

*CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES IN BURKE.*

ONLY about a year has gone by since a controversy was being carried on in the magazines relative to the religion of Shakespeare. Nearly all the writers who attempted to prove that the great poet had been a Catholic referred to the Catholicity which prevails in his works. It is this fact that leads me to imagine that a similar controversy might well arise concerning Edmund Burke, did we know nothing of him but through his writings. The history of his life tells us that he was the son of a Protestant father—made so by the penal laws—and a Catholic mother; that he spent his early years at the home of his mother's parents, and that he was the husband of a Catholic wife. It has been stated, also, that in his last illness he was attended by a priest, and that the great statesman died fortified by the rites of the Catholic church. What is the fact no one seems able to say, but for the purposes of this article it matters little. It is not my intention to treat of Burke's religion, but of a few points which, though taken at random from his writings, are quite in accordance with Catholic principles.

In a study of Burke it is by no means a hard task to find principles that are quite Catholic—the broad, liberal views of the man could hardly be otherwise than in agreement with principles that, however they may be misnamed, are and always have been essentially Catholic. His love of justice, his passion for order, his respect for law and authority, his independence of action in matters pertaining to the nation's welfare, his admiration for tradition, are all principles that have been nourished

under the protection of the Catholic church. It is with these principles—mainly that I shall deal.

Perhaps no historian has painted in more effective colors the dreadful condition of France during the days of the Revolution than has Burke. No person thinks of the shocking treatment accorded the king and queen without feelings of horror; nor can anyone meditate upon the actions of the angry French mobs without being aroused to a state of indignation. The feelings of Burke on these matters are too well known to need comment, and it is from his reference to this turmoil, in his speech to the House of Lords for the impeachment of Hastings, that I take the following selection which shows, in some measure, how Burke's views on justice coincide with those propounded by the Catholic Church; "My Lords," he said, "your house yet stands—it stands as a great edifice; but let me say that it stands in the midst of ruins,—in the midst of the ruins that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever convulsed and shattered this globe of ours. My Lords, it has pleased Providence to place us in such a state that we appear every moment to be upon the verge of some great mutation. There is one thing, and one thing only, which defies all mutation—that which existed before the world, and will survive the fabric of the world itself; I mean justice,—that justice which, emanating from the Divinity, has a place in the breast of every one of us, given us for our guide with regard to ourselves and with regard to others, and will stand, after this