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EXTRACTS FROM THE PASTORAL OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

PAUL BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN, PRIMATE OF IRELAND.

To the Catholic Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Dublin.

We are taught in the inspired pages of Holy Writ, that our life is a continual warfare upon earth; and his own experience must convince every individual of the human race of the truth of this doctrine. But if all have to encounter difficulties and trials, this is in a special manner the portion of the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, who, not being of the world, nor participating in its condemned and perverse maxims, are the objects of the hatred of the world and of the children of darkness. "All those," says St. Paul, "who wish to live piously, shall suffer persecution; and our Divine Redeemer before he ascended to His celestial kingdom, prepared His disciples by His prophetic admonitions to meet with patience and resignation the trials prepared for them in their pilgrimage through this valley of tears.

Instructed in this way by our Divine Master, knowing that His purest and most devoted followers are doomed to be the objects of the hatred and malice of a wicked world, we cannot be surprised that menaces of persecution and penal enactments are now held out against the inmates of the religious houses of this country, who are models of every virtue, edify the world by the purity and perfection of their lives, and illustrate in all their actions the true spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary in addressing you, who are so well acquainted with these institutions, to enter at any length into their merits. You are aware that the pious ladies who retire from the vanities, and delusions, and corruptions of the world into these religious houses, devote themselves assiduously to every exercise of piety, and to the performance of every work adapted to secure their eternal salvation. Whilst worldlings are engaged in revelling and frivolous amusements, their prayers ascend night and day, like sweet incense, to the Throne of the Lord, and bring down on a guilty world the mercy of Heaven. God only knows how often the fervor and perseverance of their petitions, and the sanctity of their lives, have saved society from imminent destruction, and preserved wicked and corrupt cities from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, which would not have been destroyed if a few just men had been found in them. They make a special profession of chastity, that they may resemble the spotted Lamb of God, and His undefiled Mother, and pure in body and spirit, may have the privilege of singing the canticle, which none but virgins were allowed to sing—(Ap. xiv., 3.) They renounce all dominion over the things of this earth, that they may be like unto Him who had not whereon to recline His Divine head, and may aspire to the reward promised to those who leave the things of this earth for the Gospel. "And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting."—(Mat. xix., 29.) But it is not the mere external things of earth that they abandon; they also renounce their own will, and subject themselves to others, that they may imitate with greater perfection our Heavenly Master—"Unless," says He, "you become like little children in humility and obedience, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Concealing under the simplicity of a child the effulgence of His Divinity, He was submissive to Mary and Joseph, and to give us a more perfect model for imitation. He became obedient to the death of the cross. Paganism was ignorant of these lessons; virginity, poverty, humility, obedience, were never praised or practised by the sages of antiquity. It is one of the most noble privileges of Christianity to have introduced and propagated the knowledge of such sublime virtues. Is not the profession of them a spectacle worthy of God, of men, and of angels? Should we not be filled with admiration when we see the frailty of human nature, assisted by grace, thus able to triumph over itself and every earthly attraction? Could any man endowed with Christian feelings think of maligning or persecuting such exalted virtue and sublime perfection? Yet, to the confusion of the world, and the disgrace of those who are agents in the work of darkness, the poisoned shafts of calumny have been often directed against those whose lives shed lustre on the Christian name.

Nor is it to be imagined that our religious communities, whilst attending to their own sanctification, and aspiring to an unfading crown, are idle members of society, and careless of the interests and wants of others. No one but a stranger to these institutions could fall into such a mistake. There is no work of humanity or of charity in which they do not take a part. Many of the ladies who devote themselves to

religion occupy themselves in the care of the sick and the dying; you find them in the cabin of the poor, administering relief and pouring the balm of consolation into the afflicted heart, or by the bed of sickness, preparing the departing soul for a happy eternity. When the cholera was ravaging the land, they were in our hospitals night and day, inhaling the contagion of the place, and performing the most laborious offices in service of those stricken by pestilence. A dignitary of the Church Establishment, who has now become the assailant of these devoted females, may not be able to appreciate their heroism, having instructed his own Ministers at that time not to approach the infected, nor administer the rites laid down in the Book of Common Prayer for the visitation of the sick, lest they should bring contagion into their families; but their merits have been recognized by all that is liberal and generous in this country; and we have often heard with pleasure that in other regions Protestant cities did not hesitate to decree monuments to the Sisters of Charity who had sacrificed their lives in attending the victims of disease. Would to God that this generous spirit may grow up among us, and that the day may arrive when the poor and the sick shall find many institutions open to receive them, where the zeal, the charity, and devotedness of Religious Sisters may cheer and console them.

It would detain you too long were I to enumerate the other public merits of our religious establishments. You are well acquainted with the services rendered by them to the deaf and the mute, the orphan and the widow; you know that they afford an asylum to many unprotected females, whom, preserved from the contagion of vice, they instruct in the arts of domestic life, and prepare to be useful members of society. But, passing all these things over in silence, what shall we say of their successful labors in the cause of education? Their seminaries for the instruction of the higher classes can compete with similar establishments in any country, and are esteemed and encouraged by all the Catholic families of the kingdom. The sacrifices they have made and are daily making, to give a good religious and literary education to the children of the poor, are above all praise; without fear of being contradicted, we may assert that the modesty, the purity, the attachment to religion, and the many other virtues which distinguish and adorn the females of Ireland are due, under Heaven, to the zeal, and piety, and good example of our religious communities. Is it not then a matter of great glory to the people of Ireland to reflect that in the midst of their poverty and wretchedness, they have been able to found such institutions and to bring them to perfection?

But alas! the merits, the devotedness, and the virtues of their pious inmates, are not sufficient to protect them from the envy and malice of the enemy, ever anxious to disturb the happiness of man, and to excite feelings of bitterness and bigotry against the good and the virtuous. This is illustrated in the proceedings reported by the public press to have taken place in our legislative assemblies within this week. That speakers unacquainted with Ireland, or who never visited a convent, and whose notions of a religious life were probably formed upon prejudices imbibed in childhood, or the misrepresentations of enemies, should complain of what they did not understand, cannot be to us a matter of surprise. Such men perhaps are acting upon motives of benevolence, and it may be expected that, when things are put to them in a proper light, they will be accessible to the force of truth. But, whilst we are ready to make allowances for false impressions and prejudices, our astonishment and regret are not to be concealed when we consider the conduct of a high dignitary of the Protestant Establishment, who, having been for nearly thirty years a resident of this city, in the enjoyment of the ample revenues left by our Catholic forefathers to this see, and well acquainted by his position with the advantages conferred upon the poor, by the religious communities of Ireland, did not hesitate to renounce his past professions of liberality, and to become the assailant of virtuous and pious ladies who hold a creed different from his. His desire to establish freedom of thought and religious liberty is so consistent that he would impede those admirable ladies from following the vocation which they have received from Heaven—devoting themselves in peaceful retirement to the salvation of their own souls, or sacrificing their time to the promotion of education, piety, and virtue, and exercising all their influence to advance the general welfare of their sex.

But these ladies, forsooth, are incarcerated, and detained within the convent walls against their will! In reply to this pretension I might say—

1stly. That the greatest possible care is taken to give all candidates a full knowledge of a religious life and its duties, and that they are not admitted to holy

profession until they have served a novitiate and a period of probation, which, oftentimes are extended over three years.

2dly. That it is strictly prescribed that no one shall be professed unless previously examined by the Bishop of the diocese or his deputy.

3dly. That the severest censures of the Church are fulminated against those who would sacrilegiously pretend to force any one to become a Religious against her will. And

4thly. That, even after profession, permission to retire is sometimes granted. Such cases are rare, because the force of conscience is powerful with the true children of God, and because the greatest precautions are taken by the Catholic Church to preserve the liberty of the individual before profession; but the occasional relaxations referred to show how little disposition there is on the part of the Church, to exercise coercion or restraint. However, omitting all these considerations, let me ask, does the author of this charge forget the convents are in the middle of our most populous towns and cities; that their doors are open to all; and that if any of the inmates think fit to leave their retirement, they are protected in doing so by the laws of the country? This gentleman perhaps thinks that it must be an intolerable burthen to crucify one's own flesh, with its vices and concupiscences, and to lead a holy life in the shade of the sanctuary, far from the turmoil of the world. In every walk of life individual cases of unhappiness and discontent, incidental to human nature, may be met with, cases, however, in which the individuals would blush and shudder at taking advantage of the sacrilegious liberty which a pharisaical sympathy would offer them. Are there not many instances in which those who are engaged in the married state are dissatisfied, and would, if possible, break the bonds that bind them? Nothing but a deep sense of duty, and a fear of violating conscience, would induce them to carry a yoke under which they find nothing but affliction and bitterness of heart. That Nuns, however, are most attached to their state of life, and most happy, is known to all who are acquainted with them. When the leaders of modern revolutions declared the Religious of France and Italy loosed from their vows, their constancy was so great that nothing should shake it. When Mazzini and his satellites, not more than five years ago, under the hypocritical pretence of promoting liberty of conscience, opened the doors of the convents of Rome, they could not induce one single individual to leave them; and when those pretended apostles of freedom confiscated the property of the Nuns, it was necessary to employ force to drive them from their peaceful abodes. Were similar boons proffered to our Religious, they would reject them without hesitation, and would esteem it the greatest calamity to leave their happy cells. The reason is, that God has promised much peace to those who love His law; glory, honor, and peace to every one that worketh good.

As far as the Religious sisters are concerned, they will be little inclined either to notice or to resent the insinuations and dark hints thrown out against them; but the Catholic body cannot look on with so much indifference. Is there not a serious charge levelled against them? Is not their sense of honor and integrity impugned? Are they not reproached with being, like the Pagans, condemned by St. Paul for the want of affection? For, if what is stated be true—that is, if the Religious ladies in the convents be incarcerated, and detained against their will, it must necessarily follow that their parents, their brothers and sisters, are devoid of all feelings of affection, and have coolly submitted to see their relatives detained in prison and oppressed, leaving the task of raising his voice in their favor, and of calling for their liberation to the principal Protestant dignitary of this city. And what are the grounds for thus insulting and wounding the feelings of the most respectable Catholic families of Ireland, who are happy to maintain relations of intimacy with our religious communities, and to see their children educated and received in them? Read over the speech attributed to this dignitary, and you will be obliged to conclude that no one, unless he were blinded by wounded vanity, or led astray by a diseased imagination, would have ventured to propose penal legislation upon the alleged grounds. A boy, he states, was severely beaten in some educational establishment, and his parents were obliged to call on the police to interfere in the matter. Why are not the names of the persons given, that we might understand the bearings of the case, or test its accuracy, for it may be a story fabricated by some designing knave, and pawned on the simplicity of the narrator? But supposing it to be true, what has it to do with convents? The next ground is taken from another story equally important as that referred to. A lady, it appears, had the misfortune to lose her faith, and become a member of a dissenting sect. After some time, touched by the

grace of God and the stings of remorse, she returned to the true Church, and, by performing penance, amply repaired the scandal she had given. It seems that some of her dissenting connections were so anxious to bind her to her errors, that they wished to remove her from all intercourse with Catholics, and had even paid her passage to some place in England, where she would have no opportunity of following the dictates of her conscience. The lady, it seems, declined this kind offer in a letter to Dr. Whately, and prepared to return to the bosom of the Catholic Church rather than receive the assistance graciously promised to her.

Now, what was there wrong in all this, or what had religious communities to do with the case at all?—And again, why not mention names, and give an accurate statement of the fact, that it might be examined, and an opportunity afforded to some one to put it in its proper light? The respected dignitary in question should reflect, that unless he gives the names of the persons he refers to, the Catholics of Ireland will probably entertain serious doubts, not perhaps of his veracity, but of his discretion in examining the truth of facts.

Having said so much upon this subject, you will allow me to divert your attention from it for a moment to another matter of great importance and general interest. Some, perhaps, are not well aware that the gentleman who displays such pious solicitude for the Nuns of Ireland, and is so anxious to relieve them from the obligation of observing the Evangelical counsels, has not been forgetful of other members of our society, but has given much time to the compilation of books destined to supply them with religious instruction, and to promote the spiritual welfare of their souls. I do not refer to the treatises he has published under the title of "Errors of Romanism," otherwise the errors of the Catholic Church, or to his other productions, in which he has employed every sort of sophistry against our holy doctrines. Protestants who adhere to the leading points of Christian Faith, and support the views of the Anglican Church, must admit that the tendency of these works is apparently to shake the general belief in the Trinity, in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and His divinity, in original sin, the efficacy of Baptism, and other cardinal maxims of Revelation. Had St. Paul taught the doctrines contained in such works, he need not have exclaimed, "Oh! the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are His judgments and inscrutable His ways!" for he would have found that mysteries had vanished, and that poor weak reason was to be the measure of the infinite attributes of God. But these works are destined to illuminate the minds of his own flock, and it is not our present business to complain of them.—The work I wish to draw your attention to is a little treatise on the truth of Christianity, which it would seem has been prepared principally for the use of Catholics. You may imagine how complete this treatise must be when it makes no mention of the Divinity of Our Lord, and never even hints at the existence of the one Holy Catholic Church, the pillar and ground of truth, whose testimony being rejected, every argument in favor of Christianity would be only a mockery and a delusion. The general character of this little work is rather to excite than to remove doubts about the truth of our holy religion, and were it not miserably obscure in its sophistry, it would undoubtedly be the cause of much mischief. Protestants themselves are so well convinced of the dangerous tendency of this tract, that some of them have declared that they would not allow it to contaminate the hands of their children.

I have two copies of this work now before me.—The one is entitled, "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity, being an Appendix to the Fourth Book of Lessons," published by direction of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, sold by Curry, &c.: Dublin, 1850. The author is said to have stated that this edition, or rather a previous one corresponding to it, was examined and approved in Rome. This statement is not accurate. The book was examined in Rome, and not condemned, not because it was not worthy to be condemned, but because there was an understanding at that time that no one should be compelled to use it in our schools, or rather that it would not be read by Catholics.

The second copy before me is entitled, "Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidences." London: John W. Parker, 1840. At page v. of the preface or advertisement, we read as follows:—"Another addition of this tract, somewhat altered, has been published by the National Education Board, under the title of 'Lessons on the Truth of Christianity.'—The two tracts differ in few places as to the arrangement of the arguments and in the form of expression, but not in anything essential. Some persons prefer the one edition and some the other. The board permits the use of either of them in the National Schools,