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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.

1.—WHAT EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN AND OUGHT TO DO.

Who will bring Europe into the way of regeneration which the divine mercy seems to open before her? You, Christians! you, even the lowest in station, provided you will only lay hold on the lever which sets the world in motion, because its resting-place is in heaven: that lever is prayer. Should you say but once in the day, with your heart rather than your lips, those words which the Son has taught us to address to our heavenly Father: *Thy kingdom come!* you will do a great deal.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, men poured too much over the Greek and Latin authors: they wrote much, but they prayed little. Knowledge has power, but prayer has all power.

The Catholic heroes who then restrained the tide of error, and every where drove it back—those Jesuits, whose labors have been celebrated by a Protestant writer, as also their prodigious success in Germany;—they were men of prayer, as well as of learning.

Here we have been some years praying for the conversion of England, and lo! heresy cries aloud in anguish, bewailing the multitude of her losses. So Spain was all but lost to the Catholic world; we prayed, and the impious oppressor was driven into exile.

Let us never forget that minds and hearts obey God, and that God obeys prayer. Who is there amongst us that cannot pray?

But we must also act, and what are we to do? First of all, we must free ourselves from the bonds of error, and renounce the perverse choice which we too often make amongst the precepts, either of God or of the Church, practising this, and neglecting that. Let us live as we think, obedient children of God and of the Church.

People will be easily convinced that our religion is pure and undefiled by error, when they see it over-come all our vices. A holy life is the best apology for our faith. It sheds a soft, mild light, which illumines, without dazzling the diseased mind; and imperceptibly it works its way into the heart, without producing that reaction of pride which too often follows a defeat in some polemical contest.

Let us do what we would wish to say, and we shall speedily acquire the art of saying it well. We can only master religion, in so far as religion is mistress of our heart. She only reveals herself fully to those who love her, and she is only loved by those who practise her prescriptions. Words which come from the mind are cold and captious; those which spring from the heart are warm and persuasive, and carry all before them, when embodied in the virtues.

A virtuous neighbor, or a truly pious servant, will do more for the conversion of an erring family, than the most skillful controversialist whom they may read, or hear.

There is no one, therefore, who may not be an apostle.

2.—STUDY OF RELIGION—ITS NECESSITY, AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

Let us also study. The study of religion should end only with life. He knows nothing of it, who says: I know it well enough. The knowledge of God, of man, of the world; in a word, religious science has no other limits than those of the human understanding.

This is the most indispensable of all sciences, indeed it is the only one that is indispensable, for what does one know if he be ignorant of what he is, whence he comes, whither he goes, and what he has to do?

Every one of our mental miseries, nay, even the greater number of our bodily ailments, spring from the want of religious intelligence. As evil consists in disorder, that is to say, in opposition to order, which is the source of all good, one is unhappy only because he is vicious; he is vicious, because he is ignorant. It is only by darkening the mind, that the passions triumph over the will. Enlighten the mind fully, and the evil passions will vanish like shadows at the approach of the rising sun. The idea is from the divine Master Himself: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome." Evil inclinations have no admission to heaven, because there the light is full and perfect. Advance in the knowledge of God and of yourselves, and you will rapidly approach perfection. Perfection is no other than happiness, the term of all the aspirations of the soul: the latter only suffers because of her errors and imperfections, and she shall cease to suffer only by getting rid of these.

* Ranke's History of the Popes.

Indispensable to our moral perfection, and to our happiness, religious instruction is not less necessary for enabling us to fulfil our duty to our heavenly Father, and to our brethren in Jesus Christ.

Christianity is all charity,—love of God and of men. Our first duty towards God, as soon as we have the happiness of knowing and loving Him, is to extend that knowledge and that love to others. The first good that we ought to do our brethren, if we truly love them, is to teach them to know and to glorify their Maker,—thereby opening to them the source of all good. Good example does much, but it is not sufficient. Pious practices may appear trivial, and of little importance to those who know not their meaning. Instruction is the true basis of edification.

Living in the midst of a world wherein religion has been so long calumniated and scoffed at, the Christian should be prepared to render an account of his faith and its peculiar observances. If your arguments are weak, you will confirm the unbeliever in the notion that religion cannot bear an examination, and that it is fit only for the simple and unlearned. If your reasoning, without being scientific, displays a firm and enlightened conviction, you will deposit the germ of life in the mind of your erring brother.

Let that germ grow and fructify through the benign influence of the grace which your prayers will draw down, aided on your part by watchful, though not importunate attention, and you will procure for God, His angels, and His saints, a festival of great joy. You know that a soul delivered from the bonds of error, is the precious blood of Christ snatched from Satan, and restored to the veins of Him who sits at the right hand of the Father. Jesus Christ will not thank you overpaid when He bestows upon you the glory of heaven, and the eternal enjoyment of His adorable presence, should you bring Him back a soul for which He came down from heaven and gave Himself up to death.

In an age like ours, when so many minds are in quest of truth, what treasures may be heaped up and stored away, where the rust or the robber cannot reach, by solid religious instruction, joined to an exemplary life! This is, indeed, the precious stone mentioned in the Gospel, which a prudent merchant will not hesitate to purchase at the expense of all he has.

Again, is there any science more noble—more worthy the pursuit of the human mind—more capable of exciting and of gratifying a legitimate curiosity? You would surely despise that man who, being descended from a line of illustrious ancestors, would not take the trouble of studying its history. And what are all the titles of which the great are so proud, when compared with those which religion can bestow on the very humblest of men? When you say with proper understanding: "Our Father, who art in heaven!" is there a monarch on the earth whom you would be disposed to envy?

The connections which you may have had with the magnates of this world, hold a prominent place in your memory: your mind loves to dwell upon them. But your connection with that God before whom nations and their rulers are as dust, imperceptible—do you remember it with the same interest?

Instead of contenting himself with some civil words, some favors or distinctions, the eternal Son has died for you, adorned you with His own blood, and calls you to share His throne. Not content with visiting you once, He remains with you all days; He braves the insults of the impious for your sake, giving Himself to you without any reserve, He loves you in God, with an infinite love!

If you had certain information that a great nation had chosen you for its ruler, you would, perchance, lose your rest and your appetite with excessive joy, and you could not bear to hear or speak of any other subject.

Religion tells you that you may be called, at any moment, to ascend a throne above all thrones, failing of which, you are to be consigned to eternal misery, and eternal despair. Should not these tidings prevail over all other interests? What other affair is there of so great importance as this?

He who has the misfortune to doubt this, and who neglects to have his doubt solved by a serious study of religion, is a fool; and what better is he who believes it, and yet busies himself but little about it?

The neglect of religious instruction indicates extreme carelessness, together with a low and grovelling mind: to make a parade of this indifference, is a thing wholly inexcusable.

THE STATE OF CATHOLICISM IN ENGLAND.

(Translated from the Deutsche Volkshalle.)

Striking and instructive for the members of every Church are the remarks of H. V. H., in his third letter upon the origin, development, and present

situation of the Anglican Church, wherein he depicts the growing coldness and even enmity wherewith she is regarded, and describes the dangers which have beset her since the appearance of Puseyism:—

These threatening dangers of the Anglican church consist in the natural development of the spirit and its workings, such as we have lately seen them in almost every country. Motives of this description awaken in the breasts of those who are thus agitated a spirit of inquiry, which is resolved to penetrate and sift the nature of the evil even to the very bottom. Oxford is the chief seat of English theology; here it was that Pusey and his friends stood forth to make the experiment of reconstituting the Anglican church. They went back to the period of its rise, under Henry VIII.; found the men of that time clinging fast to nearly every Catholic dogma but the submission to the Papacy, and thence down to the latest times, a number of most distinguished theologians in the seventeenth century, Forbes, Andrew, Montague, Taylor, Pearson, Ball, Thorndike, &c., and Alexander Knox, at the commencement of this century, appearing to have held fast and taught these dogmas; therefore did the Puseyites openly call themselves Anglican Catholics. They maintained that Protestantism was introduced first in the reign of Elizabeth, by the Court party, against the will of the Church and people. Protestantism offers, however, such an opposition to the whole structure of the Anglican Catholic Church, and its hierarchical succession through the apostolical tradition, that the total ruin of the latter became inevitable. Accordingly, the object of English theology must be to un-Protestantise the Anglican church. The ultimate design of the latter was a reconciliation with Rome, somewhat of the same nature, and based upon concessions such as attended the proceedings of the Florentine Council with reference to the Greeks, and akin to arrangements lately adopted in the case of the united Greeks, Armenians, and Slaves. This grand attempt to reconstitute the Anglican church, appears to have miscarried, although the most eminent divines in England, and at first some Bishops, were its promoters.

Protestant dispositions and feelings, far more than Calvinistic or Lutheran dogmas, prevail everywhere throughout the Protestant clergy—a sickly rationalism, and even indifferentism—a certain unwillingness to profess firmly any particular doctrine—are universally diffused; but withal, an ill-defined aversion and fear, more than hate, of Roman Catholicism and all that leads thereto. The experiment of re-constitution failed, mainly because the most distinguished friends and disciples of Pusey, led on from consequence to consequence, almost all became actual Roman Catholics.

The direction which these affairs had taken was for Rome and the Catholic Church most advantageous; for it is plain that as *ecclesia pressa*, her condition in England is even most flourishing. The third letter concludes with the consideration of this view of the subject. In the fourth that event will be treated of, the consequences of which no one can foresee or estimate—namely, the organisation of the English Catholic Church, undertaken by the Papacy, and the so-called Titles' Bill which is brought forth. Was this organisation absolutely necessary? Was the Pope in the right? Was the occasion suitable and propitious? To the first two questions we say yes. The answer to the third must be suspended—futura only can decide it. A discussion upon the Titles' Bill follows—we give the conclusion:—

The discussion upon the Titles' Bill brought to light many things which it was not before possible to see clearly—the weakness and inconsistency of Government, the miserable condition of the Anglican church, the confusion of parties. What operation this measure will have upon the condition and progress of Catholicism we cannot tell at present. At first it seemed as though the No-Popery fanaticism were about to awake. The agitation commenced with pamphlets and caricatures—Cardinal Wiseman was twice burned in a straw puppet, but the affair turned out to be merely a nine days' wonder. The glass palace came on, and then the Exhibition, which soon deprived all other things of interest, even Catholic affairs. Conversions to Catholicism have rather increased than diminished; a few instances of apostasy have certainly occurred, whereof the Duke of Norfolk's made a great noise. Norfolk, the premier peer of the kingdom, head of one of the oldest and most noble families, was properly first amongst the Catholics of England; but the present duke is a more than weak man, and stands in very little estimation; his apostasy damages the Church scarcely at all, and the less because his sons are strict Catholics. It must be owned that by the Papal bull, and discussion of the Titles' Bill—the *qui vive* of the Zion-watcher of assembled British Protestantism was

called forth; the various sects of Dissenters who had, therefore, regarded with indifference the Catholic movement, so long as it seemed to have for an object the Anglican church alone, began to perceive that their own existence was threatened. It is beyond a doubt, and confirmed by the last letter of the Primate of Ireland, that considerable sums of money had been expended in efforts to prevent conversions, and also to seduce the poor Catholics. More dangerous is the barbarism of manufacturers and other persons who give employment in noticing to quit and turning out persons who have become Catholics. Even amongst those employed in manufactories, but chiefly amongst the poorer classes, conversions are extraordinarily numerous. I know a manufactory in Manchester, where, ten years ago, there were only 26 Catholics out of 1,300 operatives; at present they are 700, and all converts. To form a just idea of the progress of Catholicism, we must remember that, in twenty years, more than 1,000 new churches have been built; that the number of Priests in England, since the Emancipation Act, has, perhaps, increased ten fold; that new converts and societies (all of the active orders) spring up everywhere. Conversions take place chiefly amongst the highest and lowest classes; least of all do they reach the middle ranks, and particularly those devoted to industrial pursuits, who are sunk in the most complete indifferentism; these people are too busy with their work—they have no time to be Catholics! Yet seldom is sectarian hate found here; it often happens that they send their children to Catholic schools, may even to Catholic boarding schools. The increase of conversions is greatest in the north of England, where there is a tract of land almost entirely Catholic. The least progress may be said to be in London. The most important conversions are, doubtless, that of the Puseyites, who are certainly the most learned and spirited, the most active and the honestest members of the Anglican church. Recent events must have brought home to them the conviction, that their efforts to restore and revivify will prove abortive, partly through their indolence, partly on account of the Protestant feeling and hatred against Catholics, which characterise the Anglican episcopate and clergy, some of whom threaten them with a persecuting hate, and ascribe to them, in a great part, the success of Catholicism.

One after another they go over formally to the Church, and are the most zealous and active Catholics, in the observance of its rules. The unmarried are nearly all Priests, and the true lights of the Church. Newman, their head, is perhaps the most gifted and popular preacher in England; he goes round the country as a missionary, preaching often in the open air. Cardinal Wiseman, the head of the English Catholic Church, a short time ago preached before some thousands of people, accidentally gathered together in a court which connects together two streets of the city of London. He was in the undress of a cardinal. The people heard him with great attention; nobody ridiculed or insulted him; they conversed together in groups, and remarked that this man was very different from their Anglican bishops, who would not speak to the poor—high born folks, who had families and lived luxuriously; but that the Romish Bishops preached the gospel to the poor. I have spoken upon this subject with men of all parties and classes, all of whom agree with regard to the spread of Catholicity. Right characteristically two English gentlemen expressed themselves. They did not believe in the speedy triumph of Catholicity, because people of distinction, gentlemen of good families, would not become Catholics; nor could Cardinals or Bishops be chosen from amongst the aristocracy. *Sancta (et utilis) simplicitas!* I have shown plainly enough above that conversions in the first families are abundant. All clear-seeing people, but especially those whose feelings are bitterest against the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman, admit, and are resigned to the fact, that nothing can check the advance of Catholicism. They maintain that within thirty years the whole population of Great Britain must be ranged either on the side of Catholicism or Indifferentism; that the Anglican church is hastening with rapid strides to destruction; that most sects will be likewise disorganised, split up into innumerable fragments; that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland alone is to withstand the impending ruin! But if all this happen, what is to be the effect upon the constitution, upon the condition of the whole British empire? Let the Anglican church fall, can you maintain the aristocracy—the Upper House? can you prevent the complete triumph of the city principle, perhaps the ruin of royalty itself? We cannot altogether banish these fancies and conjectures, although every day more plainly shows us the folly of attempting to speculate upon futurity, and that with regard to the future nothing is true, however probable it may appear.