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CARDINAL MERCIER

When Cardinal Mercier issued his famous pastoral letter he "mobilized the spiritual resources of mankind."

These are not the words of emotional enthusiasm or irresponsible exaggeration, they are the deliberate verdict of one of the acutest and most judicial of American minds; and in this verdict Charles Evans Hughes, late Republican candidate for the Presidency of the United States, speaks for the American people.

In view of the great Cardinal's visit to Canada we have thought it well to give in this number of the CATHOLIC RECORD a glimpse of the reception accorded him in the States. We have accordingly made some judicious selections from our esteemed contemporary the Catholic Standard and Times' splendid account of His Eminence's visit to Philadelphia. What occurred in Philadelphia is, mutatis mutandis, what has occurred in every American city visited by the great patriot-bishop of heroic Belgium.

There is something touching, ennobling, inspiring in the spontaneous homage of a great free people to the fearless champion of freedom and Christian right against the ruthless, all-conquering might of omnipotent Prussianism.

All that is highest in the New World's idealism, all that is best in the New World's aspirations leaps forth in generous and full hearted recognition of the fact that this Old World prelate, under conditions that tested the fibre of men's souls, realized America's highest ideals and personified her best aspirations. In giving expression to this homage of a nation's soul to the living embodiment of that nation's best ideals America has been particularly fortunate. Whether Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, the Presidents of great Universities or the representatives of the less cultured masses, all spoke with peculiar fitness and appropriateness. Everywhere and always there is the ring of absolute sincerity. Perhaps it could not well be otherwise. The simple dignity, transparent sincerity and self-effacing humility of the great Cardinal should prove as disconcerting to the poseur as his fearless straightforwardness proved embarrassing to the Germans. Then, too, the sentiment to which the speakers gave voice was something too sacred and too sincere for exaggeration or rhetorical embellishment. Cardinal Mercier recognized this sincerity and said so:

"The American people impress me as being sincere, first, last and all the time. You helped Belgium not from any false sentiment but because you felt that the Belgian people were sincere in their love and defense of liberty."

The addresses to Cardinal Mercier suggest many trains of thought which may be left for development at another time.

Besides their evident sincerity there is a virility of expression worthy of a great nation's grateful recognition of a great man's service in humanity's darkest hour.

There is, too, and we should like to emphasize the point, a recognition of the undoubted fact that the man whose heroism they are honoring is also a priest of God. The Patriot-Primate of Belgium is one of the few, the very few men who in the estimation of the entire world fully measured up to their responsibilities and opportunities during the great world-convulsion. And yet the source of his strength and of his enlightenment

was not his patriotism, nor his statesmanlike vision, nor his great erudition; but his religion, his faith in the Providence of God. He himself, in his addresses, reported elsewhere in this paper, makes this unmistakably clear. So Mr. Bred, who presided at a luncheon where 2,500 members of the Merchants' Association of New York assembled to honor Cardinal Mercier, very aptly stated that the Cardinal's victory over the German invaders had demonstrated for all time that "the surest guide for men and nations in the hour of peril is a simple faith in a righteous God."

Charles Evans Hughes, from whom we quoted the remarkable sentence at the beginning of this article, in voicing America's greeting to Belgium's Hero-Priest, paid this tribute to his spiritual leadership:

"With unanimity of sentiment which effaces all differences of race or creed," declared ex-Judge Charles Evans Hughes, "with a profound sense of obligation as well as with esteem and sincere affection, we pay this tribute to this champion of humanity, this exponent of invincible courage and undying faith. We have met here not merely to recognize achievement, but to pay our tribute to heroism, to the victory of an intrepid spiritual leadership."

"It is the moral strength of Belgium that furnished one of the greatest resources at the command of the Allies in the late War. That moral strength was not an abstraction; it was the strength of men and women willing to endure and to suffer. It was the strength of a people willing to die rather than to be dishonored. But that strength needed a voice in the midst of the reign of brute force; justice needed a voice in that awful carnival of lust and rapine; humanity needed a voice. At a time when wickedness was doing its worst religion needed a voice. It was Cardinal Mercier that spoke for justice and humanity. The guns of the Hun could silence Antwerp, but they could not silence Mercier. Physical force can meet and overthrow physical force, but physical force cannot meet and overthrow spiritual force deriving its constant sustenance from faith in an ever living God who makes for righteousness."

Justice Hughes declared that when Cardinal Mercier issued his pastoral letter "he mobilized the spiritual resources of mankind." From then on, he said, "it was only a question of time when America should realize her duty and cast the deciding vote in that conflict for civilization."

"Herein," he continued, "lies the great lesson of Belgium and the necessary appreciation of Belgium's contribution to progress and to the establishment in the world of justice, and herein lies the lesson of the extraordinary importance of the work that was wrought by our distinguished guest. It is the lesson of no compromise with brute force."

"This victory is priceless because it has reinforced our confidence in the eternal verities. It was at a time when our confidence was weak. It was at a time of the gravest peril when this noble man of God, unflinching, with the benignity of character which he so obviously illustrates and yet with that power of soul and courage which no soldier in arms ever surpassed; it was in that time of peril that he brought all the great ability that he possessed, the results of his important experience in so many lines of activity, and he restored the confidence of his own people, succored the distressed, threw down a defiance to the Hun and revealed the cause of the Allies to a world only waiting to be convinced of its righteousness to insure a complete victory."

Even in the Pennsylvania's historic seat of learning when Princeton's President honored himself and Princeton in honoring the President of Louvain, it was not his world-famous scholarship but his sublime devotion and heroic fortitude as Chief Pastor of his stricken flock that was emphasized; and there is no uncertainty as to the well-spring of this devotion and fortitude.

The Dean of Princeton said: "Venerated servant of God, the Lord God heard thee in the day of trouble and gave thee, most valiant soldier of Christ, for thy struggle against 'rulers of the darkness of this world' the sword of the spirit and the shield of faith. With white patience in that conflict, as though seeing Him Who is invisible, thou didst bear a burden too heavy to be borne is known to Him alone. Who both laid and lifted thy burden and in His own time put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the lowly. To Him alone be glory."

The basis and fountain of all that which in Mercier's character, life, and conduct during the War, commands universal homage, receives the same recognition from Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler in conferring Columbia's degree on the Belgian Cardinal:

"Columbia University, founded for the advancement of public good and the glory of the Almighty God, hails in you the spiritual hero of the greatest of wars. You turned upon physical danger, upon brutal malice, and upon inhuman outrage of every kind the proud contempt of a pure and lofty spirit and sublime Christian faith. Military power, until

then unmatched in history, quailed before your burning words of exhortation and defiance. Your pen was mightier than the sword of the German armies. The heart of all America goes out to you and hails you as a worthy Prince of the Christian Church and a captain of the human spirit."

"The ancient battle-cry of the Templars was 'God and my right.' The Vice-President of the United States regrets that this did not come down through the ages as the battle-cry of mankind in its striving for better things. But humanity, particularly among English speaking peoples, clipped the Templars motto into just 'my right.' Had the full motto 'God and my right' inspired human strivings for better things Mr. Marshall thinks that instead of the selfish modern interpretation we might now realize that 'my right' is rather my duty to so adjust my aims and my efforts as to produce harmony in civil society."

Now when the very foundations of organized society are threatened by the clashing of selfish rights, when God and duty are left out of consideration, when a war as real and as terrible as that through which we have just passed again menaces civilization there is good reason to think that the Governor of Pennsylvania is right in expressing his belief that the visit of Cardinal Mercier may bring a blessing to America.

"I cannot help but think," said Governor Sproul, "that his presence here and the welcome he is getting from our people will help us to a spiritual awakening in the United States which we need very much to-day." Certain it is that everywhere and at all times the personality of the Hero-Priest of the World War, not less than his simple dignity and self-effacing humility of his spoken message, is an eloquent rebuke to the selfish and self-seeking spirit which threatens us with the horrors of a class war. Religion, despised and assailed by the fomentors of class hatred, shines out in Cardinal Mercier as the source of all that has compelled the world's admiration.

And his presence amongst us must in a thousand ways tend to discredit the disrupting motto of pagan selfishness—"my right;" and bring into favor the unifying motto of Christian civilization—"God and my right." It will never be quite so easy again to disparage or misrepresent the religion which inspired and sustained a Mercier in the darkest hour of civilization's history.

PROHIBITION

Regarding the ethics of Prohibition and its manifest dangers our readers know the position of the CATHOLIC RECORD. At the request of many esteemed friends we reprint elsewhere in this issue our own article on the subject which in view of the impending plebiscite assumes an immediate and urgent importance. Here we shall devote a little consideration to the questions which the Referendum ballot places before each and every voter to answer according to his conscience and best judgment.

1. Are you in favor of the repeal of the Ontario Temperance Act?

It has been stated very emphatically that to vote "Yes" to this question is to vote for the return of the open bar throughout the province. This might be read into the vote were this the only question on the ballot; then the issue before the people would be the Ontario Temperance Act or the open bar. As a matter of undeniable fact such vote would not automatically bring back the license system and the open bar. That would require Government action and Government legislation. Mr. Hearst is quoted as holding that a vote to repeal the Ontario Temperance Act is a vote for license as it was before the enactment of the Ontario Temperance Act. There is no justification for such a view no matter who holds it. There is no demand for the open bar; there is a distinct and definite repudiation on the part of the great majority of those opposed to the Ontario Temperance Act of any such interpretation. No Government would be justified in assuming the restoration of the license system as it was before merely because the majority answered "Yes" to the first question; they are bound to be guided by the answers to all four questions as well as by the open professions of opponents to the Ontario Temperance Act. If an affirmative vote on the first question were susceptible of such interpretation it would be absurd to invalidate the

ballot where all four questions are not answered.

On the other hand we find in the Globe news columns that Mr. Dewar on the public platform declares emphatically,

"That if the Liberal party is returned to power, no matter what may be the verdict of the people on the referendum, there will be absolutely no danger of the return of the open bar in this Province, while the party would in other respects carry out to the letter the will of the people."

That is clear, definite and unequivocal. There is, therefore, no danger whatever of the return of the open bar, unless Sir William Hearst persists in his determination to regard a majority in favor of repealing the Ontario Temperance Act as a mandate to him if returned to power to restore the open bar. Sir William should declare himself on this important phase of the question.

But if there be any room for doubt on this question the voter opposed to the open bar may vote "No" to the first question and secure rational modifications of the Act by voting "Yes" to any or all of the other questions.

A cross in the "Yes" column opposite the second question is a vote in favor of the sale of light beer by Government agencies; opposite the third question it is a vote that such light beer be sold in standard hotels, but in no way interferes with the rights of municipalities under Local Option; neither does it in any measure restore to hotels the right to sell whiskey or other strong drinks.

A "Yes" vote to the fourth question will place the sale of whiskey and other strong drinks under the direct control of Government agencies, but will bring them within the reach of those desiring them for medicinal or beverage purposes without a doctor's certificate.

We are frankly and unequivocally in favor of an affirmative vote in the last two questions; the only reason for voting to place light beer under the control of Government agencies would be the possibility of a negative majority on question three; so that to question two an affirmative answer should also be given.

The Act as it is at present is class legislation of the most invidious, and in view of the serious social unrest, of the most dangerous kind. As we write the newspapers inform us that the Government at Ottawa was compelled suddenly to adjourn the House and summon a special caucus of its followers to discuss the Temperance legislation already announced. That is the Doherty bill designed to enable a Prohibition province to prevent importation of liquor. And, one member is quoted by the Globe correspondent as saying that he knew hundreds who were prepared to vote four "No's" on the referendum who would not do so if the new Dominion legislation were persisted in. One of the headings in the Globe is "The Cellar Vote Again in Evidence." The threatened revolt was quieted by the assurance to the recalcitrant members from Ontario and to others that under the proposed legislation there would be a period of indefinite length following the ratification of peace, when intoxicating liquors can be manufactured and imported into the homes of any Province in the Dominion.

So, as everybody knew before, there are many enthusiastic Prohibitionists prepared to vote No for the other fellow provided it will not interfere with the stocking up of their own cellars. There is so much paraisim and moral cowardice and political pandering to fanaticism in connection with Prohibition that this in itself discredits the whole movement. In the actual working out of prohibitive legislation it is doubtful if the abuse of alcoholic beverages is materially lessened; and certain it is that tens of thousands of citizens are daily breaking the law, and with no sense of shame or guilt in its violation. Thus is all law being brought into contempt. We are convinced that the evils of Prohibition far outweigh any good it may accomplish.

Be not deceived by the dishonest argument that the alternative to the Ontario Temperance Act is the open bar or led to believe that unless you vote four "No's"—like the enthusiastic "Cellar Vote" in the Federal Parliament—you vote to restore the old license system. Vote according to your conscience and best judgment—but vote intelligently.

"Genius may compel a man to like the disagreeable things he has to do."

LOVE, RESPECT, GRATITUDE

By THE GLEANER

The above motto which met my eye on visiting a religious institution recently, conveys a message that many of our modern Catholics might well take to heart. This is a selfish age. Selfishness manifests itself even among devout Catholics in their relations to Almighty God, His Church and His Sacraments. People go to confession because it is a remedy for sin which makes them unhappy, but they give little thought to the fact that it is the blood of Our Saviour that cleanses them from their spiritual leprosy. They forget like the ungrateful nine to return and give thanks to God. People go to Communion because it helps them to be virtuous, but often the loving affection that prompted Our Lord to unite Himself so intimately with them is but coldly reciprocated. Catholics adhere to the Church because they know that she is their best friend in the day of sorrow and need, because they know that they cannot save their souls without her, but many of them are little moved by the dangers that threaten her children and very loath to make even a slight sacrifice in proof of their love for her or their loyalty to her.

In a couple of recent articles I pointed out how the poison of heresy infests even our Catholic life. Apropos of this it is interesting to note some of the characteristics of latter day heretics as laid down by St. Paul in his second epistle to Timothy: "In the last days men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, without affection, without kindness, stubborn, puffed up, lovers of pleasures more than of God, having the appearance indeed of piety but denying the power thereof." While not contending that it may be due to any taint of heresy, there is no gainsaying the fact that much of the above description applies to a large number of Catholics who set much store upon their piety. These people are found not so frequently in out-missions as in well organized parishes whose pastors are zealously solicitous for the spiritual welfare of their flocks. Selfishness would seem to be the underlying motive of their actions, even of their devotions. The most important object of prayer "to adore God, to bless His Holy Name, to praise His goodness and to return Him thanks for His benefits" does not appeal to them. Generally speaking prayer in their case is simply a petition to God for the things that they want. Instead of being lovers of God they are lovers of themselves. The attitude of these people towards God is very much like the attitude of many of the children of today towards their parents. These spoiled children are always looking for some favor from their father or mother. They give little thought to the sacrifices that their parents have made for them, and it seldom occurs to them to show by some outward mark their affection and gratitude. The motto referred to "love, respect, gratitude," conveys the very antithesis of their attitude not only to their parents but to the other representatives whom God has placed over them viz., their teachers and their priests.

It is true that the keeping of God's commandments is the best proof of our love for Him, for He has said, "If any man love Me he will keep My word." But just as we would not class as an ideal son one who while never disobeying his parents in a grievous matter seldom gives any outward manifestation of his affection for them, so he can scarcely be considered an ideal Catholic who lives up to the letter of the law but is cold and indifferent to the interests of his loving Saviour, who goes to Mass because to miss it would be a mortal sin, but who is never present at Benediction, who pays his pew rent because he must but will give little more than the price of a cigar to bring to others less favored than he the blessings of faith that he himself enjoys.

There are three considerations which those Catholics who are lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, ungrateful to and critical of their own priests, puffed up with their own importance and devoid of affection, should ponder over. First of all they should realize that Our Saviour has a human heart that appreciates gratitude on the part of those for whom He has done so much, more than does any earthly mother who has made sacrifices for her children. Again in the day of trouble and affliction there is very little consolation for the man or woman whose religion has cost him or her nothing and who consequently does not feel deserving of any special consideration. Lastly, they should remember that the appearance of piety and even the exact observance of God's laws and of the precepts of the Church cannot merit for them the gift of final perseverance, that the greatest of all graces is a purely gratuitous gift of God, Who is most likely to bestow it upon those who serve Him not in a grudging spirit with the meager gift of a hireling, but with a loving, generous and grateful heart.

PROHIBITION

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

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In the plebiscite which the Government proposes to take next Fall on Prohibition in this province two questions, according to the information given out, seem to be decided upon: (1) Are you in favor of the Ontario Temperance Act? (2) Are you in favor of the sale of beer and wine? To these the newspapers supporting the Government have intimated may be added a third: Are you in favor of allowing alcoholic beverages in private homes?

Let us try to get at the underlying principle on which such a question is referred to such a tribunal and to see what the acceptance of this principle involves. It is quite possible to do this dispassionately though the whole question of Prohibition—and for that matter nearly every political question on which the people's verdict is sought—is made an appeal to the emotions, the passions, the prejudices or the self-interest of the voter rather than an appeal to his reasoned judgment and natural sense of equity and justice.

The principle of restriction and regulation of the traffic in alcoholic beverages has long been admitted as one justified by considerations of public order and the general social welfare; and Prohibition within certain limits may be considered as the extreme application of that principle strained to the breaking point; absolute Prohibition departs altogether from the principle of restriction and regulation in the public interest and bases itself on entirely different grounds.

Why ask the people whether or not they are in favor of alcoholic beverages in private homes? Why give a moment's consideration to the consultation of the people on a purely private matter? It is evident that there is opposition to such a course, but it is equally evident that such a course must be advocated.

There is a tendency to give a meaning to democracy which is as subversive of all true liberty as is any other form of absolutism. Have the people or a majority of them a right to command whatever they please? Are they the ultimate tribunal in matters of private conduct? The right to command involves the corresponding duty of obedience. Are we in conscience bound to obey whatever it may be their good pleasure to ordain? If so, where is individual liberty? or liberty of conscience? or any other form of liberty that is worth while? If we concede this right to the people or a majority of them then the people taken collectively are the absolute master of every man taken individually. Now this is absolutism, and absolutism is incompatible with individual liberty.

Under a monarchy the monarch is the State. "L'Etat c'est moi," "I am the State," said Louis XIV, and he expressed the whole theory of absolute monarchy. Under an aristocracy the nobility are the State and consequently if the State is absolute the nobles, the junkers, the aristocrats are also absolute. If they require the many to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to them, the many must feel it their duty to be. Here, for the many, is absolutism as much as under absolute king, kaiser or czar. Everybody admits this. But is it less true under a democracy where the people in their associated capacity are held to be absolute? The people are the State, and the State is absolute. Is not this freedom? Yes, for the State, just as the State was free under Louis XIV, under the Kaiser, the junkers, the Magyar aristocracy or the Czar. But for the individual is it freedom? There are no kings, no kaisers, no junkers, no czars, but the people, in this perverted conception of democratic liberty, may exercise all the power over the individual that kings, kaisers or junkers ever had or desired to have. It may not be quite so easy to get a majority in a democratic State; but if there is no limit to the power of the majority the democratic State becomes as absolute as that of the monarch who declares "L'Etat c'est moi." And the tyranny of the absolute majority is the more odious and insufferable because it is practised in the name of liberty and democracy. Whatever has been done under the most absolute monarchy or the most lawless aristocracy may be reenacted under a pure democracy if it be once laid down in principle that the majority has the absolute right to govern.

It is not the physical force of the majority that is to be dreaded, but the doctrine that legitimates every act the majority may choose to perform; and therefore teaches them to look for no standard of right or wrong beyond their own will. To the physical force of numbers may be opposed the moral force of right. The tendency, all too evidently the growing tendency, to make the majority of the people the ultimate tribunal legitimates every act for which a majority of voters may be obtained. Flatterers of the people take the place of the old time flatterers of the kings; and the demagogue is as unlovely as the egyptian courtier. "You have absolute power, use it thus and so" is just as dangerous, just as immoral when addressed to the sovereign people as when it used to be addressed to the sovereign king ruling by "divine right."

No civil power can be absolute, whether it be that of king, aristocracy or democracy. Every form of government must be limited by justice, for all power is from God Who is absolute Justice. When civil power is not thus limited whether it be democratic, aristocratic or royal we have the rule of arbitrary human will instead of the reign of justice. Not Americans only but every individual have the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The State, except for grave and sufficient reasons may not interfere with the liberty of the individual. The State was made for man, not man for the State. The State no matter how democratic in form can never be regarded as absolute without reducing the individual to slavery. As in days gone by liberty-loving subjects withstood the tyranny of kings so in our day we need public-spirited and enlightened citizens who have the courage to withstand the tyranny of the majority of the people, to withstand the very essence of all tyranny, the absolutism of the State.

To come back to the Prohibition plebiscite. The question for the Government to decide is not whether undue and unwarranted interference with individual liberty in the matter of alcoholic beverages will command a majority of votes but whether the State has any right to interfere beyond the requirements of public order and social welfare. Not whether the proposed legislation is popular but whether it is right and just and based on a principle universal in its application.

It is an old heresy that wine is evil. Abstention from the use of wine was one of the tenets of Gnosticism in the second century. Tatian, the founder of the sect known as the Eucratians forbade the use of wine, and his adherents refused to make use of it even in the Sacrament of the Altar; in its place they used water. These heretics mentioned by St. Irenaeus (Adv. Haer., I, xxx) are known as Hydroparastai, Aquarians, and Eucratians. The great Manichean heresy followed a few years later, professing the greatest possible aversion to wine as one of the sources of sin. They made use of water in the celebration of Mass.—(Cath. Encyc.)

In the life of Cosmas, 54th Patriarch of Alexandria, we read that the Egyptian Church had much to suffer at the hands of the Mohammedans. Among other things, the Arabs, themselves total abstainers since the days of Mohammed, forbade the use of wine under any pretext whatever, so that it could neither be bought or sold. The consequence was that the Christians were deprived of one of the essential requisites for the celebration of the divine mysteries. ("The Scriptural use of the word wine." Eccl. Rev. Feb. 1915.)

Now the revival of these old heresies in modern times would not concern us very greatly—heresies have a habit of recurring—were it not for the revival at the same time of the pagan idea of the absolute state. If the people are the ultimate tribunal in this matter of Prohibition what is to hinder a plebiscite being asked for and granted on the question: "Are you in favor of absolute wine for sacramental purposes?" And if the majority should decide that Prohibition should be absolute, bone-dry, with no exceptions; then it would be a crime to celebrate Mass. More, if we admit the modern, liberty-destroying interpretation of democracy, it would be treason against the sovereign will of the majority of the people.

A principle must hold good in all cases; it must be of universal application. The horrors of Bolshevism would not be lessened a particle if the Soviet Governments of Russia had the majority of the people behind them. The principle that the majority have the absolute right to impose their will on all the people is the very essence of tyranny, and is essential Bolshevism as well.

Mohammedans, Manicheans or Methodists may hold to total abstention from all alcoholic beverages as a religious tenet if they choose; but when they are in the majority or get the majority to their way of thinking on this matter, if they impose their religious tenet or honest moral conviction on others by civil enactment, they are as intolerant as the Arabs of the ninth century.

It may be said that there is no fear of such an eventuality; this is a flimsy assurance if we surrender the very fundamental principle of democratic liberty to the advocates of democratic absolutism. The choice does not lie between the abuses of the old license system and Prohibition; there are many alternatives. But there is a matter of principle involved in Prohibition; a principle which profoundly affects civil, religious and individual liberty.