



ARCHBISHOP HUGHES IN REPLY TO GENERAL CASS, AND IN SELF-VINDICATION

(From the N. Y. Courier and Enquirer.)

Some persons imagine that a high honor has been conferred on me by the importance assigned to my name in the great speech which General Cass has thought proper to pronounce in the Senate of the United States. The providence of God has directed that General Cass should serve not only his country but his race in one order of life, and that it should be my humble privilege to serve both in another. I trust that my purity of motives is not inferior to his. But whilst he has steered his prosperous bark on yielding tides and with favoring winds as one of the approved and cherished great men of his country, it has been my lot, though a citizen of the same country, to have been occupied in propelling the little skiff, entrusted to my charge, in a direction generally adverse to the current, whether of wind or tide. General Cass is a Senator—I am, before the law, only a private citizen. I am also an ecclesiastic of the holy Catholic Church, even an unworthy prelate. The duties and speculations of our distinct departments appertain to such divergent relations, although intended to promote ultimately the same great beneficial ends we have in view, that any controversy in regard to them must necessarily appear to the American people and to the civilised world as an extraordinary event, especially under the constitutional charter of our own beloved country, which has so wisely for its circumstances, eliminated religious questions from the deliberations of Congress.

That my name, or any views of mine in an incidental letter should have attracted such serious attention on the part of General Cass, or any other Senator, is to me rather a humiliation than a pride. The circumstance brings me, as a citizen, into an apparent collision with a Senator. I am not disposed to waive either my rights as a citizen, or sacrifice my principles as a patriot and a man, simply because the tide of American public opinion may be turned against me. Neither am I prepared, on the other hand, to say one word in maintaining my position, which, considering my age and rank in the Church, might give apparent sanction to that growing irreverence which is becoming so prevalent in this age, whether as it relates to pre-eminence, civil, ecclesiastical, social, domestic, or senatorial.

To my utter astonishment, General Cass thinks that his name was first brought into my letter without any cause or occasion having been presented on his part. I shall perhaps best discharge my duty in reference to this by giving a brief statement of the circumstances which, I thought, warranted me in using the name of General Cass. The circumstances were these. A man and his wife, named Madiai, had been arrested in Florence. They had been tried according to the laws of their country and condemned to the penalty which the said laws had provided against persons offending as they had done. The report of their crime, as it reached the newspapers of England and America, was that they had been imprisoned, merely for owning and reading their Bible. It was natural and even honorable that all men, whether Catholics or Protestants, should feel and manifest their abhorrence for the disproportion between the alleged crime and the positive penalty. A meeting of sympathy was convened and held in this city (New York). The undersigned with a view to learn the real facts of the case, attended that meeting. The speakers on the occasion, vituperated the Pope of Rome, the Monks of Italy, the Friars, the Jesuits, and the Catholics everywhere. The only person or party that was treated with a decent share of moderation was the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Towards the middle of the proceedings the following resolution complimentary to General Cass, as a bright particular shining out from the dark heavens of human nature, which the orators had been describing, was proposed, and carried by acclamation:—

Resolved—That this meeting firmly believes that it is the duty of the Government of the United States to protect all our citizens in their religious rights, whilst residing or sojourning in foreign lands, approves in the fullest manner of the noble attempt of a distinguished Senator from Michigan, (General Cass); to call the attention of the Government and the public to this important subject; and entertains the confident hope that this Government will speedily secure to its citizens, by the express stipulations of international treaties, the right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, in every foreign land.—N. Y. Times, Jan. 8, 1853.

ever, seemed to me to be sufficient reason for referring to General Cass, by name, in a letter which I wrote some time after. I have ascertained since that the Rev. Dr. Baird, who might be called the chief conductor of the Madiai meeting, was found in a short time afterwards perfectly conversant with the proceedings going on in the Senate touching religious matters abroad. He is reported to have proclaimed in the Hall of the American Institute in Baltimore, on the 17th February, 1853, that Mr. Underwood, a Senator, had done him the honor of reading his (Mr. Underwood's) report on the subject referred to, before reporting it to the Senate, and that he (Dr. Baird) approved of it. That report, if ever published, I have not been able to find; but I think it not improbable that such report would have been in consequence of the reference of a petition from the Maryland Baptist Union Association, which General Cass had so eloquently recommended to the appropriate committee in a speech delivered Jan. 3, 1853, just four days previous to the Madiai meeting.

The petition alluded to had reference especially to the condition of the Baptists under the Protestant Government of Prussia. A reference to this subject is found in a Senatorial document, published from the files of the Department of State, and designated S. Doc. 60. A letter from our Minister at Berlin, Mr. Barnard, dated Jan. 31, 1853, addressed to Mr. Everett, Secretary of State, gives an account of his poor success in attempting to obtain toleration for Protestant subjects of the Protestant government to which he was accredited. Taking this document in connection with what has gone before, there would appear to be a perfect harmony of benevolent feelings among the distinguished persons connected with the subject, namely, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Cass, Rev. Dr. Baird, and Mr. Underwood. The truth of facts, and the accuracy of memory among the parties is not by any means so perfect. Mr. Barnard pleads for subjects of Prussia, who are Baptists; Mr. Cass for the religious rights of Americans who go abroad; Dr. Baird, for international treaties, to secure such rights; Mr. Cass, not for treaties, but for an amiable diplomatic, officious, and unofficial interference everywhere in favor of American religious rights; and Mr. Underwood, as having covered the whole ground by previously reading his report to Dr. Baird, who approved of it even before it was submitted to the Senate.

I trust it will be, as it ever has been, the pleasing duty as well as right of the Executive Department of this Government, to interpose its kind and courteous offices with other State Sovereignities in dissuading from acts of oppression likely to shock the feelings of humanity at large. But for this purpose I think legislation is unnecessary; and under the circumstances I vastly prefer the form of policy presented at the Madiai meeting to that which General Cass has broached in his Senatorial place. The former goes for treaties, and I go for treaties; if anything is to be done in the matter; the latter goes for charging our representatives abroad with half-defined duties, semi-national, semi-religious, semi-benevolent, semi-humanitarian, and if I may be allowed the expression, semi-every-thing—and yet nothing definite. This I trust will be received by General Cass as a sufficient apology for my introducing his name into my letter.

In my letter, to which General Cass takes such exceptions, I stated that, if our American Congress implicated itself in such questions to be seen to by our representatives abroad, I feared that such interference would be regarded by foreign Governments as meddling. I was not then aware that what I anticipated as a probable contingency, had already become a historical fact. It appears from Mr. Barnard's communication, that a letter addressed by him to the King of Prussia, confided to a distinguished hand, had been returned to him—the party declining the responsibility of presenting it. Interviews between our Minister and the King, and the King's private secretary, subsequently took place; and it is amusing to perceive with what amiability of language the King and his Secretary lowered down the American Minister. Diplomacy never employed more courteous language, for the purpose of bowing out an intruder. All this has been substantially recorded by our Minister himself; and I can translate the correspondence in no other sense, under the circumstances, than as if the King and his private secretary, in courteous language, well known to diplomacy, and with refined manners, becoming perfect gentlemen on both sides, had said to Mr. Barnard, "Mr. American Minister, will you have the kindness to mind your own business." Now as a citizen of the United States; I should be sorry that our foreign representatives by any legislative rules should ever be obliged to leave it in the power of majesty or royalty to lower them down to a manner like this.

If under the sincere profession of respect for the character, services, and position of General Cass, which has already been tendered, it should happen that anything may be said by me in this writing apparently at variance with that profession, I trust that he knows me too well to believe for a moment that I am capable of saying one thing, and intending another, directly the reverse. Yet his speech has imposed upon me the obligation of speaking frankly, within the limits that courtesy prescribes. I complain of General Cass. He has done me injustice, not intentionally, of course, but yet he has done me injustice. He has presented as the caption of my letter to the Freeman's Journal, a caption which is not mine at all. And this circumstance leads me to fear that time did not permit him to read attentively the document, insignificant as it was, which his speech professes to review. Again, whenever he does not quote my own identical words, but professes to represent the meaning of my statements, he misrepresents me again, no doubt, unintentionally. His commentaries upon these misrepresented statements of mine must necessarily correspond with the misrepresentations themselves; and thus I am placed, by implication, before the American people as maintaining sentiments, and advocating principles which I abhor and despise. Again, General Cass must permit me to complain of him, in that he suggests an immediate judgment against me at the tribunal of what he calls the "nineteenth century," "the spirit of the age," "public sentiment," and above all, the opinion of the great American public. This is not fair. I have great respect for the American people; but even a Senator of the United States ought not to attempt the extinguishment of honorable manhood in any citizen by waving in his face the threat and danger of his incurring the frown of even the great American people. For the purposes of this argument, it is not necessary that I should incur the frown of either. But if circumstances required it, I am quite prepared to meet the issue; with which the Senator would indirectly intimidate me, and to incur without a murmur, in regard to any question now discussed between us the frown of any people, rather than incur the frown and reproach of my own conscience.

The honorable Senator has represented me as attempting to balance accounts between this country and the Grand Little Duchy of Tuscany. This was not fair. I made no accusations against this country. I merely suggested that civil governments, our own included, are sometimes unable to escape difficulties such as have sent the Madiai from Florence, according to law, and driven unprotected ladies from their dove-cot in Charlestown, in Massachusetts, against law into common banishment. Gen. Cass thinks that inasmuch as the banishment of the Madiai was according to law, in Tuscany, and that of the Ursulines against law and by violence, the comparison is wonderfully against Tuscany and in our favor. I believe directly the reverse. The laws of Tuscany had made known to all parties beforehand, that the establishment of domestic conventicles for the purpose of proselytising the subjects of the Grand Duchy from the established religion, would be visited with the judicial decisions of the established Courts, and would be followed on conviction of parties with the penalties which the law had in such cases provided. Here there was at least fair notice given beforehand. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on the other side, had proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the land, that property, reputation and life, would be safe under the shield of her sovereign protection, unless in the case that all or either should be forfeited according to law and justice applicable to the case. The Madiai of Florence had not been deceived by the laws of the country under which they lived. The Nuns of Charlestown, in regard to the laws of the country in which they had confided, were deceived. The latter, without having incurred even a reproach, much less an impeachment, or trial by jury, or judicial sentence, consequent on such trial, were driven from their own home in violation of law, their property destroyed, the very graves of their departed sisters desecrated. What then? Oh, says Gen. Cass, "that was a mob." My answer is, "So much the worse for his side of the comparison." The State of Massachusetts ought not to have allowed those ladies to spend their money in building a house, and confiding their safety and property to the high promise of its sovereign protection, if the State of Massachusetts felt itself incapable of protecting them. But although in any country in the world it may happen, as it has happened in nearly all, that a mob may have violated the laws, still, when order is restored, such sovereign State having pledged itself to protect personal rights, ought to be prepared to make such necessary reparations as would be possible, with a view to vindicate its own character of sovereignty. Massachusetts has neither protected nor has she compensated. General Cass thinks that re-

paration should have been made. This shows the benevolence of his heart. But the outrage has been on record in the public annals of the country and of the world, for the last twenty years, and even Gen. Cass, had never before betrayed, so far as I am aware, the secret of his kind sympathies to the poor ladies of Charlestown. Neither has any of the great men of Massachusetts, so far as has come to my knowledge, expressed publicly such sympathy for them.—Mr. Everett, or his great predecessor, Mr. Webster, since the burning of the Convent at Charlestown, has hardly been able to find himself in a locality from which it would be possible to look on the Bunker Hill monument, without having at the same time within the range of his vision the black walls and the ruins of Mount Benedict. I have a vague recollection that Mr. Everett did on one occasion, many years ago, refer to the subject in language of regret, but if I am not mistaken in my memory he alleged on that occasion that by false zeal the Convent had been raised, and by false zeal it had been destroyed,—thereby ignoring all distinction between acts loyally and honestly done in faith of protection from the sovereignty of the State, and acts done in violation of the State's laws and contempt of its authority.

It may be easily imagined with what greater pleasure I shall be able to find points of agreement with my own principles of conviction in the apparently hostile views of General Cass than points of divergence or antagonism. And strange as it may appear to some, I am persuaded that there is no difference between the distinguished Senator and myself, in regard to nine-tenths of his great speech. A large portion of it is an assertion, or rather reiteration of patriotic and liberal feelings with which every true American is, as a matter of course, supposed to be imbued. Among his countrymen the Senator from Michigan has acquired an honorable eminence by his well-known patriotism, benevolence of heart, zeal for the advancement of his country's interests, and profound respect for religion, all which have been generally acknowledged if not universally appreciated. His speech will be very much abridged if we put aside all that he has said, developing by implication these noble attributes of his own personal feelings and character. Neither shall I offer one word of apology for the real or supposed crimes insinuated in his speech against Foreign States, whether Catholic or Protestant, for their want of decent humanity regarding the burial of the dead within their limits. In all those States, I take it for granted, there are many things as well as this, which might be advantageously reformed. I would only observe, that Protestants sojourning in Catholic countries, can hardly claim privileges which, if offered in their own, they would not choose to accept. They do not believe in prayers for the dead, and the attendance of Catholic clergymen at the obsequies of the departed, has invariably reference to that belief. Neither do they believe in what Catholics call the consecration, by religious rights, of Catholic cemeteries. Hence, in their own country they prefer to be interred in common ground, not consecrated. I do not see, therefore, any solid reason for its being insisted on that they should be buried in consecrated ground when they are abroad, in Catholic countries, since the very idea of such thing never enters into their mind in their native land. If the following exhibit a correct estimate of what American Protestants believe regarding Catholics, one might infer that the former would have no desire to be interred among such pagans, either at home or abroad.

"THE PRESBYTERIANS vs. THE ROMAN CATHOLICS." "The Presbyterian General Assembly (New School) sitting at Philadelphia, on Thursday, had under consideration a report from a special Committee on 'Popish Baptism.' The report was read by Dr. Hartfield. The question submitted for the consideration of the Committee, was as follows:— 'Is the administration of what is denominated Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church, to be recognised as Christian Baptism?' 'The Committee' said the dispensation of baptism by other than regular ordained Ministers had been departed from by the Romish Church. The Committee concludes that the Romish Church is no longer a Church of Christ, but a synagogue of Satan. The Pope is considered the Anti-Christ. The tendency of the Popish Church is to establish the power of the Pope in all parts of the world, in opposition to the Church and religion of Christ. The forms of the Church of Rome were considered mummeries by the Committee. The latter in conclusion, says: 'The ministers of the Church of Rome are not authorised to administer the sacraments ordained by Christ, our Lord, in the Gospel, and that the administration of what is denominated baptism in the Roman Catholic Church is not to be recognised as Christian Baptism.' The report was signed by Edwin P. Hatfield, D.D., and Samuel H. Cox, the majority of the Committee. Professor Smith, the third member of the Committee, submitted a minority report, differing from the views of the majority, and taking the ground that