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LECTURE DELIVERED BY THE REV. M. KERRIGAN IN THE HALL OF THE ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF QUEBEC, ON 20TH DEC. 1853.

(From the Canadian Colonist.)

SUBJECT:—The Catholic Church the Mother of the civilization, and the Protectress of the liberties of the World: she is not opposed to the moral and material advancement of mankind.

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen—A source of error, too common amongst those who differ from us in religion, is the belief that the Church defends her authority and her faith against all the doctrines and efforts of her opponents with no other view than to establish an unjust dominion, and to bend the human mind beneath a tyrannical yoke. It has been, and many persons here present may have seen it asserted, that the Catholic Church is opposed to civilization, that she mars the moral and material progress of mankind, and that she is opposed to true liberty. It is affirmed that that great rebellion, or, if you will, that great revolution, which, in the sixteenth century, convulsed all Europe, was a special interposition of Heaven for the spiritual welfare of mankind, and that from the free and unlettered perusal of the Bible flowed blessings innumerable to the human race.—These assertions are made unquestionably oftener than proved; but in these false and inconsiderate assertions is found a pretext which arms resistance to the authority of God's only true and venerable Church rouses the deepest hatred, and excites and fosters innumerable aggressions, as if the Church, her tendencies and object, were but a systematic attack on the liberties of the people, and an obstacle to the development of all human energy. But men who believe this, are in a state of profound ignorance with regard to the Church, for, in the midst of her perpetual struggles, she has ever but one object in view, the union of all souls in the true Catholic Faith, which alone can bestow on mankind true liberty and durable prosperity.

My object then, in appearing before you this evening, is to prove that all the objections which I have enumerated are futile and false. And here I would express a wish that we may be justified in attributing more to stolid ignorance than to deep-rooted malice, the efforts of those men, who, in every mixed community, are expending the whole trash of their vocabulary against the chaste spouse of the Lamb.

Permit me, then, Ladies and Gentlemen, to direct your attention to the assertion which I will now proceed to refute, namely, that the Catholic Church is opposed to the civilization of man: that is to say, his reclamation from a wild and savage state. If I succeed in proving, what indeed scarcely requires a proof, that the very reverse is the case, then indeed this inconsiderate assertion melts gently away into very thin air. Christianity, that is, Catholicity, (for they are identical), was the mother of true civilization, and to her Europe, aye, the world, is indebted for all that is really useful to man both in time and eternity: I do not, indeed, deny that, previous to the establishment of the Antitype of the Ark, that a kind of civilization existed. Greece was civilized, Rome was civilized; that is, human nature was raised in these countries to the highest point of civilization attainable under the sway of Paganism. Both had their invincible armies led by generals whose fame had never been eclipsed; in both sprang up orators and poets; the perusal of whose immortal works delight and instruct us to the present day. All who could not glory in the name of Greek or Roman, were designated by them as barbarians. And yet these nations were not civilized; polytheism and civilization, properly so called, could not co-exist; for polytheism could not fully reclaim men from a state of nature, and gift them with the freedom of the Sons of God. To Catholicity was reserved the task of converting the nations, and thereby civilizing them; to her, and her alone, was conferred the heavenly grace adequate to enable her to accomplish the great work, and right nobly did she accomplish it.—(Applause.) The first years of her existence were, as you are well aware, sad and dreary enough. Far better it would then have seemed to the clouded vision of man, had Peter never directed his steps to the Imperial City. The keys of the fisherman would, at first appearance, seem but feeble weapons when opposed to the sceptre of the mighty Cæsars. But it is unnecessary for me to detain you with the history of the Church during the three first centuries, more especially as I wish to come down to more recent times, and grapple with those calumniators who appear to delight in distorting facts, falsifying history, and even perverting the sacred Word of God. It is sufficient to say that she came out unscathed from the terrible ordeal. Neither the malice of man, nor the ingenuity of hell, nor the combination of both, could crush her immortal energies, or successfully impede her path of truth. From the day the myste-

rious cross appeared to Constantine, when descending into the lovely plains of Italy, a brighter, but not more glorious era opened before her; the sword of persecution was sheathed, the star of peace arose, at least for a time, and the Flavian amphitheatre was no longer reddened with the blood of her martyrs.—(Applause.) The damp of the Catacombs was scarcely removed from her brow, when she collected all her strength, and braced herself up for the regeneration of the world—the civilization of man. The spiritual conquest of the nations then commenced, and at different intervals of time, St. Patrick went to Ireland, Palladius to Scotland, Remigius to France (where the great Clovis and 3,000 of his nobles were baptised in one day), Adalbert visited Prussia, Boniface, Germany, and Augustine, England. That island was then in a state of the most deplorable anarchy and ignorance. The Britons—the ancient inhabitants—were overcome by the fierce and ferocious Saxons, who forced them to retire for safety into the mountainous district of Wales. Among them a knowledge of Christ prevailed; but, distracted as they were by the subjugation of their country, and from their inability to pay many visits to Rome, on account of the unsettled state of the Continent, their discipline became somewhat relaxed. That they acknowledged, however, the supremacy of Roman See, there can be no doubt; the Councils of Arles and Sardica freely settle this point. But Austin arrives, commissioned by the great Pope, Gregory; preceded by the cross, the emblem of salvation, and accompanied by a numerous train singing canticles of joy and thanksgiving, he lands upon the Kentish strand. On that day, England, the foundation stone of thy greatness was laid. (Great applause.) Rome conquered but to save. (Applause.) The Saxons were converted, and the baptism which they received made them regard the poor Britons as their brethren in the faith. The Anglo-Saxon Church soon arose, the fruitful mother of a long time of glorious Kings and illustrious Saints. The dew of Heaven fell upon the dry and parched-up earth; the mustard seed was planted—it grew up a healthy and vigorous tree, and sheltered beneath its branches a great and flourishing people. Rome's work was hastened on, and by the ardor of her love alone was it all but accomplished; and the Holy Father, from his primatial See at Rome, could look around and see the nations of the earth acknowledging his jurisdiction, and bending at Catholic altars. I have, my Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen, taken but a cursory glance at that great transition period, during which the darkness of Pagan superstition was rolled back, like the mists of night before the morning sun, when all Europe became Catholic, and when the command of the Saviour would almost appear to have been realized? "Be ye one—even as I and the Father are one." (Applause.) But here I take a triumphant stand, and I proudly defy any man to specify a country which has yet been converted to the faith of Christ without the co-operation of Rome. Sectaries may pull down, but they cannot build up; they may find fault with a great achievement, but they can achieve nothing themselves. They may present you a garment composed of patches of every die, but they can have no pretensions to weave the seamless robe of Catholic Unity. (Great applause.)

We now come to the middle ages, or as they are contemptuously called the dark ages, when, according to every spouting schoolboy and flaming bigot, all Europe was plunged into the most gross and fearful idolatry, God's Law forgotten, and a worse than pagan superstition everywhere prevailed. All this is very fine, Ladies and Gentlemen; but all the tropes and figures of speech are but a poor substitute for the stubbornness of facts. No! "These ages," in the words of Kenelin Digby, "were ages of Faith;" ages when all Europe was Catholic, when vast temples were seen to rise in every place of human conourse to give glory to God, and exalt men's souls to sanctity, when houses of holy peace and order were found amidst woods and desolate mountains, on the banks of placid lakes as well as on the solitary rocks of the Ocean; ages of sanctity which witnessed a Bede, a Francis, a Bernard, and crowds who followed them as they did Christ; ages of vast and beneficent intelligence in which it pleased the Holy Spirit to display the power of the seven gifts in the lives of an Anselm, a Thomas of Aquin, and the saintly flocks whose steps a cloister guarded; ages of the highest civil virtue, which gave birth to the Laws and Institutions of an Edward, a Lewis, and a Suger; ages of the noblest art, which beheld a Giotto, a Michael Angelo, a Raphaelo, a Dominichino; ages of poetry which heard an Avitus, a Caedmon, a Dante, a Shakspeare; ages of more than mortal heroism, which produced a Tancred and Godfrey; ages of Majesty, which knew a Charlemagne, an Alfred, and the sainted youth who bore the lily. (Applause.) Ages, too, of England's glory, when she appears, not even ex-

cluding a comparison with the Eastern Empire, as the most truly civilized country in the globe; when the Sovereign of the greater portion of the western world applied to her schools for instructors; when she sends forth her Saints to Evangelise the nations of the North and diffuse spiritual treasure over the whole world, when heroes flocked to her Courts to behold the models of reproachless chivalry, and Emperors leave their thrones to adore God at the tomb of her martyrs. This was the time, I assert, when Europe was truly civilized. (Applause.) We had not, it is true, the Press, the Steam-engine, the Electric Telegraph, neither had we those hosts of mock religions which lure away thousands of souls to their eternal destruction—(applause); heresies of course arose, but they were soon crushed beneath the chain of St. Peter, their lives were as the mushroom, their existence was not permanent. If we are to judge by some of the writers of the present day, this age is superlatively civilized. We have attained all that the human mind can desire. "Whether our age," says the Encyclopædia Americana, "has reached a higher state of civilization than any preceding one, is of course a matter of very great doubt, but there is no doubt it makes louder claims to superiority in this respect than any previous period. Such pretensions are generally the result of the ignorance of other times and their productions. It is certainly a circumstance worthy of some consideration, that persons whose talents and acquirements have enabled them to take wide and penetrating views of the past and present, have shewn the least disposition to echo the cry of the march of intellect."

Before I proceed to make any comments on the Reformation and its influence on the moral and material advancement of mankind, I must refer to the imminent danger to which all Europe was exposed from the daring incursions of a fanatic foe, during a protracted period of time. In the East, towards the end of the sixth century, the false prophet and impostor Mahomet, arose. His religion, so called, spread with the most fearful rapidity. The sanction which he held out to his followers,

"Thrones to the victors,  
Heaven to those who fall,"

inspired them with the most daring recklessness. In process of time his followers overran Syria, Persia, and almost all the Eastern countries. They invaded Spain, and snatched the Sceptre from Don Roderick the last King of the Goths. They took possession of the Island of Sicily, which they retained for two hundred years. "Allah Achbar, God is great and Mahomet is his prophet," was the terrific war-cry which made the nations quake. In the year 719, they passed the Pyrenees, and dashed down like a torrent on the South of France; but Charles, the father of Pepin, uniting his forces with those of Eude, Duke of Aquitaine, gave them a signal defeat, and got the surname of Martel from the hammering, by which he spread such destruction among their ranks. In 1571, Don John of Austria entirely destroyed the Turkish fleet in the gulf of Lepanto. But then arose the Moslem war-cry: "Allah Achbar, God is Great and Mahomet is his Prophet; to the infidels Allah has given the dominion of the sea, but we shall rule the land." Previous to this time, in the year 1517, the Turks were threatening the ruin of Germany and the subversion of Christianity; one of Luther's propositions on this occasion was, "That it is man's duty not only to will all that God requires of us to will, but moreover to will absolutely all that God himself wills;" and from this principle he concluded, "that since the Turk should invade Germany, to resist him would be to resist the will of God." If Catholic Europe had listened to the counsel of this obscene and profligate wretch, to what dangers would its civilization and liberty have been exposed. Before I pass from this subject, I think it will not be irrelevant to briefly glance at that momentous campaign which terminated for ever the grasping ambition of the Moslem. On the second of January, 1683, the fatal horse-tails, the customary signals of an ensuing war, were suspended from the gates of Adrianople; the whole Ottoman Empire was in commotion, preparing to carry fire and sword into the heart of the German Empire, Kara Mustapha, Grand Vizier under Mahomed the Fourth, at the invitation of Count Tekili, marched at the head of 200,000 men, and sat down before Vienna on the fourteenth of July. The whole Christian World was in alarm. Pope Innocent the eleventh and John Solieski had entered into a league to support the Emperor Leopold, for Vienna was justly considered as the Key of Germany, and the great bulwark of Christendom. Upon the first news of the siege, John immediately put his army in motion, and although he had received many affronts from Leopold, forgetting all when the liberties of Europe were at stake and the Religion of Christ was threatened, at the head of 24,000 chosen men he marched with the utmost speed for Vienna, and soon ascended

the mountains adjacent to that city, from whose summit he beheld the myriad turbaned legions of the Moslem spread before him in magnificent array, decked out in all the gorgeous splendor of the East. Having gone to confession, and received Communion at Mass which he served himself, having his arms joined in the form of a cross, he arose and called out aloud, "Let us march to the enemy with an entire confidence in the protection of Heaven under the assured patronage of the Blessed Virgin." Kara Mustapha, with the Khan of Tartary, was drinking coffee out of cups of gold, and jesting at the threatened assault, in a splendid pavilion in view of Sobieski. His noble blood was immediately kindled at the insult, and instantly charging at the head of the fiery and gallant chivalry of Poland, he overcame every obstacle, and swept like a whirlwind amongst the terror-stricken ranks of the infidels. His splendid hussars raising the national war-cry, "God, for Poland," leaped the ditch which would have arrested the infantry and rode with dripping sabres over cleft turban with a fury that could not be resisted. The victory was complete, and John could write to his Queen in Poland, that the Grand Vizier had made him his sole executor. Europe was saved by this truly Catholic Prince, and well was it announced in the Cathedral of Vienna, "there was a man sent from God whose name was John." If the principles of the father of the Reformation were carried out, where now would be the liberties and the civilization of Europe? I think, therefore, that I am justified in asserting that, if it was the Catholic Church which converted all Europe from a state of Paganism and savage barbarism, it was also princes attached to the doctrines of the same Church, who preserved the liberties and civilization of Europe from being utterly annihilated by the formidable attacks of the furious and fanatic Moslems. Secondly, we will now proceed to examine whether the Church of Rome was and is opposed to the moral progress of the human race—and here I would parenthetically observe that almost all the knowledge of Catholic countries, of the history of the Church and the morality pure and sublime, which she inculcates is gleaned by our separated brethren from tainted sources, from hostile and bigoted authorities. The literature of England is anti-catholic by prescription, anti-catholic in all its departments. The day is passed, indeed, when the reader found in every romance a "russian Monk" with reeking dagger or poisoned bowl, and the villain of every plot was a crafty Jesuit or hypocritical Priest, but the poison is administered still with a more delicate, it is true, but not less busy hand. From the lordly folio down to the almost invisible Diamond edition, it may still be found in every shop and upon every stall. In truth this unworthy spirit breathes through the writing of almost every author in the English language, who has occasion to refer to the Church, her practices and doctrines. It is common to the theologian and encyclopedist, novelist and historian. It may be heard hisping in the honeyed numbers of some fair authoress, or found lurking under the gilded decorations of a scrap-book or annual. Of the various sects into which Christianity is divided some are too insignificant to provoke the hostility of their rivals; in others the characteristic difference is too slight or too speculative to afford much room for animadversion; and in all there is one common bond by which they are held together—their common protest against Catholicity. But the Catholic Church has none of these claims to forbearance. In age and extent she is far apart from all her rivals. The line of separation is broad and distinct, excluding all without exception, who do not subscribe to her authority. Hence in all times, and in all places, she has drawn upon herself the hostility and abuse of all sectarians without exception. What wonder, then, that her doctrines are misconceived and her morality misrepresented? But after all, will it not strike the most superficial observer that the loud-boast, that the Reformation advanced the morality of mankind is exaggerated and false? A few facts which I shall presently bring before your notice will, I trust, show that the very contrary was the case.—We do not deny that in some cases a reformation of morals was called for. It was, and that reformation took place. The Fathers of the Christian world assembled at Trent, enacted in reference to morals those wise decrees which effectually put a stop to the evils which existed. But our Reform, says an illustrious writer, was a Conservative Reform; we pruned away the decayed part, we placed the vessel in the furnace and the dross being melted off, we drew it out bright and pure—yours was radical to the extreme; you tore up the entire plant by the root, because you said there was a blight on some one branch; you threw the whole into the fire and made merry at its blaze. Now that you look for it again, you find nothing but ashes. And you are surprised at this. Does it not appear that Divine Providence was graciously pleased