

PASTORAL LETTER OF THE RT REV DR. WALSH, THE NEW VICAR APOSTOLIC OF THE LONDON DISTRICT.

Thomas, by the Grace of God, and the favour of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Cambysopolis, and Vicar Apostolic of the London District, to our dearly Beloved in Christ, the Clergy Secular and Regular, and the Laity of the London District.

Health and Benediction in our Lord

Notwithstanding my earnest representation to the assembled Cardinals that, independently of other reasons, the weak state of my health rendered me totally unfit for the important station in the Church, to which, I understood, it was in contemplation to raise me, from the circumstance of my being the senior Vicar-Apostolic, my objections were overruled, and his Holiness has imposed on me a *sacratissimum preceptum*.—There was no alternative but submissively to bow to Supreme Authority.

At the same time, for my consolation and encouragement, it was intimated to me that, in consequence of my infirmities, I should not be required to take on myself more of Church government than I found my strength equal to.—Hence the highly talented, learned, and truly zealous Bishop Wiseman has been given to me for my Coadjutor *cum jure successionis*.

Your experience, my beloved brethren, during the last twelve months, of his Lordship's eminent theological attainments, and his unremitting exertions for the "beauty of God's house" and the salvation of souls, must, I feel convinced, have gained for him your confidence, respect, and esteem.

Unwilling, therefore, to occasion the least interruption in the great and glorious work of God, in which he has been hitherto so meritoriously and successfully engaged, it is my wish that you should continue, as before, to consult his Lordship in all matters, spiritual and temporal, affecting religion.

I shall deem it a most sacred and pleasing duty to give to my esteemed Coadjutor all the assistance that my poor abilities and weak state of health will allow.

My Beloved Brethren, grateful to our Heavenly Father for His most tender mercy and love in having graciously made us members of His true Church, and eager to procure for others the happiness we ourselves enjoy, let us in *blessed union and charity*, walking worthy of the vocation in which we are called, Catholics in deed and in truth, preach to all around us the beauty, the consolations, the pure morality of our Holy Religion; and animated by the cheering prospect for the conversion of souls lying open before us, let us by every Christian means in our power, spiritual and temporal, zealously seek to add to the number of true adorers, and thus to give glory to God on high, joy to the angels in Heaven, peace on earth to men of good will.

The grace and blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Given at London, this sixteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord 1848.

Thomas, Bishop of Cambysopolis, and Vicar-Apostolic of the London District.

THE BIBLE

We find the following excellent remarks on the Bible, in a discourse delivered at Madrid, before the Royal Academy of Languages, by Senor Donoso Cortes, and published in the last number of the *Catholic Magazine*.—

There is a book, the treasure of a nation, which has now become the fable and the reproach of the world, though in former days the star of the east, to whose pages all the great poets of the western world have gone to drink in divine inspiration, and from which they have learned the secret of elevating our hearts and transporting our souls with superhuman and mysterious harmonies. This book is the Bible—the Book of books. In it Dante saw his terrific visions; from it Petrarch learned to modulate the voice of his complainings; from that burning forge the poet of Sorrentum drew forth the splendid brightness of his songs. Without it, Milton would not have viewed woman in her first weakness, man in his first error, Satan in his first conquest, God in his first frown; nor would he have related to the world the tragedy of Paradise, nor haunted in tones of sorrow the evil fate, the sad doom of the human race. And to speak of our own Spain. Who taught the great master, Fray Luis de Leon, his simple sublimity? From whom did Herrera learn his lofty, commanding and vigorous intonation? Who inspired Riquelme with those mournful lamentations, full of pomp

and majesty, and replete with sadness, which he let fall over the dried up fields, and over the parched hills, and over the ruins of empires, like a funeral pall? In that school did Calderon learn to soar up to the eternal mansions, as upon the wings of the wind? Who placed before the eyes of our great mystical writers the dark abysses of the human heart? Who put in their lips those holy harmonies, those tremendous imprecations, those prophetic denunciations, those bursts of sublimity, and those sweet accents of burning charity and of chaste love, with which, while at one time they struck terror into the conscience of the sinner, at another they raised to extatic raptures the pure souls of the just. Suppress the Bible in imagination, and you suppress all that is beautiful and noble in Spanish literature; or at least you strip it of its sublimest outpourings, and of its richest ornaments, of its proudest pomps, of its holy magnificence.

In the Bible are written the annals of heaven, of earth, and of the human race. In it, as in the Divinity itself, is contained that which was, which is, and which is to come. In its first page is recorded the beginning of time and of all things—in its last the end of all things, and of time. It begins with Genesis, which is an idyl; it finishes with the Apocalypse of St. John, which is a funeral hymn. Genesis is beautiful as the first breeze which refreshed the world, as the first flower which budded forth in the fields, as the first tender words which humanity pronounced, as the first sun that rose in the east. The Apocalypse is sad, like the throb of nature, like the last ray of light, like the last glance of the dying; and between the funeral hymn and that idyl, we behold all generations pass, one after another, before the sight of God; and one after another, all nations. The tribes go with their patriarchs; the republics with their magistrates; the monarchies with their kings; the empires with their emperors. Babylon passes with her abominations; Nineveh with her splendour; Memphis with her priesthood; Jerusalem with her prophets and temple; Athens with her arts and her heroes; Rome with her diadem and with the spoils of the world. Nothing remains but God. All the rest passes and dies, as passes and dies the foam that rises on the crest of the waves.

There all catastrophes are related or predicted, and therefore immortal models for all tragedies are to be found there. There we find the narration of all human griefs; and therefore the Biblical harps resound mournfully, giving the tone to all lamentations, and to all elegies. Who will again mourn like Job, when driven to the earth by the mighty hand that afflicted him, he fills with his groanings and waters with his tears the valleys of Idomea? Who will again lament as Jeremiah lamented, wandering around Jerusalem, the abandoned of God and men? Who will be mournful and gloomy, with the gloom and the mournfulness of Ezekiel, the poet of great woes and of tremendous punishments, when he gave to the winds his impetuous inspiration, the terror of Babylon? Who shall again sing like Moses, when, after crossing the Red Sea, he chaunted the victory of Jehovah, the defeat of Pharaoh, the liberty of his people? Who shall again chaunt a hymn of victory, like that which was sung by Deborah, the sibil of Israel, the amazon of the Hebrews, the strong woman of the Bible? And if from hymns of victory you pass to hymns of praise, what temple shall ever resound like that of Israel, when those sweet harmonious voices arose to heaven, mingled with the soft perfume of the roses of Jericho, and with the aroma of oriental incense? If you seek for models of lyric poetry, what lyre shall we find comparable to the harp of David, the friend of God, he who listened to the sweet harmonies and caught the soft tones of the harps of angels? or to that of Solomon, the wisest and most fortunate of monarchs, the inspired writer of the song of songs; he who put his wisdom into sentences and proverbs, and finished by pronouncing that all was vanity? If you seek for models of bucolic poetry, where will you find them so fresh and so pure as in the scriptural area of the patriarchate, when the woman and the fountain and the flower were friends, because they were all united, and each one by itself the symbol of primitive simplicity, and of candid innocence? Where shall we find but there those pure and chaste sentiments, and the glowing modesty of wedded life, and the sweet mysterious fragrances that surrounded the patriarchal families?

And thence it is, that all great poets, all who have felt burning within their breasts the inspiring flame of Moses, have run to quench their

thirst at the scriptural fountains of ever-living waters; new forming impetuous torrents, now wide and deep rivers—at one time thundering cascades and boiling torrents, at another, tranquil lakes and peaceful reservoirs.

A prodigious book that, in which the human race began to read, thirty-three centuries ago, and although reading in it every day, every night, and every hour, have not yet finished its perusal. A prodigious book that, in which all is computed before the science of calculation was invented; in which, without the study of languages, we are informed of the origin of languages; in which, without astronomical studies, the revolutions of the stars are computed; in which, without historical documents, we are instructed in history; in which, without physical studies, the laws of nature are revealed. A prodigious book that, which sees and knows all; which knows the thoughts that arise in the heart of man, and those which are present to the mind of God; which views that which passes in the abysses of the sea, and that which takes place in the bottom of the earth; which relates or predicts all the catastrophes of nations, and in which are contained and heaped together all the treasures of mercy, all the treasures of justice, and all the treasures of vengeance. A book in short, which, when the heavens shall fold together like a gigantic scroll, and the earth shall faint away, and the sun withdraw its light, and the stars grow pale, will remain alone with God, because it is his eternal word, and shall resound eternally in the heavens.

SAINT GEORGE'S.

The opening of St. John's magnificent church, Salford, was not attended by any of the St. George's people, although it was a matter of deep regret to them that they could not attend. The numerous meeting of the country Priests of the Midland, Lancashire, and Northern and Western Districts, at the opening of St. George's made it a duty incumbent on the St. George's people to attend at Salford, and they feel it required of them to account for their absence on the joyful occasion. Without publishing the circumstances which kept them all at home, one may just hint at a very interesting celebration that took place in the chapel of our Blessed Lady on St. Laurence's Day. It was the first of the kind in St. George's and the very building itself seemed to know the principal parties engaged therein. The preceding day was occupied in arrangements for the event, and, instead of preparing for a journey to Salford, other matters of importance had to be provided for. We all regretted the stern necessity which bound us hand and foot at home, yet one is compelled at times to take things for "better or worse."

We are magnificent, glorious, overpowering, matchless in our public celebration; so far it is, indeed, splendored—everything, and the music is coming about. The Litany, on Saturday nights, in procession round the church, is very devotional; it is at eight o'clock. Last Sunday night the Guilds of London moved round the aisles of the church to the rhythm of the Litany, with their special costume and banners. My heart is ready to jump out of its place—it is too much for me. Where are we? in London, or Bruges, or Rome? Is it all a dream? St. George's and all its beauty and magnificence, and full rite and wonders, glittering—golden—effulgent! And then the "Ave Maria" repose in the silent, sweet, beautiful St. George's! There is the lamp ever burning within the golden chapel of the ever to be adored and adorable Sacrament, and nearly always some heart beating its pulsations of love before it—this must bring benediction and grace on St. George's.

The most glorious function in St. George's was last Sunday morning, when after the High Mass a solemn procession of the Adorable Sacrament, carried by the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, under a rich canopy of eight bearers—Lord Arundel and Surrey, the Hon. Charles Langdale, Hon. Phillip Henry Howard, Messrs. Alfred Lock, Henry Coope, W. Henry Bosanquet, Frederick Capes—all Converts—and Ernest Scott—moved round the interior of the spacious church, with cross-bearers, singing boys and men, confraternities—rather "ly" of St. George's—and a long lengthened line of attendants in white surplices, with children scattering flowers, and fuming censers, and lights, and Priests, and cope men, and all that could render magnificence more magnificent, beauty more beautiful, impressiveness more impressive. The church was too crowded and the long develop-

ment of the procession, and so far our procession of this morning was more effective, because the church was less crowded; but not withstanding the difficulty the procession found in making its way through the dense multitude, its effect was beyond description religiously impressive and beautiful. Some years since, at St. John Lateran's, I saw something similar to it, but not at all to be compared to our procession of last Sunday at St. George's. Don't open your eyes in amazement, my dear Romanes, no one venerates Rome more than Father Thomas; but I tell you what, that things are done as well here, if not better, than in Rome, and with much greater solemnity, reverence, earnestness, and deep devotion. We are all in earnest, intense earnestness here; no looking about, no hurry, no nothing but the one stern, real thing—all absorbing adoration and love of the great and Holy God whom we are striving to honour.

Perhaps I am a shade too severe in these matters, but nothing will do for me in holy functions, when God Almighty is before us to receive our worship, but the most reverential and breathless attention. Even in the sacristy I cannot bear anything above a whisper; and loud talking, and running unmeasuredly to and fro, and fuss and bounce, make me happy beyond expression. Father Thomas is not a pious fool who never laughs or swaggers and foots it about. Perhaps amongst his other weaknesses, he is rather too funny for his gravity of office and standing; perhaps he is much too sunny—Don't say "perhaps," but the real truth is that he is so. Well, let it be as you like, he cares for your cause and confesses his fault, and that is something after all; but be that as it may, there is a time for everything excepting sin, and the time for reverence and demeanour befitting high and holy things is, at all times, when one is in or even near the sanctuary of the living God. Don't work me up into indignation so that I could almost scourge you out of the temple—then be silent, be grave, be reverential in the courts of the Lord of Hosts. The functions in Saint George's hitherto would do honour to Saint Peter's in Rome. There is nothing, for the dimensions of the place and its narrow (oh, how narrow!) means, that at all approach to it in this country or any other. Look at Westminster Abbey with all its revenues, and look at Saint George's on a high festival or a common day! One thing must be said, that the opening, and high celebrations since, owe their principal arrangement and credit to the successful exertions of Mr. Burton, the Sacristan. Too much cannot be said in commendation of this gentleman's skill and taste in matters connected with the chancel and, on the opening day, with most other things. This is a duty on my part to make known my feelings of high consideration for the exertions—and efficient exertions—of Mr. Burton; he deserves this, and their it is for him. Everybody else will come in for it by degrees, for right is right every day in the week.

The Adorable Sacrament, ever since Sunday, has been exposed for the worship of the faithful, and every hour, night, and day, until the morning of the High Mass, there has been worshippers before the Divine Presence! What a blessed coming about is this. How, after so many and so great irreverences, indignities, and for so long a night of adversity and repression, is it that the "Holy One" is again adored in London in this sacrament of his love? And what do I see? Who are those bent-down adorers—like adoring seraphs before the Throne—who are paying their hearts offerings to the hidden Holy One? Amongst others, men and women until lately scoffers and revilers of the Divine Presence in the Eucharist: some of them lately Ministers of the Protestant sect—pardon the word, but is it not the word of truth—who are now zealous and ardent, and too happy to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and to give up all things for His sake. The glorious Forty Hours' Adoration terminated this morning with a solemn procession: it was well attended throughout.

The Church was well filled last night with the poor—with those who, after all, are the crown and glory of the Church. They come, poor faithful souls, to speak with him who is their only consolation. Talk of religion, faith, and feeling,—get amongst them and learn your lesson how to worship God. Without a red-screen the Forty Hours' duration would have been half its effect. The "within the Sanctuary" all glory and beauty? Guarded, but not a highway—this Sanctuary, within the red-screen, looked like Heaven, and Heaven's end was there.

FATHER THOMAS.

Tuesday, Octave of the Assumption.