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THE IDEAS OF A CATHOLIC AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

Translated from the French of Abbé Martinet, for the True Witness.

(Continued from our last.)

10—MEANING OF THE WORD CATHOLICITY.—WHAT THERE IS OF TRULY DIVINE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH.

The divinely distinctive mark which shines resplendent on the brow of our church, is Catholicity. Churches founded by man, bear everywhere the impress of men. Whether they will or not, they have human names, and are called Photians, Waldenses, Lutherans, Calvinists. They have each a date which has nothing divine, the sixteenth, seventeenth, or nineteenth century. Going forth from the earth, they are subject to the earth. They cannot cross the limits of one state, without falling into the territory of another. They are Anglicans, Scotch, Dutch, Swiss, Germans of an hundred different kinds, Swedes, Danes, Greeks, Greco-Armenians, Greco-Russians, Chaldeans, &c.

In vain have heresy and unbelief sought in christian history a time when the Catholic Church was not; they are obliged to admit that she has no date.

In vain have empires and kingdoms said to our Church: "Be ours, all ours, and ours only! If our territories be too limited for thee, join forces with us, and we shall extend it. What should prevent thee from being great and happy? Hast thou not magnificent cathedrals, rich bishoprics and livings, flourishing universities, and a fair share of the temporal power? Thou shalt retain all that, and obtain much more, if thou wilt only break with the stranger; but if thou wilt keep on good terms with our foes, then shall we treat thyself as one of them. Confiscation, exile, and the scaffold—these shall be thy portion."

The Church has invariably answered: "No temporal advantage, no earthly power shall make me abdicate the empire confided to me by my spouse, when he said to me: 'Go, teach all nations.' The spiritual mother of all nations, and of all men, no nation or no man can ever be a stranger to me. The dispenser of the word of life and of the blood shed for all, woe to me, and woe to you, if I consented to give up to you the universal heritage!"

That which is divine in the spirit of Catholicity is not precisely propagandism, or the desire of communicating itself to all. Has there ever been a heresy which did not aspire to overrun the entire world? That which is divine, that which is superior and even contrary to human wisdom, is the sacrifice which the Catholic Church has ever made of what she had in possession to what she had yet to gain, and might never gain; it is her sacrifice of men to humanity, of things to principles, of the particular to the general.

When the popes and bishops of the fourth and fifth centuries suffered themselves to be anathematised, driven into exile, or even slaughtered by Arianism, seated on the imperial throne, and in many episcopal sees, rather than sacrifice to it the word consubstantiality, and a name which was also a principle, the great name of Athanasius;—when St. Gregory the Seventh saw arrayed against him the powers of the earth with a great portion of the clergy, and died in exile rather than give up to sovereigns the investiture with cross and ring;—when Clement VII, who had already lost more than a third of Europe, chose rather to loose also the three united kingdoms of Great Britain, than to abandon the cause (for it involved a principle) of Catherine of Arragon;—when Pius VI, though seeing all the Catholic nations raised against the Holy See, yet hesitated not to place the first of those nations between schism and the abandonment of the civil constitution of the clergy;—when Pius VII, under the very claws of the Imperial eagle, spurned the insidious promptings of fear, and defended, by all the means at his command, that patrimonial inheritance without which the chiefs of the Church would be, in the eyes of the world, no more than the political tool of some earthly potentate; when popes and bishops acted thus, did they not walk against the dictates of worldly policy?—Success, it is said, justifies them.—Yes, but what eye could foresee that success?

At the time when, according to St. Jerome, the world was amazed and groaned beneath Arianism, could it be foreseen that, before two centuries, Arianism should have run its race, and that everywhere, on the tombs of that hydra-headed monster, altars should be erected to its destroyers?

Mildebrand, so loudly and so often accused of having himself excited the fearful troubles which caused him to die far away from the tomb of Peter, could he foresee, without a supernatural enlightenment, that the Church and all nations would do homage to him for their spiritual independence, and that his name, revered even by the enemies of Rome, should be surrounded with such a halo of glory, as to draw from the modern Alexander the exclamation: "If I

were not Napoleon, I should wish to be Gregory VII!"

At the moment when Clement VII, with tearful eyes, signed the sentence of unfaithful Britain, nothing was less probable than the wondrous revolution which was then (1534) preparing, in the Church of Montmartre, by a Biscayan officer, maimed some years before at the siege of Pampeluna. Who could foresee that those disciples, then pledging themselves to Ignatius, would set out, some to attack heresy in its stronghold, to arrest its course, and drive it back to its centre, others to evangelise the vast continents of Asia, and the New World, to replace twenty nations lost by thousands of nations and of tribes, and to substitute for the fearful prospect of universal apostasy, the fruitful hope of the world's conversion?

In 1791, could Pius VI flatter himself that the nation, whose representatives erected altars to Voltaire and Rousseau, and scaffolds to bishops and priests, would soon restore its altars, recall its priests, and hail the arrival of his successor with unheard-of gratulation?

Could Pius VII, under the sabres of Radet's dragoons, and transferred from the prison of Savona to that of Fontainebleau, could he know, or could he hope that the till-then sworn enemies of the Holy See, from the apostolic throne to the most heretical princes, would conspire together to break the fetters of the Church?

The wisdom of the Church is not like unto our wisdom. She incessantly commits blunders which grieve, and even mortify the worldly-wise amongst her children. But somehow it happens in the end, that these very blunders prove to have been marvelously-prudent calculations.

LECTURE BY CARDINAL WISEMAN.

SUBJECT:—THE CATHOLIC'S SAFEGUARD AGAINST PROTESTANT OBJECTIONS.

"Who among you will convict me of sin."—John viii. 46.

Judging, my brethren, from the dispositions manifested by the Jews during the discourse contained in this chapter of the Gospel, we can easily imagine a murmur break out in some part of that crowd, and indignant expostulations raised against these solemn and stern words. "Who shall convict you of sin?" Why, have not our Priests proved again and again to the satisfaction of their hearers that your doctrines are blasphemous? "Who shall convict you of sin," when it has been proved to evidence that you pretend to supersede the written word of God, and to add to the precepts of the Law, which God has forbidden should be increased by a single word?—

"Who shall convict you of sin," when, to your very face, the Priests of your own country, and the men learned in its laws, have not feared to assert that you are in league with the Evil One, and that even the wonderful works which you seem to perform are wrought by the agency of the very guiltiest of demons? "Who shall convict you of sin," when, at this moment," as one might perhaps have put in the suggestion, "councils are being held by the princes of your own nation to see how they can stem the torrent of evil-teaching and practice which you are introducing—when it has been demonstrated that your system (your religion, as you call it) is in reality an usurpation of the rights of the State and of the sovereign power—when they are consulting how the arm of the law may be brought in to kill you—and when they are satisfied that the whole of your scheme is that the Romans should come and take your place and nation." And some one, more artful, and more crafty, and more deeply plotting of the Pharisees might whisper, "Wait a short time; and when you see him crucified and all his followers dispersed, then we shall see whether he had a right to speak those words of boasting."

Thus, my brethren, it might easily be imagined a running commentary upon these words of our Lord scattered perhaps through various parts of the crowd, in its different sentiments. But while the words are being spoken, and while they were going on not attending to the few sentences that followed that which struck them as such an act of temerity, stones are being taken up, and they are thrown at Jesus for presuming to assert His own most lawful rights.

And why is this, my brethren? Where is the key to this strange treatment of the word of God? Why, the answer is simple. It was, if I may so speak, His very mission. It was necessary for Him to accomplish what had been spoken of Him, that it should be so—that the whole course of His Divine teaching should bring a series of stupid interruptions, of most unfeeling objections made to everything that He spoke, because it had been said of Him from the very first time that He manifested himself in His temple, that He was set up to be contradicted.

And if I, my brethren, now say to you, as I have often said, that the Church of God is the Spouse

of Christ, and must be like Him in all that concerns her public ministry, and were I to tell you that she has been made like to Him in nothing more than in this—that it is her right to teach with the same authority with which He taught—that, like Him, she is not liable to err, or lead you astray when you put yourselves under her guidance—should I be surprised if I heard with my imagination, at least, the same words spoken concerning the assertion of the claims of the Spouse of our Lord? Should I be surprised if I heard it said, "You ask in the name of this Church. Who can convict her of error or sin, when, is it not notorious that from the press and platform, in pamphlet and in speech, and in every form in which assertion of all that hear and read to be but a corrupt and blasphemy-teaching Church? Who shall convict her of error and sin, when her very principles make her depart from the teaching of God's Word, and put aside the Bible, and fill the minds of men with her ungrounded traditions? Who shall convict her of error, when you know that the very State itself is put in commotion at the prospect of her advance—when that Church of yours is considered in reality to be attempting to usurp the authority and assume the jurisdiction which belongs to the temporal power, and to bring about that very same effect which the Jews contemplated, that Rome will usurp, not merely the spiritual teaching, but the very liberties and rights of the State—and when it has been seen that those who consider themselves aggrieved appeal, and have appealed to the temporal power to protect them against the encroachments of this Church that claims to guide and teach all mankind?"

Shall I be surprised at this, my brethren? Oh, no; so long as I believe that the Catholic Church has taken by appointment the very place of our Divine Lord in teaching upon earth—so long as I believe her invested with authority to teach and instruct, and to guide to all truth, which necessarily finds itself in jarring conflict with the passions of the heart and the inflated intellect of man. I shall not be surprised, moreover, when I know that her mission in respect to contradiction was the same. When St. Paul came to Rome, the Jews had seized already upon the characteristics of his teaching. "We wish to hear something from you concerning this sect which is everywhere contradicted." As Jesus was set up that He might be contradicted, and as the whole of His benevolent course of instruction by word and by deed was a series of incessant obloquy and contradiction, so am I not startled, but consoled and encouraged, when I see from the beginning this same became a characteristic of the Church of Christ; that they who heard it not before were anxious to know something about it on the very ground that every one spoke ill of it, that it was everywhere contradicted. And, my brethren, is it not the case now as it was in the time of St. Paul? Surely the experience of but a few months or of but a few years will suffice to prove this.

Having, therefore, been engaged now for some evenings in examining these contradictions that are made to the teachings of our Lord, and the time has come for me to bring them to a close, I propose to wind up the subject by cautioning you concerning the objections which as yet you may not have heard answered. And, having found it impossible to do justice to but a very limited portion of my subjects, I will conclude this evening by endeavoring to give you some general rules which may be greatly useful in aiding you to meet, to reply, or at any rate, to be on your guard against contradictions and objections which may come upon you for the first time.

1. The first rule that I would request you to keep in mind when objections against Catholic doctrines are brought before you is, to insist that our religion be treated as a fact, and not as a theory; as a real existence, and not as a system.

You will be told, for instance, and it has been repeated a thousand times in every possible form, that the Catholic religion is incompatible with the existence of rational freedom in a nation—that it is essentially opposed, also, to the progress of art and prosperity. Now, to prove this, you will hear, you will read declamations against the principles of Catholics—assertions of what they hold upon subjects connected with civil rights. You will find the supremacy of the Pope, the authority of the clergy, and the influence of the Confessional, all made to bear upon this proposition. And it will appear to come out as almost a necessary consequence, "therefore, the Catholic religion is not compatible with the existence of true freedom in a country."

And then, if the pamphleteer or the orator wishes to satisfy his audience still further, he turns with an indignant air to some countries of Europe, and says, "Look at Spain, behold Austria, witness Naples, and then you see what the Catholic faith makes a nation become—down in the very lowest depth of the scale of civilisation, with no real generous sentiments of

freedom, with no honorable aspirations, with no desire to enjoy, even to breathe that very air of liberty which is the atmosphere of an Englishman." My brethren, this sounds very suspicious, and it makes a tremendous impression. It is followed by volumes of cheers, and it is received on the platform with a smile of triumph and self-complacent approbation.

Now, my brethren, no amount of reasoning can stand against facts. The Catholic religion is not a philosophy. It is not a system of ideas of which you can pronounce by learned reason that it will or will not give effect. It is a thing existing for centuries, existing now; and, therefore, facts as resulting from that existence are the only true tests which can be applied to such a statement. These speakers, who denounce in such vivid terms those few countries of Europe which I have mentioned, not in consequence of any opinion or feeling of my own; but because they are the popular illustrations, never think of telling you what is a very simple fact, and, as such, is surely worth being put in the balance against an abstract reasoning—they never tell you that the Catholic religion is at this moment the religion of the republic of Switzerland, and that the Catholic Cantons of that country are as much and as strongly attached to the liberties purchased for them by their ancestors, as are the inhabitants of this island. Nay, more. It is the Catholic Cantons which have preserved and retained among them the very cradle of that liberty amid their rocky fastnesses. And the Catholics of Lucerne point to their magnificent chapels, and their monuments, with as much triumph and as much thankfulness to God, as does any Protestant here point to any trophy of ancient liberties.

These men do not tell you that there is in a portion of the Alps, a race or family of men perhaps exhibiting the most true specimen of stern, manly, honest deep Christian morality—that the Tyrol is the delight of all who wish to see an unsophisticated peasantry, true to their sovereign and true to their God—men who have shown themselves when the invaders came, as brave in defending their mountain homes, as have ever been the English, or any other Protestant race. And they are Catholics. These men are Catholics, not only Catholics—Oh, but go among them and see what their Catholicity is. From mountain and crag down to the valley and stream, there is not a jutting point in which the crucifix is not every where seen—there is not a turning in the road where the elegant and beautifully festooned chapel, showing the freshness of devotion, does not meet you with a lamp burning before the image of God's most Blessed Mother. And you will meet the peasants returning home from their labor with the rosary in their hands, and they will salute you with Christian and Catholic words as you pass. And these men—Oh, no—they are never brought before the public to show what the Catholic religion can do. They are bound to say in all fairness that though they believe that the Catholic religion is not compatible with rational freedom, yet the whole continent of South America has thrown off the yoke of monarchy—has divided itself into almost countless independent republics—and is kept as attached to the Catholic faith as when they were glad to call themselves the subjects of a most Catholic king. Nay, they are even charged with bigotry in not allowing Protestantism to diffuse itself among them.

My brethren, why are not these facts brought before the public when the inquiry is proposed, "What is the influence of the Catholic religion on freedom and liberty?" Why take a number of subjects very vaguely and indefinitely put, and brought before the public with the popular declamation, "No man of these can be free?"

But that is not all. This fact of Catholicity is historical. It does not belong merely to the present age and generation. It has had a real existence for many centuries. With those same denunciations of Popery as connected with abject servility, are you ever told, by brethren—I address such as have been laid away by this sort of popular demonstration—that there existed as watch-towers of liberty upon each side of Italy's entrance two great republics, which for a course of centuries were more jealous of freedom than any modern nation has been. For they are reproached, if anything, with having guarded their freedom with mysterious and unjustifiable safeguard in order to be protected against even the chance of oligarchy—Genoa and Venice. Venice, dear to the recollections of all who have ever seen it, and splendid in the annals of history!—That Venice, which erected more beautiful temples to God and to the Invocation of His Saints, than any other kingdom of the world, and which put far more trust for its argosies and richly-laden fleet, returning home in safety in the Invocation of God's Blessed Mother, and in bearing home rich gifts for His temple, than in the securities of underwriters or of insurances by wealth. That city, my brethren, was free—as free