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THE IDEAS OF A CATHOLIC AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

Translated from the French of Abbé Martinet, for the True Witness.

(Continued from our last.)

—HISTORICAL STUDIES.—REFORMATION WHICH THEY REQUIRE.

From the elevated region of the Scriptures, let us descend to history. Let us follow the workings of Christian thought through the ages that are gone.

Let us study that profound, interior, and unseen labor which gently animates the world, disseminates ideas, waters them with the purest blood, causes them to bud, and to expand slowly, like all that is destined to last, giving only to civilisation its flowers and its fruits, when the tree is well enough grounded in thought and in morals, to resist the blighting and withering breath of the passions.

This admirable work is unnoticed by those who seek only in history such and such proofs of some pre-established idea. Thus it is that men, otherwise great and far-seeing, come gravely forward and assure us that Christianity alone did not abolish slavery, because it did not effect its overthrow in one day.

History—what a field does it present for Catholic writers!

The history of the old world, written at the idolatrous period of the revival, is a repetition, often an amplification of the pompous eulogiums decreed to itself by false and lying antiquity. That history is, nevertheless, the necessary introduction to Christian history.

If we are so far carried away by an idle and puerile enthusiasm for pagan antiquity, as to regard only its brilliant side, so also has the malignant spirit of heresy and of false philosophy grievously magnified whatever is dark in Christian history.

We should badly refute so many calumnies, by merely opposing to them the picture of the benefits of Catholicity. If there has been a time when providence commanded us to conceal from the eye of weak, but still respectful children, the shame of their fathers, that time is far removed from us. The failings or abuses of the Christian ages have been too much magnified, for any scandal to be given by the frank admission of their real failings or abuses. The virtues play so prominent a part in the history of those times, that we can well afford to admit the existence of some vices. The latter serves even to show off the former in more brilliant colors, and to enable us to appreciate its excellence. How could we so well illustrate the heroism of the Christian character, as by showing it in its warfare with the passions and the vices?

It may be asked, are there not in ecclesiastical history certain passages which it might be as well to conceal from the eyes of the young and the un-informed?

Yes, assuredly, if, on their departure from school and from college, you will undertake to guide our young and inexperienced to a region where they shall be sheltered from the pestilential wind of error. But if they are to remain in Europe, this will be the result of your wisest precautions: they will very soon learn the evil which you have hidden from them, and a great deal more, and they will regard as a fable the good which you have shown them.

It can never be too often repeated to those whom God has entrusted with the instruction of youth and the masses of the people: salvation is now only to be found in the entire truth, and in solid religious teaching. The scandal which is dreaded from the revelation of certain facts, is not so much owing to the facts themselves, as to the way in which they are held. Give them as they are—as the work of man, rather prone to err, and you will silence those who seek to represent them as the result of Catholic institutions.

What harm would it be, then, if the young and the multitude, should be profoundly convinced of that fundamental article of our faith, that the Catholic religion is the work, not of the real or apparent sanctity of those who preach it, but of the Holy of Holies Himself? Is it not good for them to know,

It has been frequently said that the abolition of slavery in the modern world was the due effect of Christianity. I think this is saying too much: slavery long existed in the very bosom of the Christian Church, without giving her any very great surprise or concern.—M. Guizot, Cours d'hist., leçon xii., p. 12. Religion, it is true, was not indignant, because the yoke of man worketh not the justice of God.—Ep. St. James, i., 20. She knows that if time, of itself, does nothing, it is for him who always does—the great father of miracles, according to a Persian proverb. Let philosophy wax angry, for it, without futurity, without moral force, has never more than mere human life; it is true that, in order to overcome obstacles, it prefers the executioner to the teacher, which is perfectly natural; but we are all well aware of what liberty does by its anger.

that though the Priesthood has produced an infinite number of great and good men, who do honor to humanity, and prove the perpetual presence of Christ in His Church, it also contains some who demonstrate that man may abuse all grace, and that he still retains the unhappy liberty of going astray, and destroying himself!

There are no finer models for the historian than the sacred writers. They tell all, the bad as well as the good, because that both, presented in their true light, are profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice! The knowledge of the perfections of God, and the miseries of man, is it not the true spiritual nosegay to be gathered from historical studies?

Glory and love in the highest heavens, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, only and eternal source of light and life!

Glory, on earth, to Jesus Christ, in that Church which He has begotten and purified by His blood, which He strengthens by His presence against the assaults of hell and the world, and which He has established as the dispenser of all His treasures!

Glory, again, to Jesus Christ, in His Saints, who show forth the power of His grace, and the true nobility of man!

Respect, charity, and unbounded compassion for that humanity, so great when it rests on faith and love; so wretched, so weak, and so perverse, when confiding in itself alone!

Such should be the conclusion of the general history of Christian times.

V.—MINDS AND CHARACTERS COMPARED.

To the study of the general history of the old world, compared with that of the new, it is necessary to add the study of the particular history of minds and characters, as compared with each other.

Eighteen hundred years have passed since heretical and philosophical pride accused the Church of crushing minds beneath the weight of authority, of compressing thought within the iron circle of her articles of faith, so that Catholic reason, not daring to permit itself the slightest excursion into the domain of revealed truth, grovelled supinely within the labyrinth of theological formulas of which it understood nothing.

In order to deprive those who thus reproach us of the wish to do it again, it is important to give, in a picture of fitting extent, an idea of the philosophical labors of the school of believers in authority, the nature of the questions broached by them, and the manner in which they have resolved them, from the days of Origen, of St. Augustine, of St. Basil, on to the times of St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, and thence down to this grand epoch—our own age.

We would compare the labors of the serfs of Rome with the magnificent conceptions, the masterpieces of eloquence, of logic and of reason, for which we are indebted to the school of free thinkers; from Simon the Samaritan, who first protested against Papal authority, down to Arius; from Arius to the Rationalists of the middle ages—Abelard and Amaury; from these to Luther and Calvin, from the religious reformers of the sixteenth century, to the philosophical and political reformers of the eighteenth; from them to the great men of our own times, who deeming Catholicism unworthy their intellect, and inadequate to our requirements, invoke a more excellent religion.

This work, well executed, would be the best specific against the fatal meteorism, from which the partisans of unbridled thought now suffer.

The compared study of characters would be no less crushing to those who pretend that the human heart has undergone a deep humiliation, by falling under the yoke of Him who is meek and humble of heart.

Let us oppose sage to sage, hero to hero. Let us demonstrate that if pagan philosophy has produced an Epictetus, "Christian philosophy," as the liar of Ferney somewhere admits, "has produced and does still produce thousands as great as Epictetus, all unconscious that they are so, and whose virtue is such that they know not they possess it." Let us dispel, by force of light, the absurd prejudice, that, for patriotism, and heroism, both civil and martial, pagan society might serve as a model.

Is it not an admirable scandal to see men of the world, and of the great world, such as Montalembert, de Falloux, Montreuil, Saint-Cheron, Poujoulat, Chavin de Malan, &c., apply themselves to record the Lives of the Saints?—Let us hope that it may become contagious.

Let us compare our great men with those who are glorified by modern philosophy. The pen which has recently confronted The Two Chancellors of England, Bacon of Verulam, and St. Thomas of Canterbury, has demonstrated how glorious to religion is such a comparison.

Let us confront our laurels with those of Protest-

\* 2 Ep. to Tim. iii. 16. † Paris, 1837, by Mr. M. A. F. Ozanam.

antism, and prove by facts that "if the reformation cramped genius in eloquence, poetry, and the arts, it also narrowed and compressed the heart of the warrior."

Catholicism had produced knights; Protestantism made captains brave and honorable like La Noue, but without a particle of warmth or feeling; often cold and cruel, and austere, still more in mind than in manner. . . . It could never have formed a Du Guesclin, a La Hire, or a Bayard.

Chafillon must ever pale before the Guise. The only warrior of energy or activity that Protestantism could boast, was Henry the Fourth, and him they lost. The Reformation gave us in the rough, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles the Twelfth, and Frederick of Prussia; it could not give us a Buonaparte; it miscarried of Tillotson and the minister Claude, and had no part in Fenelon or Bossuet.

Let us also bring forward into the light of day men who were not less admirable, though much less admired; those Catholic magistrates, who were models of intelligence, of learning and of virtue, in the midst of a corrupt world, like unto Romans of the days of Cincinnatus, transplanted to the court of Heliogabalus. To the Sullys, and Mornays, of whom Protestants are so proud, let us oppose that host of statesmen and of ministers, who, with more learning, and greater elevation of mind, presented a graver and holier life.

Above all, let us study woman, that most influential portion of mankind, ever guiding the other either to death or to life, according as she is impregnated with the spirit of religion or with that of the world.

To the matron of Sparta or of Rome, a monster of luxury and cruelty, dividing her time between the revel and the arena, capable only of corrupting men, and making them massacre each other, and regaling herself even at her toilet, with the sight of blood and tears; with this tiger, who is not yet sufficiently known to the world, and who should be better known, in order to have a just appreciation of the regenerating efficacy of Christianity, let us confront the Christian mother, angelic in her purity and beneficence, the fruitful source of the virtues which embellish, honor, and console our society, the admirable creation of the Christian mind, and so much the more admirable, in that, being everywhere found, she excites no surprise.

Contrast the Protestant maiden, separated by a baneful prejudice from the knowledge and the love of the fair model of her sex, and regarding her existence as incomplete, unless united with that of a man, shuddering at the bare idea of a desolate and disgraceful celibacy;—contrast her with the young Catholic virgin, growing up in the shadow of the altar of Mary, and to whom her religion says: Be not uneasy! Whatsoever may be thy destiny here below, it depends upon thyself to render it glorious, nay, sublime. Should all men forget thee, or shouldst thou be disposed to forget them, rejoice, and be glad! The greatest and noblest of women remained a virgin. Thou shalt obtain a throne amongst those myriads of virgins whom the virgin Saviour loves to honor. If, on the contrary, thou wilt choose a husband from amongst those who solicit thy hand, think not that thou dost evil because that others do better. Mary was a wife and a mother; thou shalt walk in the footsteps of innumerable wives and mothers, whom heaven and earth unite in praising.

A highly-gifted lady of our acquaintance, has just given us a work in three volumes, 8vo., entitled The Protestant Wife, formed by the Bible. But let us consider the Catholic wife, as a respected Catholic writer has lately done in a few admirable pages.

When confronted with the wife who goes to confession, what a sorry figure is the starched-up Bible heroine, losing herself in the multitude of her obligations as daughter, wife, and mother, sacrificing to conjugal exactions the tenderness of filial piety, of friendship, and of maternal love, and keeping on her guard against knitting and sewing, because, forsooth, adultery might lie at the bottom of all that!

This would be the best reply, if it were expedient to make it a reply, to a pamphlet recently flung out in a fit of fury, under the title of La prêtre, la femme, et la famille. (The priest, the wife, and the family.) (To be continued.)

\* Chateaubriand, Etudes Hist.—† Ibid.—‡ Ibid.—§ See Sabina, or Morning of a Roman Lady, by C. A. Beattiger.—|| Apoc., xiv. 4.—¶ 1 Cor., vii. 38.—\*\* Du mariage au point de vue Chrétien, by Mme. de Gasparin.—†† Un mot d'un Catholique sur quelques travaux Protestants, by M. Frauz de Champagny. Paris, 1844.—‡‡ Ibid.

LECTURE BY HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

Delivered in St. George's Cathedral, Southwark.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

"And when He had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."—John xx. 22, 23.

It is most important that if we are asked to give an account before the tribunal of God, or to tender on earth a reason for the hope that is in us, we should be able to say, "I mean precisely such and such." Now, my brethren, ask yourself this—you at least who do not give the answer which the Catholic Church gives—"What mean you, by saying each day that you believe in the forgiveness of sins? Do you mean in general terms that there is such a thing as forgiveness of sins? Do you understand by it that our Saviour imparts forgiveness—that forgiveness of sin has been sufficiently secured by His death and passion—and that there is some mode, but of which you have no precise and definite knowledge, in which spiritual forgiveness is applied to the individual seeking it?"—Then, what is it that means? Is it only in reference to baptism that these words are spoken? Do they refer only to some inward act exercised either in prayer or in some other indefinite and vague method by the sinner? By what act, by what process is sin forgiven?

Our blessed Saviour came down to our earth chiefly, mainly, entirely for the purpose of atoning for sin and redeeming man. That expresses a principle upon which I think there can be no difference. But, my brethren, it is not sufficient to say that He came to atone, to expiate for sin; for although He did indeed make full satisfaction to God for all the sins of the whole world, yet He did not destroy sin, but allowed it still to remain. He left man with his frailty around him; He left a living power to the tempter to seduce and lead men astray to sin. We have all experienced ourselves our own weakness, and we know that we have all sinned and incurred guilt. Our Blessed Saviour came then not merely to atone for sin, He came to remedy it. He came to be the means of overcoming and conquering sin. He must necessarily therefore, have left behind him the means by which salvation was to be applied, means which would enable man to conquer sin, of which until then he had been the victim and slave.

The question between us and others then is simply, what were the means which our Blessed Saviour left on earth to His Church, by which forgiveness of sin was to be obtained and applied to the penitent? Or, we may begin with an earlier and, if possible, a simpler question. Did He intend men to remain just as they were, with nothing whereby it was in her power to ascertain whether God would or would not forgive sin—without any assurance of pardon or any outward act wherein that grace could be embodied? Was man just as he was before His coming? You know that under the Old Law there was forgiveness of sin, and you know that their forgiveness could only be obtained through the atonement of Christ Jesus. It was only through His Sacred Blood that the sins of patriarchs and prophets, kings and people, could at any time be forgiven. The ceremonies and institutions of the Old Law abundantly prove this fact; and those who engaged in them had their sins forgiven only through the Blood of the Atonement, and their forgiveness thus obtained was secured to them by some external act performed by qualified and divinely appointed ministers. Has man then been left in the same position? Has he now nothing to hope for as a means of obtaining forgiveness similar to that which they had under the Old Law? They of the Old Law looked prospectively to the atonement of the Saviour; and must they of the New Law, Christians, look to that atonement retrospectively? Must the one be contemplated looking forward to a Redeemer, and the other looking back? Is this the only conclusion which we are forced to adopt? Strange, it appears, does it not, that anybody should imagine such to be the case? Our Blessed Redeemer came certainly to improve the condition of man with regard to those things which were the objects of his profession; and wonderful were it not if, after He had suffered so much, all for the purpose of forgiving sin, He should not leave a definite mode to man whereby that which He gave should become of simple and practical application. I confidently say, and you will agree with me, that the whole of our Blessed Saviour's mission clearly shows that he had a practical interest in the forgiveness of sinners. He did not come merely as John did, preaching the necessity of repentance, of penance, and of bringing forth proper and worthy fruits thereof. He did not merely announce the wrath of God to those who refused to repent. He did this, indeed, because it was necessarily a part of the means of bringing men to repentance. But He did more. He went seeking the individual sinner. He wanted to choose that class of

TOM MOORE CLUB.—A Club under this title, is to be established in Boston, for the cultivation of a taste for the melodies of Moore, and for the perpetuation of his memory. However necessary the former proposition may be, we think the latter entirely unnecessary, for we rather incline to the belief that the memory of the great poet will outlive all the clubs at present in existence.—Baltimore Catholic Mirror.