soul; it has hopes and aims "full of immortality." It looks to eternity; it sows on earth, that it may reap in heaven. Thus earthly and heavenly happiness is wreathe into one crown. Yes; since the Almighty Himself gives to kings and queens the title of "nursing fathers and nursing mothers" of His Church, and since this is promised as a blessing to His Church, and since it is the chief duty of fathers and mothers in their families to provide for the spiritual welfare of their offspring, it cannot be supposed that the eternal interests of their subjects are not to be the first care of magistrates. This being so, it follows that they have a divine right to those powers, without which this duty cannot be performed. That is to say, Kings have royal authority in spiritual matters as well as in temporal. Let us examine in what this consists.

First, then, it certainly does not extend to the performance of any sacred function, such as the ministration of the Word or Sacraments, or the ordination of Ministers of the Church. The power of performing these offices is derived from God alone, and is restricted to those spiritual persons to whom He has assigned it. He struck King Uzziah with leprosy for invading the priestly office; and the prince who dared to consecrate priests was Jeroboam.

Sanders, indeed, and other Jesuits of his day, pretended to believe that Queen Elizabeth assumed

to herself the sacred office of ministering the Word and Sacraments, and they studiously promulgated a scandalous calumny to that effect. But this imputation was solemnly repudiated by Queen Elizabeth herself, and by our Church in her Articles, and by our greatest divines. From all which it appears, that when our sovereigns claim supremacy over all persons in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, they assert their right and acknowledge their duty (not to perform any sacred function in their own persons,) but to see that all they who have sacred functions assigned to them perform them duly. The royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters in England does not admit of the exercise of any priestly power on the part of the sovereign to command all those who have that power to use it rightly.

It appears further, from the same authorities, that this ecclesiastical supremacy is no other than that which belonged to the princes of God's own people, the Jews; and to the first and greatest emperors of Christendom. I pass briefly over this topic, but I cannot forbear reminding you of the important fact, that those of the Jewish rulers who exercised this authority most vigilantly and energetically,—as, for instance, David in convoking religious assemblies, in bringing back the ark, in regulating the courses of the priests, Solomon in building, Joash in restoring, Hezekiah and Josiah in purifying, the temple, in republishing the book of the law, in putting down idolatry and superstition, and in bringing back the people to the true worship of God, in a word, in effecting a great religious Reformation,—are distinguished with special commendations and benedictions by God in Holy Writ.

But you may say, let it be granted that the Jewish law furnishes precedents for the supremacy which you are maintaining, what authority have you in Christian antiquity for your principles and practice? I do not hesitate to say, Sir, in reply, that we have the unanimous consent of all ancient Christendom, after the empire ceased to be pagan, in favour of our English laws in ecclesiastical matters.

Compare, I would request you, my dear Sir, our system in this respect with that of Rome. A Roman Catholic bishop derives all his authority from the Pope. No Romanist archbishop can consecrate a church, or confirm a child, without receiving the Pallium from Rome. All Romanist prelates are what they are, not by Divine Providence or permission, but by the grace of the Papal see! All this is in direct defiance of the laws and practice of the ancient Church. It is notorious that "most princes in the west, as in Germany, France, and England, did invest bishops till the time of Gregory VII." It is certain, also, that the popes of Rome, who now claim a right to ordain and place bishops throughout the world, were themselves appointed by the emperor till the ninth century; and the Church of England treads in the steps of the ancient Church, when she acknowledges the English Crown to have the right of placing persons, whose spiritual qualifications have been ascertained and approved by the spiritual authorities, in the sees which the Crown itself has founded, and in allowing them to exercise episcopal jurisdiction over its subjects within the limits duly assigned to them.

Again, the Church of Rome, as we have seen in the episcopal oath (above, p. 295,) claims the power of convoking bishops from all parts of the world to attend her in her councils, and allows no ecclesiastical law to have any authority without her sanction. This too is in contradiction of ancient practice. All the General Councils of antiquity were summoned by sovereign princes; and there is not a single instance of any one Council claiming to be general, convoked by the Pope of Rome, for a thousand years after Christ; and the laws made by bishops in councils depended for their ratification and publication on the sovereign power. Who then is the true follower of Christian Antiquity, the Church of Rome—which obliges bishops by an oath to quit their own dioceses, whenever summoned to Italy by the Bishop of Rome, and to attend upon his calling, perhaps for near twenty years together, if the Romish synods are to last as long as the Council of Trent, and which asserts that the canons of councils depend for their validity on the Pope's assent—or the Church of England, which declares "that General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes," and which acknowledges the right of her own sovereigns to summon the bishops and clergy of the realm to meet together in convocation, and to give effect to their decrees by sentence of ratification?

In all these ecclesiastical matters, that is, in the placing of bishops, in the summoning of councils and in ratifying their decrees, we acknowledge our sovereigns to have supreme jurisdiction over spiritual persons, to the exclusion of all foreign power, whether lay or ecclesiastical, and according to the ancient principles and practices of the Christian Church, and for the maintenance of her laws: but, observe, against these received laws and customs of the Church, no power is claimed by our princes, nor is any ascribed to them by us. "Nihil protest rex, nisi quod jure protest," is our maxim. Our most gracious Queen has supreme power according to the laws, and for the laws, but against them none. And we go further and say, that this jurisdiction,

which I have described, is an inalienable prerogative of the English crown. You speak to us sometimes of our King John and Henry the Second, as having brought their realm under the spiritual dominion of the Pope. But, Sir, not all the kings who ever sat on the throne of England could do this. As Lord Chancellor Clarendon says, "The king of England has no power to release a single grain of the allegiance which is due to him."

The supremacy of our sovereigns in ecclesiastical matters, and over spiritual persons as well as civil, is founded not on any human basis, but on the Word of God. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," says the Apostle St. Paul, and "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme," says St. Peter. It rests on the will of God, Whose ministers and representatives sovereign princes are, and Whose work human society is; and the throne of the one and the peace of the other can never be secure, while the Sovereign has only a divided sway, and while his partner in it is the Pope.

Observe, my dear Sir, I do not say that the exercise of this power may not be greatly embarrassed by reckless and revolutionary legislation, or may not fall into decay by the neglect of those to whom it is committed; for we all know that the possession of rights supposes the discharge of duties. Monarchs, therefore, may become mere phantoms, by the fault of their subjects or their own. Remove from Monarchy its religious responsibilities, make it indifferent to Religion, so that it may treat all creeds alike, and you rob it of all the respect of its subjects, who will regard it with offence as a misshapen abstract of their own anomalies, as an unsightly epitome of all their own religious deformities. A Crown without a conscience is a mere bauble, or rather it will be looked upon as a splendid grievance, which a heavily taxed and restless Nation in an utilitarian age will condemn to destruction.

By your Charte of 1830, France ceased to have a national religion. She then thought fit to suppress the article of the Charte of 1814, which declared that she had a "religion de l'Etat." By the same Charte of 1830, she gave endowments to various forms of Christianity, and in 1831 she extended them to Judaism. Let us mark the consequences of these unhappy acts. She did not, it is true, directly deprive the crown of its supremacy, but she did virtually; she paralyzed the exercise of it. The Charte robbed the crown of its Creed; it divested the Monarch of his religious character; it took from beneath his throne its only true support—Christianity. Before 1830, the language in France was "Le Roi ne tient sa couronne que de Dieu et de son épée;" but now it is "Il ne tient sa couronne que de la Révolution, fille de la Philosophie." The State by endowing all religions does in fact endow none. It endows religious indifference. It has estranged the Church from the Throne, and placed it at the feet of the Pope. By the Charte of 1830, France intended to establish the sovereignty of the People, but the event has shewn that she advanced that of the Pope. No bull which ever issued from the Roman Vatican in the days of Hilderbrand has done so much for the Papal power in France, as the popular Charte of 1830, which decreed the equality of all religions. You, my dear Sir, know full well what the language of the Roman Catholic Church of France now is. As long as the Crown had a conscience and a creed, (of course I am speaking of the office alone,) so long the Church allows she owed it reverence. But now that the Crown regards all creeds as equal, the case is very different, and the Church cannot (she says) any longer admit that the Crown has any right to exercise any authority over her. No; the eyes of the Church of France are now turned away, alas! from the royal throne to the Papal chair. Instead of being a National Establishment,—may I not say, the great conservative establishment of the nation?—the Church of France has become an extra-national and antinational one.

In proof of this, let me appeal to the course the Church has pursued and is still pursuing in the great question of National Education. On one side we see the civil power—and the eighty bishops of France on the other. They assert that the State, having ceased to be Christian, has no right to interfere with public instruction; that it cannot any longer pretend to discharge the great duty of a state, that of improving the moral and religious condition of the people, especially of the poor; that it has forfeited the power of maintaining truth and repressing error; that the whole work of instruction must be left, without any restraint or direction, to the energies of individuals, that is, in fact, to the Church of France, with all her ultramontane affections and obligations, on the one side, and to the democratic license of an infidel philosophy on the other.

This is a deplorable condition of things, and one which (unless Divine Providence should interfere) must inevitably produce in a very short time results too dreadful to contemplate. What indeed can be more lamentable than to see that they—I mean the bishops of France—who ought to be the most faithful and zealous supporters of the throne, and who would doubtless be so, if their circumstances were different, that is, if they were released from their oath of vassalage to the pope and if the Crown had a creed, are in fact now the devoted subjects of a foreign and hostile power?

A slight incident will illustrate what I am saying. The reappearance of the Proper Lesson for Gregory the VIIIth's Day in your Parisian and Lyonnaise Breviary of 1742 (to which I alluded in my last Letter) speaks volumes concerning the ultramontane spirit which now animates your Church. But what I now advert to is a different circumstance, though not of a dissimilar kind. Your bishops take an oath to the pope, one of the clauses of which is, that they will visit Rome once in so many years, and render an account to him of the state of their dioceses. By your civil laws the bishop is bound to obtain the leave of the Crown before he quits his diocese on his journey to Rome. But when, the year before last, one of your prelates visited Rome, and it was stated that he had not obtained any such previous permission, your reply was, that the preventive law might have been very well for the time of Louis XIV., when the sovereigns of France bore the august title of most Christian king, but that it would be a violation of the liberties of the Church, if it were enforced now. Upon which I would only beg leave to ask one question: If this be so, whose subjects are your bishops? the King's or the Pope's?

Let me add another observation on the papal advantages derived from what is not infrequently, but most truly, called popular legislation. About a year ago you suppressed the order of Jesuits in France. This was no new thing with you. In 1610, the year of the murder of Henry IV., you burnt their books by order of parliament. In 1644, your university petitioned parliament against them, affirming that "their doctrines affected the security of all states and nations interested in preserving the authority and just power and life of their sovereigns." In 1682, your clergy, with the great Bossuet at their head, protected the crown and the constitution from their anti-monarchical and anti-social principles, by the declaration of the Gallican Articles. In 1763, the Parliament of Paris declared by its decree of the 6th of August, that the "order of Jesuits was by its nature inadmissible in all rightly-constituted states;" and it was suppressed accordingly.

But since your last Revolution affairs have greatly changed in your country, in this as in other matters. Your clergy appear to be desirous at present of identifying themselves with the Jesuits. Some of your bishops have come forward as their champions. The Bishop of Chartres declares in his published letter to the Minister of Religion, that "he knows that many archbishops and bishops have intimated to him (the minister,) that if the Jesuits are driven from their houses, they will be received by them into their palaces." What a change does this indicate in the animus of the Church of France toward the Crown! What a demonstration is here of its determination to make common cause with the papacy in its most anti-monarchical form!

(To be continued.)

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61