

"LAST REMNANT OF DESPOTISM"

This is what some people are pleased to call the Papacy. The Catholic Church, to be sure, can be no democracy in the ordinary sense. In the natural order which concerns the present world, human reason is the main guide and capable of framing the conditions that make for earthly happiness. One of these conditions is the form of government under which they desire to live. It was never meant that men should abdicate their right of choosing in these matters or could forfeit it beyond the power of recovery. For authority in civil affairs rests primarily and inalienably with the people. A king no more rules by the grace of God than a president. In the exercise of their authority both have divine sanction; in entering upon their authority both are dependent on human conventions.

The Church, on the contrary, is of the supernatural order and concerned with the happiness of men in the hereafter. What the conditions of that happiness are, and by what means it is to be achieved, depend entirely on the will of God. A king no more rules by the grace of God than a president. In the exercise of their authority both have divine sanction; in entering upon their authority both are dependent on human conventions.

Now we Catholics believe that the Church is a divine institution, established by Christ to continue His mission to the world. To it He entrusted His teaching authority and His sanctifying power. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew 28: 19-20.) These words were spoken, in the first instance, to the Apostles, but that they referred also to their successors is made evident by the final clause, "I am with you to the consummation of the world."

And the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops of the Church. From other passages of the New Testament we learn that St. Peter had a position of pre-eminence among the other Apostles. On him Christ built His Church, to him He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, him He commissioned to strengthen His brethren, to him He entrusted the feeding of His lambs and sheep. Accordingly we hold that the successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome has a similar pre-eminence among the successors of the other Apostles, among the Bishops of the Church. To set aside the authority of the Pope and the Bishops would be to forego the benefits of that assistance in learning His gospel which Christ has guaranteed to His appointed teachers, even unto the consummation of the world.

For Catholics, then, who hold this faith, it is impossible to discover any despotism in the authority of the Pope. For despotism means essentially unlawful power, power exercised for the oppression of slavish subjects, whereas the Pope's authority has divine sanction and its exercise is welcomed as a blessing by those who bow to it. Accordingly the attitude of Catholics towards the Pope is one of love and devotion. To them he is the Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ, the supreme guardian of their faith. If they do occasionally feel his ruling hand they submit with the same spirit of loyalty with which we all submit to the civil government. For our spiritual welfare demands sacrifices from us as our temporal welfare.

But suppose a Catholic would come to change his mind about the divine endorsement of the authority of the Pope—what then? Why, in that case he can go his own way. The Pope has neither policemen nor penitentiaries. His way is founded not on coercion but on the faith and love of his willing spiritual children. Another reason why the Papacy is not a despotism is this consideration settles any worry that some Catholics may have about the authority of the Pope. Should they ever come to recognize him as the Vicar of Christ, divinely aided to convey the correct meaning of Christianity to all inquirers, they would, no doubt, be anxious to listen to what he had to say. But until then he is no more to them than the special teachings of Baptists or Methodists or Presbyterians are to us Catholics.

Nor is the Papacy a menace to free governments. For the Church is absolutely indifferent as to what government any people may choose to live under. Give her freedom and she will prosper. And to prosper in her case means to save the largest number of souls. Other ambitions she has none. Her sphere is the spiritual realm. Hence there never can be a clash between allegiance to the Church and allegiance to one's country. The two jurisdictions are distinct and separate. The most loyal patriotism is not only compatible with but the natural flower and fruit of Catholicism.

From all this it appears that a world made safe for democracy need have no fears of the Catholic Church. In a very practical sense the Catholic Church is a most democratic institution on earth. She has the special

sympathy of the common people, of the poor, the afflicted, and down-trodden, because of the spiritual comforts she has to offer them. While fostering every legitimate aspiration for better conditions among the masses, the Church knows how to bridge over the unavoidable chasms of disappointment with contentment. This is why the instigators of social revolt find but scanty hearing among her members. If we are not mistaken the Church will prove, at the present crucial turning-point of the world's history, not a remnant of despotism, but a rampart against the despotism of lawless Bolshevism.—The Guardian.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR JANUARY

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FAMILY

The little home at Nazareth has been the spot to which Christian families have in all ages turned for inspiration and strength, for the virtues which should be practiced in every Christian home. One need only mention a few of them: mutual affection, meekness, love of peace, resignation in trial, love of retirement, trust in Providence, fear of God—all domestic virtues which should find scope for their fullest development among those who have assumed home responsibilities. When parents and children are united by the bonds of tender love as the members of the Holy Family were united, they may hope to share the blessings which Heaven showered down on Nazareth. This does not necessarily mean that they shall be exempt from all crosses and trials—few families escape those things here below; but it means that strength and patience to bear their crosses joyfully will be given them by a bountiful God.

After the example of Nazareth, Christian homes are the soil wherein the most fundamental of domestic virtues, the love of God, should blossom into fruits of salvation. Joseph and his holy spouse, Mary, showed that they loved God and journeyed to Bethlehem to obey the edict of Caesar Augustus. In the Roman Empire was centered the authority which came from the Source of all authority and the holy couple knew that in obeying the law of the land they were obeying God. The journey on foot was long and painful and their cruel reception at Bethlehem only added to their discomfiture; but they knew full well that inconvenience and suffering are often the signs of God's love for His creatures, and they accepted the rebuff with sublime meekness and resignation. How many fathers and mothers there are nowadays who might find in this simple incident a world of sound teaching. The State may not oblige them to undergo suffering and fatigue in order to obey its laws, but at least in the journey to Bethlehem, the Roman Emperor was centered the authority which came from the Source of all authority and the holy couple knew that in obeying the law of the land they were obeying God.

There is asked whether there be any special reason why the example of Nazareth and the virtues practiced there should now be placed before us, the answer must surely be affirmative. The sorrowful spectacle that a bankrupt civilization presents in these years is having its repercussion on Christian families throughout the world. Happily the European war is ended, but during its four years' course it has broken up innumerable homes; and, what perhaps is almost as bad, it has taken from their firesides hundreds of thousands of fathers of families who had to leave behind them children bereft of energetic leadership which should have trained and directed them in their plastic years; a leadership in which mothers, even with the best intentions, and for all their authority, only too often fail. It is in no great part to the lack of paternal control that the increase of juvenile crime noted in every country, not excepting our own, must be attributed? When family bonds are thus broken by years of absence, the warm affection, coupled with filial submission, necessary to the flowering of character in children ceases to exist, the selfish human element in them soon asserts itself and easily finds an outlet. Once emancipation from parental control has been attained, that half-natural, half-supernatural instinct known as the family spirit disappears, or at least it receives setback the sad results of which will be felt in the future generations.

And yet the antidote should be forthcoming from somewhere. Where shall we go for inspiration, not to Nazareth where union and love and submission were practised in such a lofty degree? To what better school shall we go to be taught the true family spirit than the school of Nazareth, where Jesus, Mary and Joseph will be our instructors? Christian homes should study the virtues of the holiest family that ever lived on this earth, who with unswerving devotion to the members who composed it, seek their intercession daily, try to imitate them in the daily actions of their lives. If our Christian families show their good will in doing this, their Eternal Father will give them the grace and strength to live as they should live in order that their lives on earth may be a fitting preparation for their home in Heaven.

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

WHY A PRIEST IS CALLED "FATHER"

The faithful call their priest "Father" because of the childlike reverence they have for him. This is not a universal custom, but one that has been specially adopted in English-speaking countries. The Germans do not call their priests by that name

rather by a word that is akin to our "reverend." The French use the words "curé" or "abbé." There is however, an eminently pertinent foundation for the custom of saying "Father" to a priest. The word "father" means "author of life." The priest is the author of the spiritual life of the faithful. With the waters of baptism he infuses the life of grace into the soul. If man has lost this grace by mortal sin, the priest revives it by absolution in the Sacrament of Penance. Furthermore, he takes a fatherly interest in all those entrusted to his care. The parish is but a large family, and as a father is the natural head of a family, it is but natural that the head of the parish should be called "Father." We call Washington the "Father of his Country."

Similarly members of religious Orders were wont to call their founders by the title of "Pater," or "Father," just as founders of Orders for women were called "Mother." Gradually the title of "Pater" in religious Orders was applied to those that were ordained, to distinguish them from such as were still aspiring to the priesthood and whose title was "Pater" or "Brother."—Catholic Columbian.

THE CHRISTMAS CRADLE

'Tis Christmas Eve; and so to-night The Christmas candle let us light. For, those who kept the faith of old This custom quaint were wont to hold;

And who are we aside to cast The Christian customs of the past? Then let us gather one and all, And light the Christmas taper tall; And as its starlike shames afar, 'Twill mind us of the other Star That shone when first the Holy Child

Looked up in Mary's face and smiled. So, let it burn, a symbol bright Of faith and love, this blessed night. And as we watch it, let us pray To Him newborn on Christmas Day, That we and ours may ever keep Within our hearts secure and deep The faith our fathers hither brought, The faith for which our fathers fought;

The faith that was our mothers' pride, The faith for which our martyrs died. Yea, be it ours to hold unspelled The heritage for which they toiled. Nor let us have the hardihood To flout this ancient Christmas good, Whereby our hearts each year recall The birth of Christ, who lights us all.

—DENIS A. MCCARTHY

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

O heart of mine I lift up blue eyes Of perfect form, of face divine— And see who in your manger lies! It is the Christ Child, heart of mine!

O dearest, holiest Christ Child, spread Within this heart of mine thy bed; Then shall my breast forever be A chamber consecrate to thee!

Beat high today, O heart of mine, And tell, O lips, what joys are thine; For with your help shall I prolong Old Bethlehem's sweetest cradle song.

Glory to God, whom this dear Child Hath by His coming reconciled, And whose redeeming love again Brings peace on earth, good will to men!

—EUGENE FIELD

WAR SAVED WORLD FROM ITSELF

"This War arrived just in time to save the world, including the British Isles and the United States, from itself," said Raymond Blathwate of England in an address on "The War's Effect on English Character."

"The War has worked a marked change upon the character of the English people," he continued. "The attitude of the people toward the popular form of religion is changing. The people have been put to a crucible test and have come out glorified. The people have developed a personal consciousness. They have felt the need of a deep religion and they will find it. The keynote of this deep, true religion is stirring life after death. That is what has come into the hearts of the people of England out of the fires of the suffering, sacrifice and death through which they have passed. The women of England have left their homes to sacrifice health, strength and energy in war work. Women who never worked in the past, left their homes daily for munition factories. There are 6,000,000 of working women in England today. The character of the woman has been strengthened as much as the War and its near-death work have opened the minds and hearts of their English brothers. The code of honor among the women is high. 'The War has brought, about a reincarnation of our ideals and has given us more of a sense of values of human life and of those things which we should value.'

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

The good which a holy, self-sacrificing man does in life, is scattered here and there in little fragments of blessing: a kindness to a child, a glance of pity, a sympathetic word, an answering smile. The great things he is called upon to do make but little part of the real value of his life.

ONE CATHOLIC'S READY ANSWER

An incident in connection with the Rosary is related about the late Father Maturin. Some years before he became a Catholic, his duty as an Episcopal clergyman took him to a hospital in Philadelphia one morning. Walking through the surgical ward his attention was attracted by the luminous expression on the face of an aged Irishwoman, who was thanking the nurse for giving her a Rosary. The visitor paused by the bed, and taking a bead between his fingers, asked: "What do you say on this?"

"I say the Hall Mary, sir," replied the owner of the beads. "You Catholics think everything of the Hall Mary, don't you?" he asked. "Yes, sir, and so did the Angel Gabriel," put in the quick-witted and devout nurse. Questions and answers followed briskly, and the learned clergyman admitted that the two simple, unpretentious women had given him a truer and deeper conception of the mystery of the Incarnation than he had ever had before. The manner of the incident tells:

Were these simple women God's instruments to lighten the darkness of the great scholar and prepare him to receive the greatest of all graces, the priceless gift of faith? Did he compare the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of the faithful women—free gift of the Holy Ghost—with his learning so laboriously attained in the schools?—Catholic News.

PRAY DURING SCOURGE

BLESSED SACRAMENT CARRIED IN STREETS DURING EPIDEMIC

Catholic Montreal, Canada, forced by the influenza to close its churches like most other cities of the United States and Canada, adopted a unique method of bringing God's blessing to the people. Command of Archbishop Bruchesi, the great Bourdon of Notre Dame Church passed forth, and every parish priest entered the sanctuary to celebrate Mass for his people, while in every household the people gathered to pray. Then the priests walked or rode through the streets with the Blessed Sacrament, and blessed the people as the latter came to the doors, many of them carrying lighted tapers. Large numbers of pedestrians dropped to their knees as the Blessed Sacrament was by Archbishop Bruchesi himself was among the priests who participated in the outdoor ceremonies.—Catholic Bulletin.

ONLY SAYING HIS BEADS

Speaking of Cardinal Mercier, his utter fearlessness, and his provoking meekness, Monsignor De Wiat, Belgian envoy, told the following story to a New York audience: The German Governor in Brussels, von Bisping, shortly before his death, sent for the Cardinal and ordered him to sit down in front of his desk. He then proceeded to read all the trumped-up charges against the Cardinal, who sat quiet calm the whole time, his lips moving but uttering no word. At last von Bisping could stand it no longer, and burst out: "What have you to answer to all these accusations?" "Oh! nothing," replied the Cardinal, "I am only saying my beads."

SENSIBLE MOTHERS

Girls should be encouraged to confide in mother

Surely it is a mother's fault if she does not enjoy an ideal companionship with her children. Her girls especially need this.

Happy that girls make a point of meeting every one of her girls' friends. If she approves of them, let her make them welcome guests at her home. Let her encourage her daughter to talk freely to her of her doubts, her plans, her hopes and failures, and ideals. And let her listen patiently and sympathetically, not describing them as silly, nor looking as if they bored her.

Happy that girl who can go to her mother with even foolish, girlish secrets—not to be laughed at, nor to be scolded, but to be told gently and lovingly what is wise, and sensible.

Happy, indeed, is that mother who comes so close to her daughter, for in no other way can she so surely secure a sweet influence that will guide her girl into lasting happiness and well-being.—Buffalo Echo.

HABIT

Whenever habit makes you a slave, you have lost your dignity as a man. Undertake to declare your independence in all that habit, the disorderly use of the senses. Look around you and see how the disorder of the senses may enslave you. Conscience of the eye, to possess; conscience of the flesh to enjoy; pride of life, craving for honors and worldly fame. The ordering of our senses is such that it entails suffering. The mystery of suffering comes in here. Our own penitential life, united with the infinite merits of our Blessed Redeemer will wipe out the blackness of sin. A man who knows and believes these things is a Christian. A man who does not believe in Divine Revelation, who does not believe in the spirituality of the soul, finds all suffering a mystery.—Bishop Alard.

Standard library

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Aunt Honor's Keepsake, by Mrs. James Sedler. An interesting story with a strong moral purpose. The characters are the people of a small town in America, in every trade and calling, in every mood and color. They are real.

Avira, or The Heroic Story, by Rev. A. O'Reilly. A thrilling story of the seventeenth century. Between Friends by Richard Aumale. Joe Carv is a leader among the boys of St. Nicholas school and the hero of the story. He is an orphan and, thinking of the past, becomes so unhappy that he runs away. He has many experiences in the city, is arrested as a thief, sent to a reformatory from which he escapes, and finally gets back to St. Nicholas.

Circus Rider's Daughter, The, by F. von Brackel. A high-class novel—a love story that every reader will find better for having read. Captain Ted, by Mary T. Waggoner. Captain Ted is a Catholic college boy forced by circumstances to leave behind St. Elmer's and plunge into the life of a soldier. His youth is spent in the army and perseverance win him a place at the Children of the Log Cabin, by Henriette Eugène Delamare. The story of a struggling home, bright thoughtful children, and all the trials and hardships of misfortune. The trips of various places of interest will be found in a volume of the same name. The story is told in a simple, unpretentious way. The story is told in a simple, unpretentious way.

Harmony Falls, The Gifts of a Tenement House, by S. W. Whitmore. The author's sympathy is for the poor, and his story is a study in the lives of the poor, and the neglect of children, forced by relentless circumstances into the poverty of a tenement house. The story is told in a simple, unpretentious way. The story is told in a simple, unpretentious way.

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Ambition's Contest, by Father Faber. The story of a young man who starts out in life to be a saint, and finally, through the prayers of others, reaches the grace of God and is called to the priesthood.

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Broken of Heart, by Charles G. Loring. A story of mystery and entanglements so interwoven as to create new difficulties in rapid succession. As in all Christian fiction, the grace of God and the action is sudden and severe.

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Five O'Clock Stories, by a Religious of the Holy Child. An entertaining romance set in the days of the French Revolution.

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