

HAS THE CHURCH OPPOSED PROGRESS AND CIVILIZATION ?

Is it true that the Catholic Church is the enemy of progress and civilization? If you mean by progress Divorce, Polygamy, Sects, Socialism, &c., yes. such things are not the outcome of Catholic teaching. If you mean by progress that continuous advance in the feats of the human mind, whether in the regions of the purely intellectual, or in the practical applications of thought in the material world, the Church has not been the enemy, but the best friend and guide in this world's march to the highest ascents of progress. The mission of the Church is to teach truths of the supernatural order, but as truths in this natural order are from God, as well, the truths in both orders will not contradict or destroy each other, though having different spheres. On the contrary they will be a natural aid to each other. Hence the Church always interested herself in the glory which resulted to religion from being the foster mother and patroness of learning and science.

It will not be denied that there was intellectual progress before Luther preached in Wittenberg, and the world owed it to the Catholic Church. If Guttenburg had waited for seventy years longer before inventing the printing press, and printing the Bible; if Columbus had delayed thirty more years before discovering America; what eloquent orations we would have on the glories of the Reformation, which would have given us the printing press, snatched the Bible from monastic cells, and spread it through the world, and inspired Columbus to sail boldly on the broad ocean in search of a new continent. It is no wonder that the world has made such gigantic leaps in the road of progress since the invention of printing. This progress is falsely attributed to the Reformation, when, in fact, it is due to the rich and varied treasures of the past, the fruits of the patient toil of the clergy of the Catholic Church for eight hundred years. What culture and progress Protestant countries have shown since the 16th century followed as the natural consequence of the activity and discoveries of former periods.

It was the Catholic Church that founded all the great universities of Europe and established the first free school for the people. If the Church were the friend of mental darkness she had the golden opportunity during the Middle Ages to display her spirit and scatter to the winds the sources of enlightenment which she alone possessed. What did she do? The answer should forever silence her calumniators. She gathered up with loving care, beneath the folds of her mantle, the literary treasures of the past, not only the sacred Scriptures and the writings of her own doctors, but all that she could find of the monuments of profane learning from Greece and Rome. She appointed her monasteries to be the depositories of her treasure, and commissioned her monks to guard them, and by their pens to perpetuate them. What time was not spent in prayer, the monks spent teaching the barbarians agriculture, and copying manuscripts for the benefit of generations yet unborn. The Church set to work to dissipate the darkness that had settled on the world outside of her sanctuaries. Profane learning belonged to the natural order, but the natural order was unfit to guard and spread it, and she came to the rescue.

The progress and enlightenment of the present day are largely due to the invention of printing, which is of Catholic origin; but Protestants attribute the advancement of literature to the Reformation, though its progress is due to the discoveries already made by Catholics, as the art of printing afforded facilities which before it did not exist. Protestantism had little direct influence upon literature or science. It built up, it is true, some universities, not half as many as it has destroyed, and contributed liberally to Biblical lore, such as it was. Not much more can be ascribed to it. Nor could it well be otherwise, since being so divided it has no power of organization, and can never exercise much positive influence, except where all join in the cry of protesting against the aggressions of Romanism. That's their strong point.

One of the first acts of the so-called Reformers was to confiscate and destroy the noble institutions reared by the Catholic Church for the spread of education, and then charge the

Catholic Church with hostility to learning. Next they tear violently from Catholics their property, and then charge them with poverty. Let those who feel disposed to deny these facts, first read the Penal Laws on the English Statute Books. Let them read the list which they will find in Cobbet's works of these institutions, and then charge the Catholic Church with ignorance and superstition. Can we wonder that those who thus became enriched with the spoils of the church should have laboured to asperse the character of her ministers who were the previous holders of the property? It is a principle of perverse human nature to hate those whom we have injured, and the spirit of bigotry in regard to the Catholic Church exhibits a frightful carrying out of this maxim.

Who raised up the universities of Oxford and Cambridge? and endowed them before the Reformation was thought of? Who built the magnificent cathedrals of Westminster Abbey, Yorkminster and hundreds of the magnificent cathedrals and abbeys in Great Britain, now in the possession of Protestants? The equals of these structures have not been erected in Protestant times, and yet Catholics who designed and erected them are charged with being the sworn enemies of the fine arts. Another great enactment of the Reformers was to deprive Catholics of the benefits of education. Any one who has read history will not deny this. After all this, is it not a burning shame to repeat the charge that Catholics are hostile to education?

Neither have Catholics been behind in discoveries and inventions. Nicholas, the Cusan, taught that the earth moved, not the sun, one hundred years before Galileo, 1481, and was created Cardinal for his learning. Copernicus, a priest, taught the same in 1500 under the protection of Pope Paul III., and an Irish Bishop, Virgilius, first formed a correct theory of the rotundity of the earth. A Catholic first read the field of the heavens through the telescope, and a Pope regulated the calendar. Father Secchi, who died lately in Rome, was the highest authority on astronomy. A Catholic discovered galvanism, another discovered the compass, another the barometer, and another invented gunpowder. A Jesuit, Father Dunn, discovered and utilized the properties of gas. Spectacles were invented by a monk of Pisa. The first treatise on algebra was given by Lucas Pacciolus, a priest. The Arabian system of arithmetic was introduced into Europe by Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. In later times the greatest sculptor, Canova, was a Catholic; the greatest moral philosopher, Adam Miller, a Catholic; the most learned biblical Wiseman (Cardinal) was a Catholic. Raphael was a Catholic. Catholics almost monopolize singing, painting and architecture. The oldest example of known learning in music is the treatise of a learned priest, Hucbald. It was Guy, another priest, that introduced the scale of musical notes into church singing. The inventor of the church organ was a Catholic. Most of the great music composers have been Catholics—Mozart, Hayden, Clementi Pergolesi, Beethoven, Carl Mard, Von Weber, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Gounod, &c., and nearly all musical artists were Catholics. Engraving was invented by Albrecht Durer, a Catholic priest. Paper was invented by Catholics. The first almanac printed appeared in 1474. The first printing press ever set up in England was placed in Westminster Abbey by William Caxton, a Catholic. The first book printed in America was the "Spiritual Leader of St. John Chmacus," printed in Mexico in 1535, by John Pablos, a Catholic.

This sketch I know is very imperfect, but I think it is sufficient to vindicate the Church from the charge of hostility to learning and progress, and I think it ought to make those ashamed of themselves who either through ignorance or malice make such charges. The feature of the movement in more modern times is that in both Catholic and Protestant countries, the development of the natural order is left very largely to that order itself, where indeed it properly belongs. Individuals or governments without reference to church organizations push forward literature and science. The natural order is now able to take care of itself, as it was not in ages past, and the church has no need to bestow on it that fostering care at one time absolutely necessary. This being the fact, when literary or scientific progress is made in a country, Catholic or Protestant, it does not follow that the glory be-