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### RELIGION AND LEGISLATION

By a Protestant Theologian

(Sacred Heart Review)

The most effective weapon in the armory of popular Protestant controversy is that Rome is inexorably bent on securing supreme political control throughout the world, and that in every country, through the bishops and priests she is laboring incessantly for this end.

It suffices here to say that a church which is not incessantly laboring to make the mind of Christ effective, in public as well as in private life, is not worthy of the name of a Christian body. And how should it labor to do this except according to its own apprehensions of the mind of Christ? It is this last thing, however, which is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. Let the Pope only say something, however distinctly political, which falls into line with Protestant opinions and wishes, and, except by an implacable minority, the supposed iniquity of his political strivings is suddenly forgotten. In other words, it is terrible in him to try to influence politics if he really acts as Pope, but if he will only say "Pope" and mean "Archbishop of Canterbury," or "Presbyterian Moderator," or "Methodist Bishop," or if he only does something that can be so interpreted for the moment then he is the most charming old man that the ages have seen.

Unbelievers go ahead of Protestants in their readiness to denounce the Pope unsparingly on principle and then to forget all their denunciations as soon as he says something which they think they can turn to account. For instance Gambetta was unwearied in denouncing clericalism as the great enemy. His school declared: "The priests must learn to give to Caesar the things which belong unto Caesar, and to understand that everything belongs to Caesar." Yet when Gambetta came to believe that Leo was really unfriendly to monarchical plottings in France, his letters show that he begins to praise him as an enlightened and reasonable man, whose friendship republicans would do well to cultivate. When then a few years later Leo XIII. publicly admonished French Catholics to give up all foolish identification of monarchy with Christianity, the prominent unbeliever, Eugene Spuller, hailed the papal authority as something highly desirable to be enforced in France over all Catholics; and in his new born zeal he attributed to papal authority a reach and compass far beyond all that Catholic theology of any school has ever ascribed to it or would tolerate.

Now I wish to remark that Protestantism, which in these matters is substantially one body over against Roman Catholicism, is bound, as being Christian to do all that in it lies to secure that legislation shall proceed along Christian lines. Moreover, if it would not be curiously inconsequent, it is bound to favor Christian legislation that shall rest in the main on Protestant assumptions. If I have to walk anywhere how should I walk except after my own gait? What a goose I should make of myself if I were all the time trying to "neutralize" my gait, so that it should neither be mine nor anybody else's! In like manner, when Catholics are or become a majority, their obligation to act as Christians in public life implies, not so much the obligation as the necessity of acting as Catholic Christians. How should they act? As Protestant Christians? That would mean that they are to carry out that which they hold true Christianity, in the lines of that which they hold false, Protestantism. Are they to act as Christians, indeed, but neither Protestant nor Catholic Christians? That would be a simple impossibility. If it meant anything, it would mean that they are to be Christians in name, but unbelievers in fact. Therefore, when

Protestants are in the ascendant in a country, they may be expected in the main to follow Protestant lines in legislation, and Catholics in like circumstances Catholic lines.

This does not mean that either Protestants or Catholics have the obligation, or indeed the right, ever to forget, that they are to be considerate towards those of other ways of thinking. It is no explicit doctrine of the New Testament, or of Christian Tradition, that misbelievers and unbelievers should, or would not be admitted to civil rights. It appertains to the State to determine this, not to the Church. In Spain, before Ferdinand and Isabella, the Jews were sometimes admitted to high office, sometimes shut out. It was not the Church that determined the one or the other; it was the Kings. When the Holy See in 1648, entered a "pro forma" protest against the Peace of Westphalia, it was not that it supposed that the free exercise of the Protestant religion in Germany was to be restrained. It protested because the Treaty ratified numerous confiscations of Church property without securing the consent of the Pope. Yet even this involved no excommunications or interdicts against the Catholic princes and bishops that accepted the Peace. In like manner had Belgium, on becoming a kingdom in 1830, provided in its constitution that Protestants and Jews should be disfranchised, the bishops would doubtless have sworn to support it. When it provided that no religion should be disfranchised, the bishops, under full sanction of Rome, swore to support it, and have kept their oath irreproachably to this day. When the Belgian Catholics, led by the bishops, reintroduced Catholic teaching in the schools, they were careful to exempt the children of all objecting parents.

In like manner, Catholics in Great Britain swear to support laws which, if the Prince of Wales, becoming a Catholic, should attempt, on his father's death, to force his way into the throne, would require them to keep him out, even at the cost of his life. As Cardinal Newman remarks (evidently with the approbation of Rome, which thereafter raised him to the purple), it does not appertain to the Pope to decide who shall be king of England, but to the law. On the other hand, the Protestant subjects of Spain are sworn to carry out laws which, as I understand, would require them to bar from the throne, even to the shedding of blood, a Protestant Prince of the Asturias. Yet again, all Prussian subjects, of whatever religion are bound, should the Protestant Hohenzollerns die out, to support by word and work, the title which would then inure to the Catholic Hohenzollerns. In all these various countries the obligations are perfectly parallel. In all, moreover, they are equally independent of Pope, Primate, Bishop or Presbytery. It is no article of Christian Faith that the adherents of all religions shall be civilly enfranchised. If any church imposes it in its confession of faith, it does what it has no business to do. Yet in the providential evolution of Christendom, it has come to be accepted in almost every country, as a permanent fact, that a man's religion shall not determine his civil rights. Catholics understand this just as well, and accommodate themselves to it just as ingeniously as anybody else. There are rude fanaticisms and rude fanaticisms everywhere; Anti-Semites, A.P.A.'s, and in some of the ruder Catholic countries, sporadic outbursts parallel to the latter, and even fiercer. Yet (excepting barbarous Russia) these are little more than the dregs and dross of a Christendom which is coming to understand that the business of the state lies mainly within the range of those interests which are common to all men, whatever may be their relations to the spiritual world, so long as they are willing to

accommodate themselves to the general principles and institutions of Christian morality. Whether such a toleration covers the case of the Mormons, is a question not yet finally settled.

CHARLES C. STARBUCK,  
Andover, Mass.

### CATHOLICS IN RUSSIA

It may be remembered that not long ago the czar issued a manifesto the purport of which was that a much larger amount of toleration in matters of religion might be expected by his subjects than they have enjoyed in recent years.

This promise, though it still lacks adequate performance, has excited the keenest interest of Catholics, who constitute a much larger population than is generally supposed.

From figures given by the Gotha Court Calendar for 1903-04 there were at the time the statistics were gathered only 70,000 Catholics in Asiatic Russia, whereas there were in European Russia no fewer than 11,420,000, showing that the subjects of the czar who are faithful to the sovereign pontiff of Rome concentrate in the European territory of the great empire. As was to be expected, these latter are found mainly in those provinces which belonged to independent Poland before the successive partitions of that kingdom. There would have been at least twice as many had the solemn pledge made by the Russian sovereign who acquired the greater portion of Poland been fulfilled.

But the persecutions of the Roman Catholics which were begun and prosecuted with such vigor under Catherine II. kept the faith from spreading while they lasted. When the activity of the government relaxed, the Church again began to make progress, and the persecutions, even as late as 1885, again assumed vigor and helped to retard the growth of Catholicity. Ultimately, however, a kind of modus vivendi was established between the St. Petersburg government and the papacy. Even now, however, any successful attempt at proselytism is severely punished, and in the case of mixed marriages the children are forced to be brought up in the religion of the state. If a member of the Orthodox Russian Church becomes a Catholic, he is treated like the "state criminals," forfeits all the rights and privileges of his station and is exiled.

A correspondent of Civiltà Cattolica of Rome has the following to say of the flourishing condition of the Catholic Church in Russia:

"I was recently told by an Orthodox Russian priest in the course of a conversation that the upper classes of Russian society are showing a great many tendencies toward the profession of Catholicism. This is accounted for by the fact that families of the nobility live in Italy and France a greater part of the time and naturally are affected by the religious convictions of the people with whom they are in contact. Further, although the intellectual condition of the higher clergy of the Russian Church is perfectly satisfactory, at the same time the lower members of the clergy are too ignorant and have too many moral failings to exercise a beneficial influence on the cultured classes. Russian orthodoxy does not respond to the demands of their minds. With reference to the spiritual organization, the Orthodox religion clearly reveals its inferiority when compared with Catholicism, which, notwithstanding the severity of the Russian laws, preserves inviolate its prestige and even in St. Petersburg reveals its admirable force of organization and its supernatural vitality.

"In the great Russian centres the condition of the Roman Catholics is such as to lead one to believe that the Russian government is one of the most tolerant in matters of religion. In the schools Orthodox and Lutheran, the Catholic children are instructed by a Catholic priest, and this freedom is carried even to the highest circles. The Catholic churches are frequent throughout the country, and sermons are delivered in Polish, German, French or Italian, according to the locality. The Catholic Church cannot, however, have any bells, as this is a right which is accorded by the law only to the Protestants. Polish must not be taught in the schools, processions are prohibited, and for funerals celebrated with state it is necessary to obtain the authorization of the police. These restrictions, however, do not embarrass the work of Catholicism in its effect on the mind, and the piety and generosity of the faithful—above all, of the Poles—are admirable. There is not a day on which some hundreds of persons do not receive Holy Communion and the church of Santa Caterina, especially on Saturday, is filled with soldiers and officials. The Archdiocese of Mohilev, in the limits of which are included St. Petersburg and Moscow, is one of

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the largest dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia, and numbers 998, 670 faithful, 358 priests and 228 churches, spread through the districts of Mouilev, Vitebsk, and Minsk."—Ex.

### VOTE OF CONDOLENCE

At a meeting of St. Mary's Court, No. 276, Catholic Order of Foresters, it was resolved by a standing vote that the Recording Secretary forward and express the condolence of the Officers and Brothers of the Court to Bro. E. R. Dowdall, at the sad loss of his mother, which took place at Perth, Ontario, during the month of June, as follows:

"Moved by Bro. Raleigh, seconded by Chief Ranger J. J. McDonald, that the expression of sympathy be extended to Bro. E. R. Dowdall on his sad loss by the death of his mother, and that the same be printed in the Northwest Review, The Courier, of Perth, Ont., and that a copy be forwarded to Bro. Dowdall personally."

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