

COMMON SENSE IN RELIGION.

It seems to be a subject of great joy and consolation amongst all classes of Protestants that their religion and worldly prosperity go hand in hand; that whenever, at least since the sixteenth century, you find a people progressing and becoming "enlightened" and achieving wonders in science, or art, or literature, that people is sure to be Protestant; and that you have only to point out the Irish, the Italians, the Spaniards, and others to show that the Catholics are not prosperous, not progressive, and are doing nothing for the enlightenment of modern times. This feeling has become so general that Catholics themselves are not wholly unaffected by it. They look around them, and while viewing with just suspicion the reports of far-off countries, they are sufficiently aware of a number of circumstances at home tending to induce them to fall in with the popular cry. The literature of the day and the newspapers which every one must read are Protestant, and by these mediums it would be strange if Protestantism were not exalted. It may not, indeed, be exalted to the heavens, but assuredly it is to the ends of the earth. By these it appears that there is wealth, and influence, and respectability about Protestantism. In the British Empire it towers over everything Catholic as did the Romans over the Jews of old. It is essentially a religion of the world, and it looks as if it would in time possess it. Now that is no argument in favour of Protestantism as a form of religious belief, but, on the contrary, the strongest argument that it is a human and not a divine institution. Many clergymen of the Church of England have felt that if they had less of the good things of this world their Church would be the better for it. To be everything in this world, to have wealth and position and all the prizes of the world at one's back is no sign of belonging to the fold of Him whose kingdom is not of this world. It is gospel truth that these have their reward in this world, and that these princes are already judged.

It is a question of no great discernment or judgment that if a man is free to adopt any or no religion he ought, in justice to his common sense, to fall in with the fashion and wealth and respectability of the world, if that is what he wants and all he wants. He can call himself anything except a Catholic, and he will not then be identified with ignorance and stagnation and poverty. He can believe anything, and keeping the law of the land in view he can say or do anything; but he is expected, as the unfailing test of his creed or condition to protest against Rome. A sure fortune is in store for him if he goes out of Rome and takes to the lecture-hall with some acceptable and respectable novelty. The religion of Protestants to-day has no dogma which may not be shifted except this only—"No peace with Rome." That is a simple *Credo* and ought not to embarrass anyone. There are brilliant possibilities before those who, as Martha, are solicitous for the things of this world; and they would be lacking in common sense if they encumbered themselves with the Creed of the Apostles and of those who seek the better part.

Some Catholic writers have been at pains to show that Catholic nations are not as we hear them represented, and that a people may be Catholic and become just as wealthy, as "enlightened" and as famous as modern Protestant peoples. That all may be but it proves nothing. Worldly prosperity is not what the Catholic Church seeks or cares for. It is no part of her mission to make men wealthy, learned, or skilled in human sciences; but as Catholics in all ages and countries have been famous in everything that the world regards of importance, it is evidence that the Church is not inimical to success in worldly avocations, but, indeed, has preserved and fostered them. On the other hand the Church having in view man's future happiness is concerned only incidentally with his present success; so long as he looks after the affairs of his soul the balance of his time and energies can go for the glory of this world. There were more saints in the time of the persecutions, and when the Church was under the ground, than during the splendour of the reign of Leo X., when to the eye of the world the human side of the Church was at its best. There are brilliant prospects before those who, like Mary, are not solicitous for the things of this world; and they would be lacking in common sense if their main object was to make themselves renowned in this

world, or to devote themselves entirely to its service. The heart of man naturally turns to human greatness and worldly prizes; but it is the office of true religion to correct that wrong idea. The last request of the Jews to the Saviour was that He would restore to them the kingdom of Israel. The reply which He gave and the teachings which He has instilled into His Church are to the effect that His Kingdom is not of this world and that those who put their faith and trust in this world have their reward in it.

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THE MAIL-JESUIT CASE.

"The order has scored first," reported the evening press after the first session of court on the *Mail* libel suit. The decision of Judge Loranger brought the *Mail* to the point of form at issue, the unconstitutionality of the Jesuit Act of Incorporation. It eliminated from its plea vague and sweeping allegations like that of the Order's embodying principles and teaching doctrines subversive of law and morality. It struck from the record the seven volumes of Constitutions and Rules, the Compendium and *Casus Conscientie* of Father Gury, and the infamous commentary of Paul Bert in the *Morales des Jesuites*.

Sir Charles Russell opening his case against the *Times*, styled its allegations the indictment of a nation for a decade of its history, but the vaulting ambition of the *Mail* fabricates a plea which is the indictment of a church, and that the church of all nations for eighteen centuries of its existence. It is the indictment of Christianity and civilization. The principles and maxims embodied in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, the teaching of the Compendium of Father Gury, illustrated in the *Casus Conscientie* are not new. They are as old as the Catholic Church herself, handed down from the Apostles, explained and applied by the Fathers, reduced to scientific method and system by theologians, adopted by the founders of religious orders to the wants and circumstances of their age, and to the aims which they proposed to their followers. The Compendium of Father Gury of which the *Casus Conscientie* shows the application, is a text-book in all Catholic seminaries, and by all Catholic priests in the direction of consciences. It is a summary of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church and its application to conscience in cases of ordinary life. I venture to affirm that the *Mail* and its Counsel did not once read it through. It preferred to take the allegations, like its English prototype the charges, second hand from an infamous commentary on garbled extracts by Paul Bert. I venture to assert that the *Mail* and its counsel cannot read Gury. The Compendium is a scientific exposition of a doctrinal system that only a logical mind, well trained, and aided by a competent preceptor, can grasp. No wonder the *Mail* should shrink from defining allegations, naming rules and axioms and principles, quoting chapter and verse and example. It came into court with a pile of books on its shoulder, and laying them down before the bench, said: These are my allegations, you yourselves know what they contain. I need not tell you what your own vows and rules and principles are. There is Paul Bert, the French radical, who will tell you all about them and show you how subversive they are of religion and morality.

In truth the most striking feature of all this anti-Jesuit agitation has been not so much the display of bigotry as the exhibition of stolid ignorance by those who in tribune, press and pulpit fostered and conducted it. When challenged to prove their assertions by citing volume and chapter they failed. Adducing passages they gave evidences of their incapacity to construe the Latin text or interpret the verbal meaning. On several occasions they falsified and forged and distorted. They read and interpret history as they read and construe Jesuit teaching, looking at all through the coloured prism of their distorted fancy. Had they gone a little deeper into Gury they might have been converted, and so would they have understood that lies and calumny uttered in grandiloquent phrase do not bolster up the cause of liberty and morality.

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