

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

THE CATHOLIC SIDE OF THE QUESTION.

The Establishment of Protestantism—Persecution Forbidden by the Church—Denmark, Geneva, the Whole Continent, and Great Britain, Perverted from Catholicity by means of Unjustifiable Persecution.

(This communication is continued from the week before last and will be concluded in our next issue.)

The Witness is never tired carping on the intolerance and persecution of the Church of Rome. Like all the "goody-goody" organs of sectarianism, it can discern the mote in the Catholic's eye, but not the beam in its own. In the Witness's theology, every Catholic who lives up to the practices and doctrines of his Church is a Jesuit, and every Jesuit is a persecutor. With such gross calumnies and unscriptural doctrines preached daily from the sanctum of the sectarian press, can we wonder that our separated brethren are ready to swallow and believe the most glaring falsehoods against the Church of Christ and her followers? Would not the Witness be more usefully employed, if it had the true spirit of religion, in chastising, through its columns, those elements of bigotry, strife, and persecution,—such as the Apatists of the Western States, the youngest son of Know-nothingism; that hydra-headed monster, Orangeism—an exorcism of Irish ascendancy and intolerance; and lastly, the P.P.A.'s of Ontario, of which the immaculate Margaret L. Shepherd is the foundress and spiritual head—rather than hurling its venomous thunderbolts at the Vicar of Christ and his spiritual children? Such a sensible, Christian course would not, perhaps, add to the exchequer of the Witness; neither would it give its bigotted and intolerant writers a chance to keep alive the spirit of religious strife so acceptable and pleasing to the Witness and its readers. The only way to meet the Witness and its old, exploded calumnies against the Church is, to kodak the persecuting and intolerant spirit of Protestantism, and the innumerable sects into which these inherent principles have divided the first revolters. With this in view, I dedicate this article to the Witness. In it I shall prove that persecution has been more generally, and is still more generally practised by Protestants than by Catholics; also, that it has been more warmly defended and supported by the eminent "Reformers and Divines" of their party, than by their Catholic opponents; and lastly, that the sectarian press, of which the Witness is a type, is as much to blame for this state of things, as is the sectarian pulpit. No Catholic can be a persecutor, his religion forbids it. No Catholic can be intolerant, his religion forbids it. No Catholic can be a bigot, it is unknown in his Church;—but bigotry is the essence of Protestantism, therefore bigotry and Protestantism are convertible terms. Catholic and loyal are synonymous terms. If then the Witness would have Catholics disloyal, bigotted, intolerant, and persecutors, it will have to put them through the same process Mirabeau would have. When the great orator and statesman wished to republicanize his countrymen he sighed, and said, *il faut commencer par déatholiser la France*.

The learned Bergia defies Protestants to mention so much as a town in which their predecessors, on becoming masters of it, tolerated a single Catholic. (Traité. Hist. et Dogmat.) Rousseau, who was educated a Protestant, says that "the Reformation was intolerant from its cradle, and its authors, universally, persecutors."—(See Lettres de la Mont.) Bayle, who was a Calvinist, has published much the same thing. Finally, the Huguenot minister, Jurieu, acknowledges that "Geneva, Switzerland, the Republics, the electors, and princes of the Empire, England, Scotland, Sweden, and Denmark, had all employed the power of the State to abolish Popery, and establish the Reformation."—Tab. Lett. quoted by Bossuet, Aversis, p. 625. But to proceed to other more positive proofs of what has been said: The first father of Protestantism finding his new religion, which he had submitted to the Pope, condemned by him, immediately sounded the trumpet of persecution and murder against the Pontiff, and all his supporters in the following terms: "If we send thieves to the gallows, and robbers to the block why do we not fall on those masters of perdition, the

Popes, Cardinals and Bishops, with all our force, and not give over, till we have bathed our hands in their blood?"—(Ad. Silvest. Parier). He elsewhere calls the Pope, "a mad wolf, against whom every one ought to take up arms, without waiting for an order from the magistrate." He adds: "If you fall before the beast has received its mortal wound, you will have but one thing to be sorry for, that you did not bury your dagger in its breast. All that defend him must be treated like a band of robbers, be they Kings or be they Cæsars." (Thesus apud Sleid, A.D. 1545; Opera Luth. tom. 1.) By these and similar incentives, with which the works of Luther abound, he not only excited the Lutherans themselves to propagate their religion by fire and sword, against the Emperor and other Catholic princes, but he also gave occasion to all the sanguinary and frantic scenes which the Anabaptists exhibited, at the same time, through the lower part of Germany. Coeval with these was the civil war, which another Arch-Reformer, Zuinglius, lighted up in Switzerland, by way of propagating his peculiar system, and the persecution which he raised equally against the Catholics and Anabaptists. Even the moderate Melancthon wrote a book in defense of religious persecution, (Besa De Hæret. puniend.) and the conciliatory Bucer, who became Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, not satisfied with the burning of the heretic, Servetus, preached that "his bowels ought to have been torn out, and his body chopped to pieces." (Ger. Brandt, Hist. Abreg. Refor. Pais Bas, vol. 1, p. 454.) But the great champion of persecution, every one knows, was the founder of the second great branch of Protestantism, John Calvin. Not content with burning Servetus, beheading Gruet, and persecuting other distinguished Protestants, Castallo, Bolsec, and Gentilis (who, being apprehended in the neighbouring Protestant Canton of Berne, was put to death there), he set up a consistorial inquisition at Geneva, for forcing every one to conform to his opinions, and required that the magistrates should punish whomsoever this consistory condemned. He was succeeded in his spirit, as well as in his office, by Besa, who wrote a folio work in defense of persecution. De Hæreticis puniendist. Civile Magistratu, &c., a Theod. Besa. In this he shows that Luther, Melancthon, Bullinger, Captio, no less than Calvin, had written works, expressly in defense of this principle, which, accordingly, was firmly maintained by Calvin's followers, particularly in France. Bossuet refers to the public records of Nîmes, Montpellier and other places, in proof of the directions issued by the Calvinist Consistories to their Generals, for "forcing the Papists to embrace the Reformation by taxes, quartering soldiers upon them, demolishing their houses, &c." and he says, "the wells into which the Catholics were flung and the instruments of torture which were used at the first-mentioned city to force them to attend the Protestant sermons, are things of public notoriety." Variat. l., x., m., 52. In fact, who has not read of the infamous Baron Des Adrets, whose savage sport it was to torture and murder Catholics, in a Catholic kingdom, and who forced his son literally to wash his hands in their blood? Who has not heard of the inhuman Jane, Queen of Navarre, who massacred priests and religious persons by hundreds, merely on account of their sacred character? In short, Catholic France, throughout its extent, and during a great number of years, was a scene of desolation and slaughter from the unrelenting persecution of Huguenot subjects. Nor was the spectacle dissimilar in the low countries when Calvinism got a footing in them. Their first Synod, held in 1574, equally proscribed the Catholics and the Anabaptists, calling upon the Magistrates to support their decrees, which decrees were renewed in several subsequent Synods.—Brandt, vol. 1, p. 237. I have elsewhere quoted a Protestant writer, who on the authority of existing public records, describes the horrible torments with which Vandermerk and Sonci, two generals of the Prince of Orange, put to death incredible numbers of Dutch Catholics.—(See the learned Estius's History of the Martyrs of Gorvum, De Brandt, &c.) Other writers furnish more ample materials of the same kind. But while the Calvinist Ministers continued to stimulate their Magistrates to redoubled severities against the Catholics (for which purpose,

among other means, they translated into Dutch, and published the above-mentioned work of Besa), a new object of their persecution arose in the bosom of their own society: Arminius, Vossius, Episcopius, and some other Divines, supported by the illustrious statesmen, Barnevelt and Grotius, declared against the more rigorous of Calvin's maxims. They would not admit that God decrees men to be wicked, and then punishes them everlastingly for what they cannot help; nor that many persons are in his actual grace and favor, while they are immersed in the most enormous crimes. For denying this Barnevelt was beheaded.—Diodati, quoted by Brandt, says that the Canons of Dort carried off the head of Barnevelt. Grotius was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and all the Remonstrant clergy, as they were called, were banished from their families and their country, with circumstances of the greatest cruelty, at the requisition of the Synod of Dort. In speaking of Lutheranism, I have passed by many persecuting decrees and practices of its adherents against Calvinists and Zuinglians, and many more of Calvinists against Lutherans, while both parties agreed in showing no mercy to the Anabaptists. Before I quit the continent, I must mention the Lutheran Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden, in both of which, as Jurieu has signified, the Catholic religion was extirpated, and Protestantism established, by means of rigorous persecuting laws, which denounced the punishment of death against the former. Professor Messenius, who wrote about the year 1600, mentions four Catholics who had recently been put to death in Sweden, on account of their religion, and eight others who had been imprisoned and tortured on that account, of whom he himself was one.—(See Scandia Illustrat., quoted by Le Brun. Mess. Explic. tom. iv.)

To pass over now to the northern part of Great Britain. The first Reformers of Scotland, having deliberately murdered Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, (See Gilbert Stuart's Hist. of Ref. in Scotland, vol. 1, p. 47.) and rigorously destroyed the churches, monasteries, and everything else which they termed monuments of Popery, assembled in a tumultuous and illegal manner, and before even their own religion was established by law, they condemned the Catholics to capital punishment for the exercise of theirs. "Such strangers," says Robertson, "were men, at that time, to the spirit of toleration and the laws of humanity."—Hist. of Scotland, Anno 1560. Their chief apostle was John Knox, an apostate friar, who, in all his publications and sermons, maintained that "it is not birth, but God's election, which confers a right to the throne and to magistracy"; that "no promise or oath, made to an enemy of the truth, that is, to a Catholic, is binding"; and that "every such enemy, in a high

station, is to be deposed."—(See Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. 2, p. 442.) Not content with threatening to depose her, he told his queen to her face, that the Protestants had a right to take the sword of justice into their hands, and to punish her as Samuel slew Agag, and as Elias slew Jezabel's prophets.—(Stuart's Hist., vol. 1, p. 59.) Conformably with this doctrine, he wrote into England that "the nobility and people were bound in conscience not only to withstand the proceedings of that Jezabel, Mary, of whom they call Queen, but also to put her to death, and all her priests with her."—Cited by Dr. Paterson, in his Jerns and Babel. His fellow apostles, Goodman, Willox, Buchanan, Rough, Black, etc., constantly inculcated on the people, the same seditious and persecuting doctrine; and the Presbyterian ministers, in general, earnestly pressed for the execution of their innocent Queen, who was accused of a murder, perpetrated by their own Protestant leaders. (Stuart's Hist., vol. 1, p. 255.) The same unrelenting intolerance was seen among the most moderate of their clergy, "when they were assembled by order of King James and his council to inquire, whether the Catholic Earls of Huntly, Errol, and their followers, on making a proper concession, might not be admitted into the Church, and be exempt from further punishment?" These ministers then answered, that "though the gates of mercy are always open for those who repent, yet, as these noblemen had been guilty of idolatry, (the Catholic religion,) a crime deserving death by the laws both of God and man, the civil magistrate could not legally pardon them, and that, though the Church should absolve them, it was his duty to inflict punishment upon them." (Robertson's History Anno, 1596.) But we need not be surprised at any severity of the Presbyterians against Catholics, when, among other penances, ordained by public authority, against their own members who should break the fast of Lent, whipping in the church was one. (Stuart, vol. II, p. 94.)—Com.

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