

WHEN AND HOW SHALL THE CATHOLIC CHURCH PERISH?

BY THE REV. FATHER O'HAIKE, AFRICAN MISSIONARY.

(Continued.) There is a strong disposition on the part of men to cast off revealed religion, and because the Catholic Church is the guardian of God's revealed Word, the determination to crush her is but a natural result.

The history of the Catholic Church, brethren, consists of persecutions and victories. It is proclaimed by a long series of incontestable authorities that the greater the trials, the greater the triumphs.

All must acknowledge that while empires have fallen, and dynasties have disappeared, and thrones have crumbled to the dust, the Catholic Church has survived every change, outlived every revolution, and proved herself to be what her Lord made her, "the pillar and ground of truth."

When Christ sent forth his Apostle to teach all nations and establish everywhere His Church on the ruins of a wide-spread and universally cherished idolatry; when He bade them fear nothing, that He would be with them all days, even to the end of the world; who, I ask, reasoning on merely human principles, would have believed that they could have succeeded in their seemingly impossible mission?

Who could have ever dreamed that not only would their labours be crowned with the most brilliant success, but their work would survive the revolutions and changes of eighteen centuries? Who could have imagined that Peter and Paul, coming from a remote and despised province of a vast empire—the former a poor pilgrim and advanced in years, the latter a prisoner in chains, on his trial for alleged crimes against the State—were to become the second founders of the great city of the Caesars; that the emblem of redemption, their only standard, would in three centuries surmount the loftiest pinnacles of that imperial city which were the heralds would be proclaimed and acknowledged in the most remote regions of the earth? On that natural principles will the infidel account for the potent, unquestionable fact?

What! a few unlettered peasants, without any influence or patronage, teaching doctrines incoherent to human reason, most humiliating to human pride, and at open war with men's passions; preaching the Cross, an absurdity to the polished Greek and a laughing to the haughty Roman; every where encountering the most deadly hatred, the most inveterate opposition, daily threatened with tortures and death, and yet, most wonderful to relate, triumphing over all opposition. The victories of the Church, and the awful conflicts and fiery trials of the first two hundred and fifty years of her existence, unquestionably prove that she is the work, not of man, but of God. The infant Church had to encounter the relentless, their only standard, would in three centuries surmount the loftiest pinnacles of that imperial city which were the heralds would be proclaimed and acknowledged in the most remote regions of the earth? On that natural principles will the infidel account for the potent, unquestionable fact?

It is worthy your attention that, at the very time her trials appeared most appalling, her most glorious

victories were about being accomplished. While Diocletian and his three colleagues, as Lactantius informs us, were raging like four wild beasts against the Catholic Faith; while her churches, cities and villages, were reduced to a heap of ruins; while her sepulchral monument had been already prepared bearing the haughty inscription "The Christian name abolished;" then it was, when the fiendish laughter was raised, and the wild shout of triumph re-echoed from shore to shore, the power of the Most High snote her persecutors, and humbled them as it did Antiochus of old. She came forth from the catacombs the desert, the caverns; she cast aside the weeds of mourning, put on garments of joy, pealed forth the note of victory, and was acknowledged as the spiritual queen of the world.

A period of three hundred years constituted her first campaign; and although her garments were dipping with the blood of other children, slain in battle, her face was radiant with joy, and her brow decked with laurels of victory.

The conversion of Constantine summoned Pope Sylvester from his hiding place, and proclaimed the what religion demanded—freedom of action. The heavenly Cross which appeared to him at mid-day, as he was taken as the auspicious omen of future victories. The motto, "In this sign shalt thou conquer," was adopted, and, with this watchword inscribed on her banners, the Church finally triumphed.

It having come to the attention of some of the workmen in a boiler shop on Leonard Street that an old vagrant was in the habit of sleeping in an old boiler in the yard, three or four of them came down at an early morning hour, cut off his retreat by pushing a barrel into the orifice, and then, armed with sledges and hammers, they made such a din as only boiler-makers can. When they had become tired they pulled away the barrel and looked in. The vag was rubbing his eyes, and as they called him he replied: "He? What is he? Was that a fire-alarm?"

"If you were by no means satisfied, and next morning they turned on the water used to test boilers, and thrust the hose into the boiler. By and by the old chap came crawling out, wet as a rat, and as he landed on the ground he inquired: "Boys, have you got any soap around here?"

"They gave him a piece used at the wash-basin, and as he crawled back into the boiler with it he remarked: "It's four weeks since this shirt was washed, and if you gent's will let that water run for about fifteen minutes more you'll be doing me a great favor! I'm sorry to bother you, but I'll try not to waste any of the precious fluid!"—Free Press.

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