

THE CATHOLIC POSITION AND MISSION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCHES.*

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"THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL"—REV. XIV, 6.

THIS is the Feast of that Apostle to whom his Master gave the name of a Stone. It signifies that he derived his character from the Rock of Ages, out of which he was hewn and on which he was built. And the same apostle, in his humility, has taught us how we may share in his distinction; how each one of us may become a Stone, a Cephas, a Peter—each in his proportion and degree. It is not, primarily, by unity with him, the Stone, but by unity with his Master, the Rock. The apostle seems to adopt the metaphor of a magnetic rock, to be laid on which is to become magnetic in turn and to afford a like magnetism to others. So he paraphrases his own name and seems to keep in view the noiseless growth of the temple:

"Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung."

The invisible Spirit is its cement. By that magnetism it is "fitly joined together and compacted in every part." For thus he speaks: "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also as lively stones" (as so many Peters) "are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ." In this Christian priesthood, as in that of the Jewish people, who were a nation of priests, every man has "his own order." All are not the head, all are not the hand. Under the great high priesthood of Christ, we have the apostolic priesthood of bishops, and then that of presbyters, and then that of deacons, and then that of the Christian laity. So God has harmonized and glorified his body, the Church. I need not say that this festival has, therefore, been most appropriately chosen for the ordination of an apostolic missionary called to preach the everlasting Gospel, and to minister the same as a successor in St. Peter's faith, and in that commission which every Christian bishop shares with St. Peter.

What, then, is this "Everlasting Gospel" but the confession of St. Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"; what but this and the publishing to all mankind of "good-will to men," through his gracious incarnation, his precious death and glorious resurrection? For this, this only, a new bishop is about to receive his commission under the invocation of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

When I remind you that the exposition of St. Peter's name and confession which I have briefly given, is the only one known to the Primitive

Church, and that it has been continuously asserted, even in the Latin churches, I need say nothing else to refute a system of gigantic fable which has been reared upon "the wresting" of this Scripture. The "Old Catholics," Dollinger and others, have so lately pulverized the pretensions of the Vatican by an appeal to antiquity on this point that none can err therein save those whose opinions have no relation to evidence. Let one citation suffice, that of the great Latin doctor of the fifth century. "It is not," says St. Augustine, "on thee, who art a Stone, but on the Rock which thou hast confessed, . . . that I will build my Church." Against this confession, then, which is all one with the Gospel, and against this church which I build upon it, the gates of hell shall not prevail. Both are "everlasting."

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven," says the holy exile of Patmos, "having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." The last of the apostles, keeping his lonely Easter on that barren beach in the Mediterranean, receives in these words the assurance that the testimony of Jesus is not to die with its first preachers. What reason, according to human foresight, had he to suppose it possible, that, after eighteen centuries, and here in these "utmost parts of the earth," so far beyond any horizon that he could even imagine, his own words should cheer us to-day in sending forth a new missionary to new fields in a new world, with the same everlasting Gospel? You cannot answer this inquiry without a virtual demonstration of two great truths, which our fanciful generation has a caprice to question: (1) the truth of a supernatural revelation, and (2) the truth of a supernatural force which sustains the Church and its Gospel against all enemies. Yes, the blessed apostle heard the promise; but we see the miraculous realization of the promise, so that we are unable to doubt the Gospel, or the truth that it is everlasting.

One thousand years before St. John's time the charter of the church's missionary work was recorded by King David: "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." He with whom this covenant was made stood on the Mount of Olives, and sent forth eleven Galileans to be the light of the world and to claim this promised world for his empire. From that centre they and their successors have gone forth accordingly. They have girdled the round earth; they have penetrated eastward to Japan, and westward to Saskatchewan and Alaska. Their westward mission has planted the Diocese of Algoma.

Though it might be idle to inquire as to the point of time indicated by the vision of the angel, perhaps we may venture a conjecture that the great revival of primitive faith and of missionary zeal, which coincided with the invention of the press and the discovery of a New World, may be the

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